

Pharmacy Workforce Demographic 2023



pharmacycouncil

Te Pou Whakamana Kaimatū o Aotearoa

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Introduction

Pharmacy Council | Te Pou Whakamana Kaimatū o Aotearoa is the Responsible Authority for Aotearoa New Zealand's pharmacy profession. Our role is to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the public by ensuring pharmacists are competent and fit to practise. Some of the key ways we achieve this are by:

- ensuring that intern pharmacists, pharmacists, and pharmacist prescribers are qualified and registered
- ensuring that pharmacists are competent to practise safely
- monitoring education programmes.

For further information on our functions please visit our [website](#).

The annual Workforce Demographic report provides an overview of Pharmacy Register movements in the year from 1 July to 30 June. It also provides a point in time (30 June) analysis of the profession's registered practitioners.

Practitioners provide information to Council when they apply to Council for registration or recertification. This includes workforce data declared by pharmacists when applying for a practising certificate (i.e. recertification). In our role as the Responsible Authority, we provide workforce-related information to the Director-General of Health.¹ This report goes further, providing an overview of the pharmacy workforce for the wider sector and interested stakeholders.

The data shows that the number of practising pharmacists grew by 0.6 percent over the 12 months to 30 June 2023. The report raises questions about the capacity of the workforce, illustrated by a reduced rate of pharmacists per 10,000 at a time pharmacists are delivering new services. This year also saw the highest number of verification requests from Australia, which is an indicator of the number of pharmacists moving to practise there. We recognise that 2022-23 was a stressful year for most pharmacists, as New Zealand like many other countries struggled to return to pre-Covid health workforce capacity. We note the data for working hours is concerning and we will continue to monitor whether measures (e.g. immigration changes) will improve the situation. We urge the profession and Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand to closely investigate the profession's capacity, and we would welcome ongoing conversations, including how Council's data can be further used to ensure safe practice.



Michael A Pead
Chief Executive



Christine Anderson
Registrar

¹ Health Practitioner Competence Assurance Act (HPCAA) 2003, [section 134A](#).

Pharmacy register

Pharmacists must be registered with the Pharmacy Council and hold a current practising certificate under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 to be entitled to practise in Aotearoa New Zealand.

On 30 June 2023, there were 4,143 *registered, current* pharmacists in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Between 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, 194 pharmacists registered with the Pharmacy Council for the first time.

Table 1 – Composition of the Register on 30 June 2023

Practising status	Scope of practice	Practitioners
Registered, current ²	Intern pharmacists	278
	Pharmacists	4,143
	(includes pharmacist prescribers) ³	(51)
	Subtotal	4,421
Registered, inactive ⁴	Intern pharmacists	52
	Pharmacists	1,123
	(includes pharmacist prescribers)	(2)
	Subtotal	1,175
Suspended ⁵	Pharmacists	6
	Subtotal	6
Registered practitioners		5,602

The number of *registered, current* pharmacists is Council's most accurate measure for estimating the number of practising pharmacists in Aotearoa New Zealand.

For the remainder of this report the terms '*registered, current pharmacist*' and '*practising pharmacist*,' and '*registered, inactive pharmacist*' and '*non-practising pharmacist*' are used interchangeably.

Throughout this document, the term 'pharmacist' includes pharmacist prescribers unless otherwise indicated.

² Registered with Pharmacy Council and holds, or is deemed to hold, a current practising certificate and is entitled to practise.

³ All pharmacist prescribers are also registered in the pharmacist scope of practice.

⁴ Registered with Pharmacy Council but does not hold a practising certificate and is not entitled to practise.

⁵ Registration or practising certificate is suspended, and the pharmacist is not entitled to practise.

Figure 1 – Register composition on 30 June 2019-2023

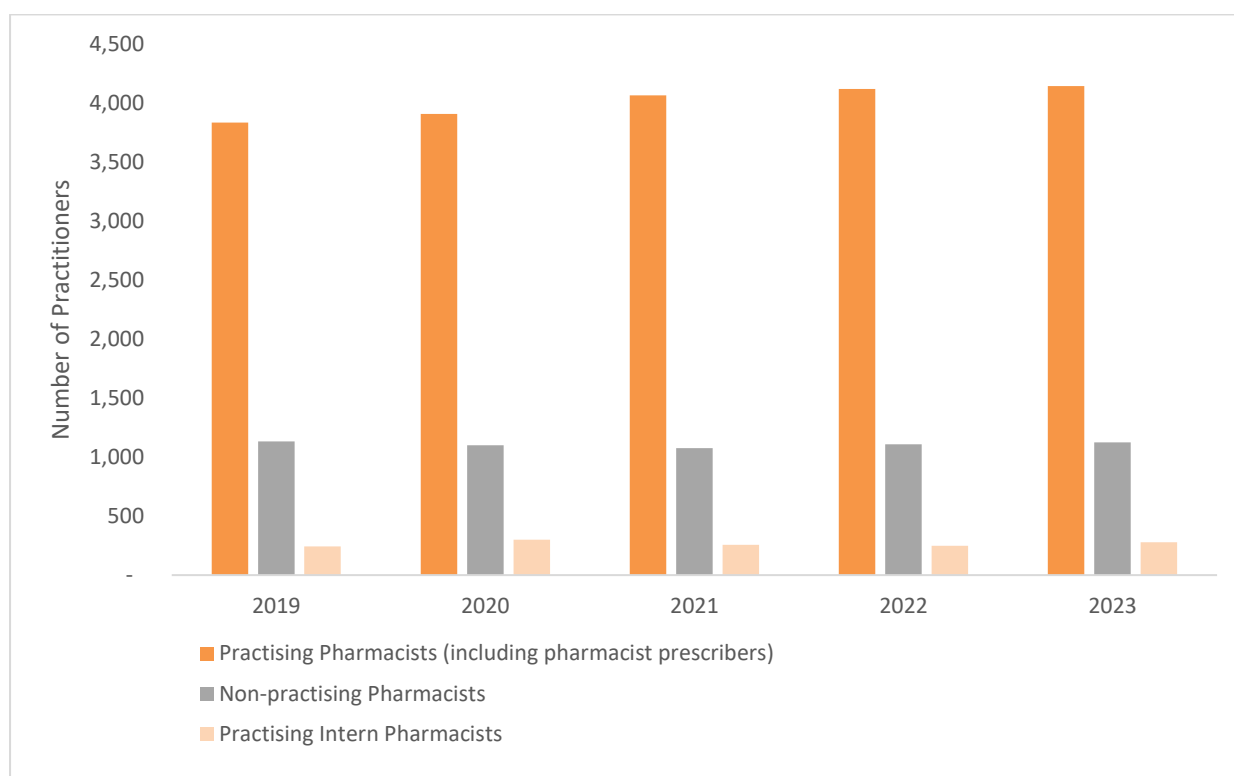


Table 2 - Register composition on 30 June 2019-2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Registered, current					
Intern pharmacists	243	300	256	249	278
Pharmacists	3,832	3,906	4,062	4,118	4,143
^L incl. Pharmacist prescribers=	(20)	(34)	(37)	(46)	(51)
Registered, inactive					
Intern pharmacists	24	24	30	40	52
Pharmacists	1,133	1,100	1,074	1,109	1,123
^L incl. Pharmacist prescribers=	(0)	(0)	(3)	(3)	(2)
Suspended					
Pharmacists ⁶	7	8	9	8	6
Registered practitioners	5,239	5,338	5,431	5,524	5,602

Number of practising pharmacists

In the 12 months to 30 June 2023, the number of *registered, current* pharmacists in Aotearoa New Zealand increased from 4,118 to 4,143. This increase of 25 pharmacists represents a 0.6 percent increase on last year. In 2022 we reported growth of 1.4 percent and commented that this was less than the long-term average of 2.2 percent per annum

⁶ At the time of reporting there were no suspended intern pharmacists or pharmacist prescribers

growth observed previously. This year’s result continues the recent deviation from historic trend, and the average growth over the last five years has reduced to 2.0 percent per year.

Of the 4,143 pharmacists registered and entitled to practise, 51 were pharmacist prescribers. The change in the number of pharmacist prescribers was as a result of:

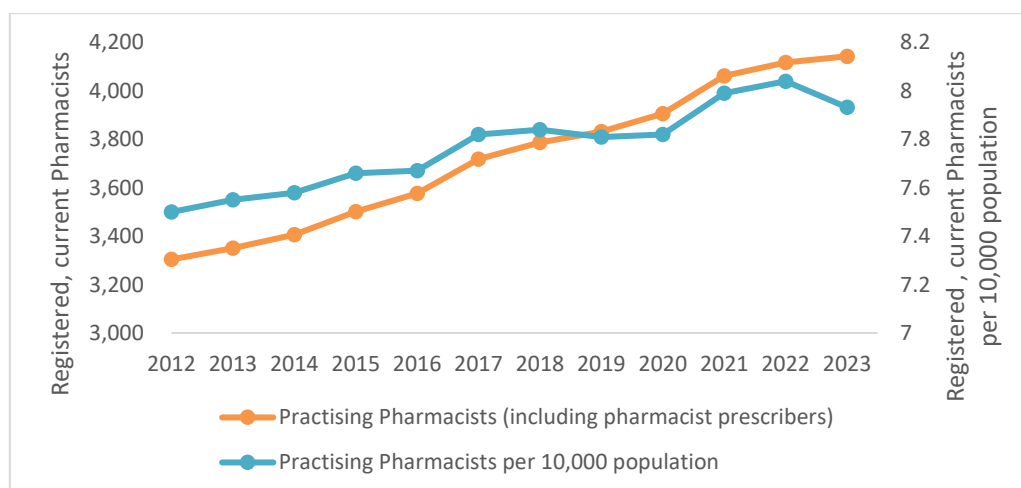
- + Four newly registered in the Pharmacist Prescriber scope.
- + Two returning to practise in the Pharmacist Prescriber scope
- One opting not to continue practising in the Pharmacist Prescriber scope.

The reason for the relatively small increase in the number of pharmacist prescribers was because neither the University of Otago nor the University of Auckland offered a prescribing programme in 2022.

Table 3 – Number of registered, current pharmacists on 30 June 2019-2023

Year	Registered, current pharmacists	Percent change
2023	4,143	0.6%
2022	4,118	1.4%
2021	4,062	4.0%
2020	3,906	1.9%
2019	3,832	

Figure 2 – Number of registered, current pharmacists and per capita analysis



There were 7.93 practising pharmacists for every 10,000 people in Aotearoa New Zealand on 30 June 2023. This represents a decline from 2022 (8.04) to a value in between that reported in 2020 (7.81) and 2021 (7.99). The minimal growth rate for practising pharmacists in 2023 does not match the higher national population growth rate of 1.96 percent.

The density of pharmacists in Aotearoa New Zealand⁷ is less than what is reported for comparable jurisdictions: Australia (10.44), Canada (10.55), Ireland (13.68), United Kingdom (8.53), and United States of America (10.64).⁸

⁷ The metric we use (pharmacists per 10,000 population) is used internationally by other health organisations including the World Health Organization.

⁸ World Health Organization. "Pharmacists (per 10 000 Population)." World Health Organization. Last modified 2023. [https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/pharmacists-\(per-10-000-population\)](https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/pharmacists-(per-10-000-population)).

Figure 3 – Summary of changes to the number of registered, current pharmacists⁹

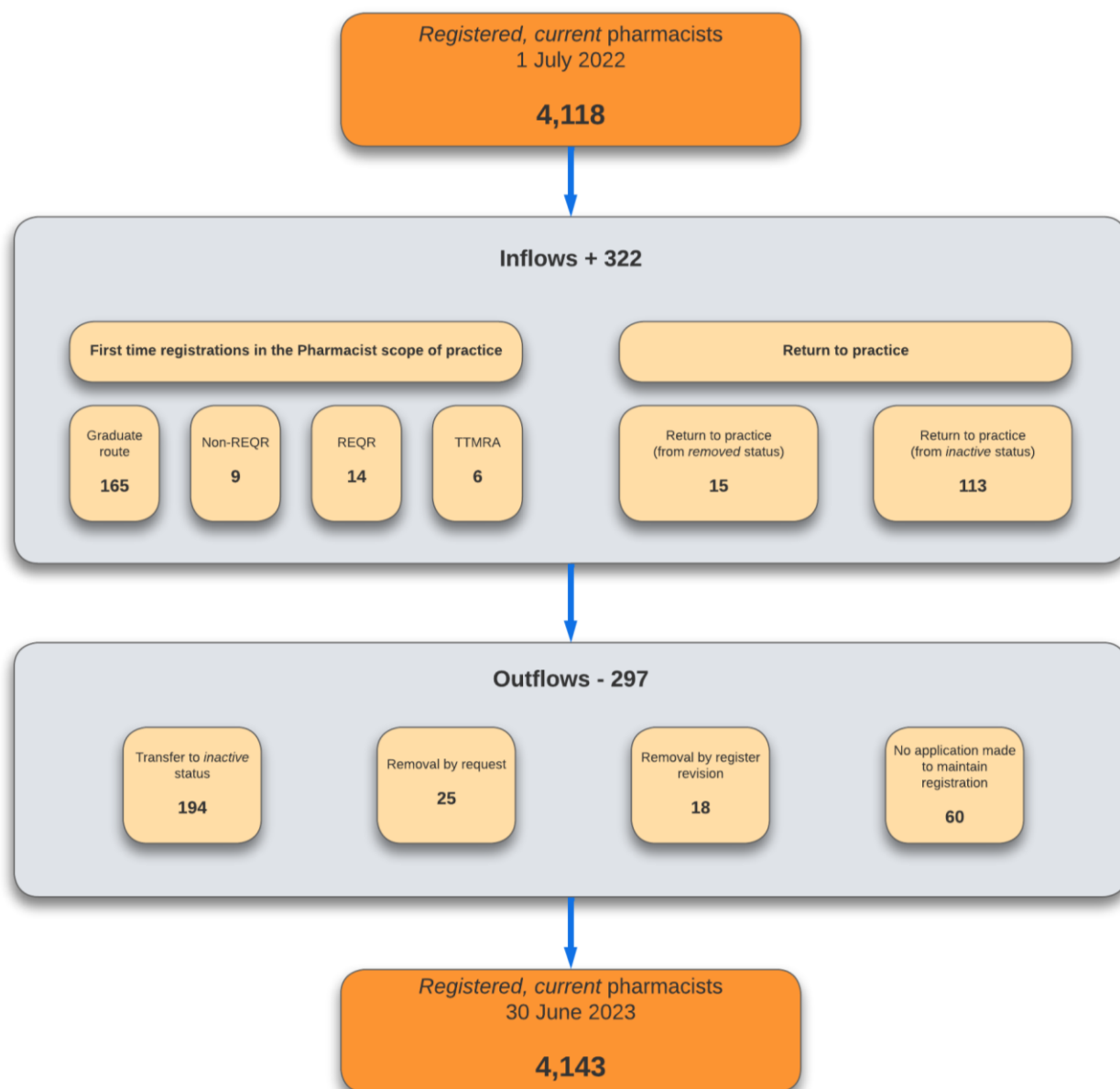


Figure 3 illustrates changes to the number of practising pharmacists between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023. The number of additional practising pharmacists (322) marginally outweighed those no longer practising (297).

In this period, 165 new pharmacists (51.2 percent of inflow) were intern pharmacists (New Zealand or Australian graduates) registering in the Pharmacist scope of practice. A further 128 (40.8 percent of inflow) were pharmacists returning to practice.

Over the same period, 297 pharmacists holding a practising certificate until 31 March 2023, did not apply to continue practising beyond 1 April 2023. Of these, the majority (65.3 percent) applied to remain on the register but not practise. As of 30 June 2023, a further 60 pharmacists who held a practising certificate until 31 March (20.2 percent of outflow), had not made an application to either practise or remain on the register as non-practising.

⁹ Changes relating to practising status (i.e. practising to non-practising) occur from 1 April as the practising certificate expires on 31 March annually.

Non-practising pharmacists

When a pharmacist's practising status is *registered, inactive* they are on the register but do not hold a current practising certificate, and cannot practise, however they may continue to use the title 'pharmacist.' Applying to remain on the register is also done annually.

Table 4 – Number of registered, inactive pharmacists on 30 June 2019-2023

Year	Registered, inactive pharmacists	Percent change
2023	1,123	1.3%
2022	1,109	3.5%
2021	1,071	-2.6%
2020	1,100	-2.9%
2019	1,133	

Despite growth in the total register over time, the number of *registered, inactive* pharmacists has remained within a range of around 900 to 1,100 pharmacists since 2005. Of the 1,123 pharmacists with *registered, inactive* practising status, 867 made an application to retain their registration, while, as of 30 June 2023, 256 had not submitted an application.

When a pharmacist applies to remain on the register but not practise, (i.e., *Registered, inactive* status), we ask them to provide reason(s) for not practising. Table 5 collates data from the 867 pharmacists who made an application for *inactive* status. Most of the responses came from pharmacists who were already not practising. Table 5 shows total reasons (996) exceeding the number of respondents (867) as some pharmacists provided multiple reasons for not practising. Overall, the mix of reasons for not practising has not changed significantly from previous years.

Table 5 – Pharmacist reason for discontinuing practice

Reason for not practising	2023	Percentage
Overseas - practising	337	34.9%
Overseas - not practising	125	12.9%
Working in a non-health role	127	13.1%
Parenting/maternity leave	84	8.7%
Other	89	9.2%
Retired	77	8.0%
Working in another health profession	71	7.3%
Full-time study	20	2.1%
Seeking employment in a non-pharmacy profession	34	3.5%
Seeking employment as a pharmacist	2	0.2%
Total reasons provided	996	(100%)

Intern pharmacists

Intern pharmacists are registered health practitioners training and practising under supervision to meet further prescribed qualifications to register in the Pharmacist scope of practice. Like pharmacists, an intern pharmacist must hold a practising certificate to practise, (i.e., showing as *registered, current* on the register).

Table 6 shows that there were 278 intern pharmacists registered and holding a practising certificate on 30 June 2023. Other than for 2020¹⁰ this is the highest number of practising intern pharmacists reported in any year since 2006.

The number of intern pharmacists is affected by two broad factors: the number of pharmacy graduates and overseas pharmacists entering the scope, and the number of intern pharmacists registering in the Pharmacist scope of practice.

Table 6 – Intern pharmacists on 30 June 2019-2023

Year	Intern pharmacists	Percent change
2023	278	11.65%
2022	249	-2.7%
2021	256	-14.7%
2020	300	23.5%
2019	243	

To register in the Intern Pharmacist scope of practice, an applicant must either hold a pharmacy degree from New Zealand or Australia or have completed the first three steps of

¹⁰ In 2020 the number of intern pharmacists was higher as the May 2020 Assessment Centre was deferred to later in the year due to COVID-19 restrictions.

the Non-Recognised Equivalent Qualifications Route (Non-REQR).^{11,12}

Table 7 shows that of the 278 intern pharmacists registered on 30 June 2023, 256 (92.1 percent) held a qualification from a New Zealand university, compared with 231 (92.8 percent) in 2022.

The number of intern pharmacists reported in Tables 6 and 7 is the total of intern pharmacists holding a practising certificate on 30 June. This is a mix of graduates from various university cohorts. Therefore, the count of intern pharmacists is not a reliable measure of the number of graduates for a given year.

Table 7 – Origin of pharmacy qualification for intern pharmacists

Number of interns by university or country of university		2022	2023
New Zealand and Australian pharmacy graduates	University of Auckland	65	95
	University of Otago	166	161
	Australian universities	1	1
Overseas pharmacists	Non-REQR	17	21
Total intern pharmacists		249	278

Pharmacists removed from the register

Pharmacists may request to be removed from the register at any time and apply for reinstatement if they want to return to the register.

When pharmacists do not apply to either continue practising or remain on the register by the end of April each year, they are included in the Council's register revision process¹³, and Council may remove pharmacists from the register, typically nine months later if, after attempts to contact them, no application is made.

Table 8 – Removed from the register

Removals	2022	2023
Revision of register	75	109
Removed at own request	66	55
Total pharmacists removed	141	164

In the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, 164 pharmacists were removed from the register. Of these, 43 pharmacists (26.2 percent) held a practising certificate until 31 March 2023 (25 of these 43 pharmacists requested removal from the register and 18 were removed following the register revision process).

¹¹ New Zealand Gazette. "Pharmacy Council Scopes of Practice and Prescribed Qualifications Amendment Notice 2014 - 2014-gs6347." New Zealand Gazette. Last modified October 16, 2014. <https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2014-gs6347>.

¹² The Non-Recognised Equivalent Qualifications Route (Non-REQR) is for overseas registered pharmacists (who qualified in countries other than Australia, Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the USA), who are pursuing pharmacist registration in New Zealand.

¹³ Section 144 of the HPCAA 2003.

This is the highest reported number of pharmacists removed since 2018, when 179 pharmacists were removed. When a pharmacist requests removal from the register, we collect information on the reason (or reasons) for wanting to be removed. Table 9 shows the reasons provided by pharmacists requesting removal. Consistently, most pharmacists requesting removal indicate retiring as their reason.

Table 9 - Reason provided by pharmacists requesting removal from the register¹⁴

Reasons for requesting removal	2023	Percentage
Retired	31	50.0%
Overseas – practising	8	12.9%
Working in a non-health role	5	8.06%
Overseas – not practising	0	0.00%
Parenting/maternity leave	2	3.23%
Seeking employment in a non-pharmacy profession	5	8.06%
Working in another health profession	4	6.45%
Other	5	8.06%
Full-time study	2	3.23%
Total reasons provided	62	100%

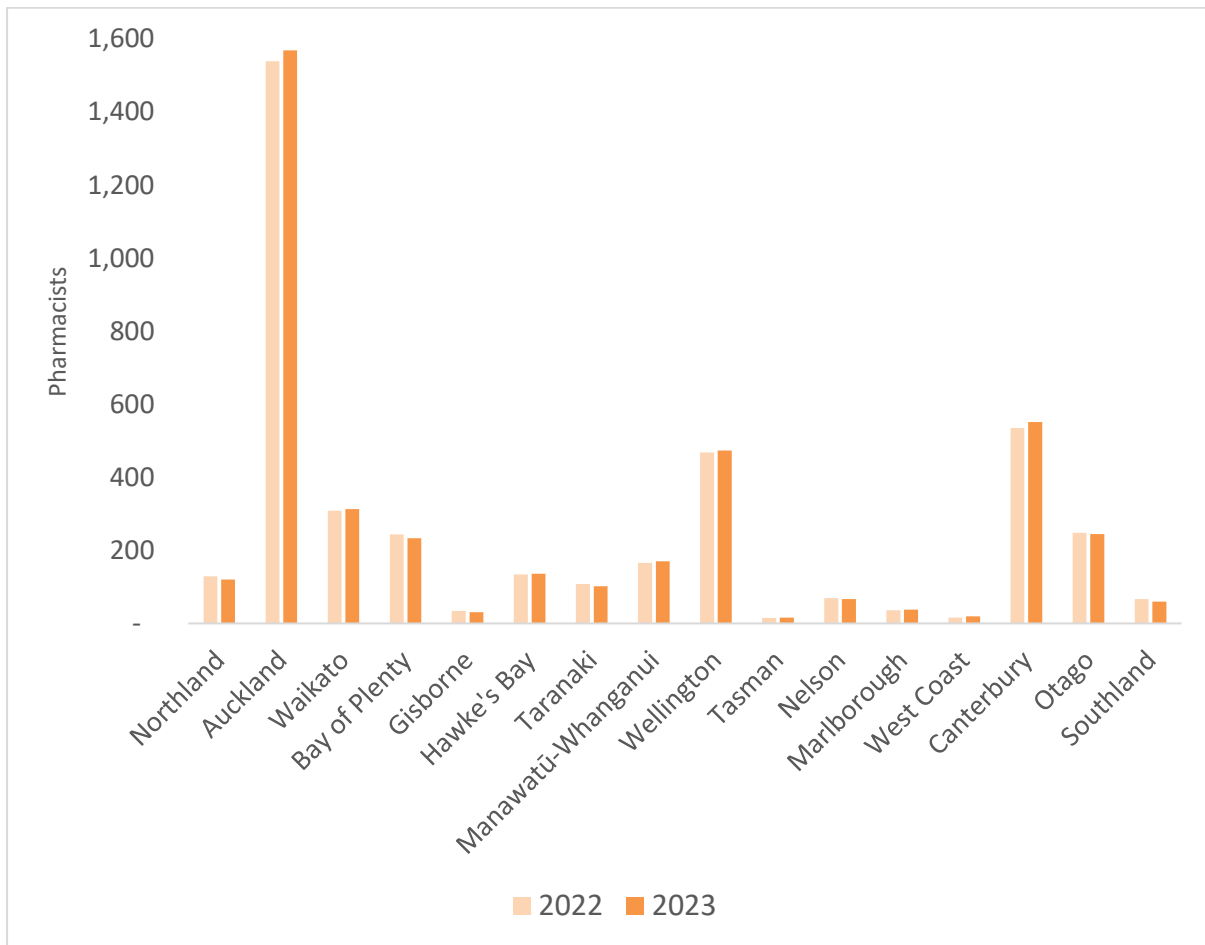
¹⁴ Only applies to pharmacists requesting removal.

Practising pharmacists in detail

Where pharmacists practise in Aotearoa New Zealand

Aotearoa New Zealand has 16 regional and unitary councils.¹⁵ To understand the distribution of pharmacists, Pharmacy Council assigns each pharmacist to a region based on their reported primary place of work. Failing this, the provided postal address is used. This workforce data is collected at the time of recertification and is retrospective. As such, this data reflects pharmacist practice based on the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. Previously we have also reported geographical distribution by district health board (DHB). With DHBs disestablished in 2022, we will no longer be reporting by DHBs.

Figure 4 – Distribution of practising pharmacists by regional council



¹⁵ Local Government New Zealand. "Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa." Ko Tātou Local Government New Zealand. <https://www.lgnz.co.nz/regionals/>.

Table 10 – Distribution of practising pharmacists by regional council

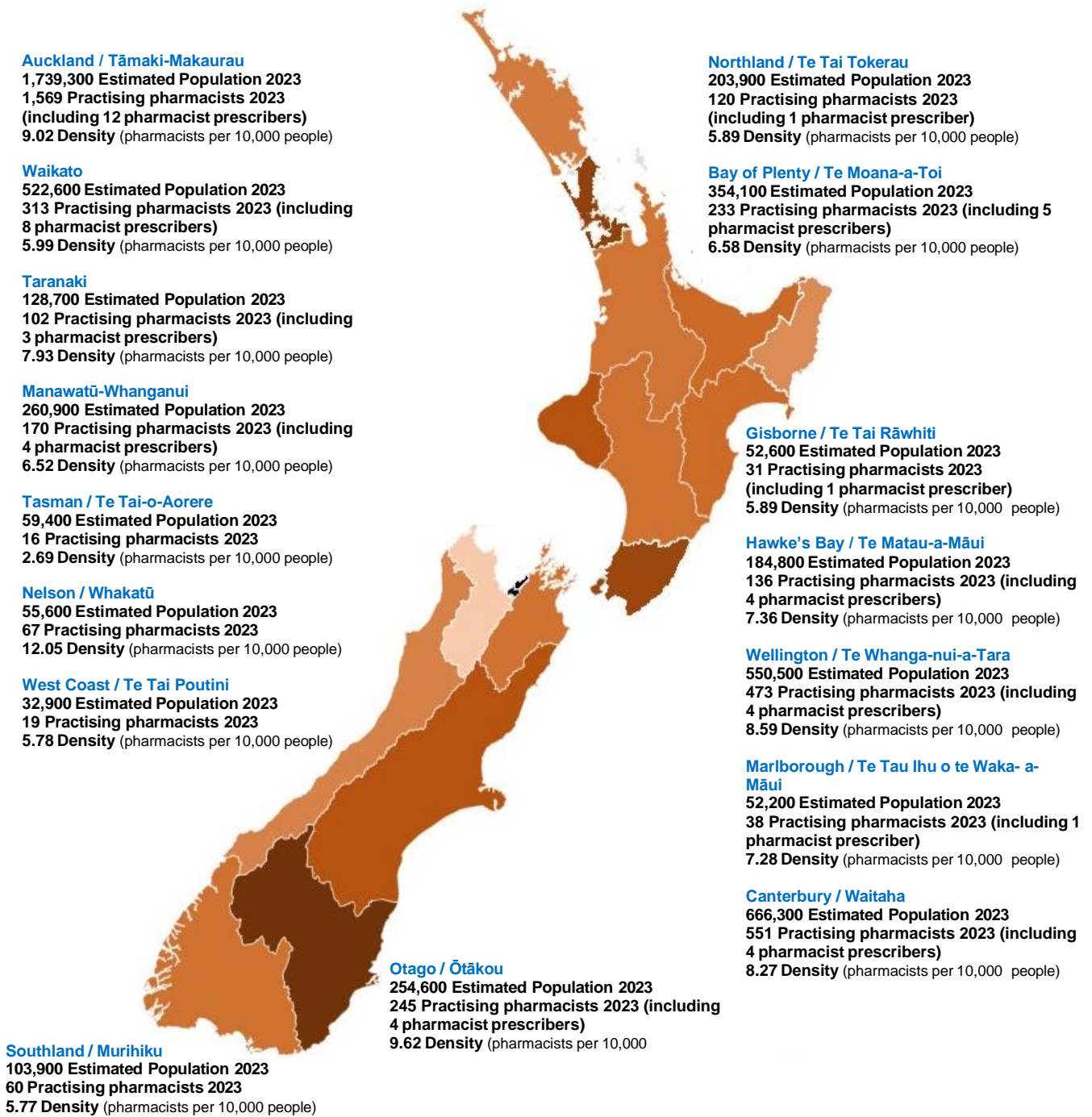
Regional council	2021-2022			2022-2023		
	Pharmacists	Population	Pharmacists per 10,000	Pharmacists	Population ¹⁶	Pharmacists per 10,000
Northland	129	197,900	6.52	120	203,900	5.89
Auckland	1,539	1,715,600	8.97	1,569	1,739,300	9.02
Waikato	309	506,000	6.11	313	522,600	5.99
Bay of Plenty	244	343,400	7.11	233	354,100	6.58
Gisborne	34	51,500	6.60	31	52,600	5.89
Hawke's Bay	134	181,500	7.38	136	184,800	7.36
Taranaki	108	126,400	8.54	102	128,700	7.93
Manawatū-Whanganui	166	256,500	6.47	170	260,900	6.52
Wellington	468	547,000	8.56	473	550,500	8.59
Tasman ¹⁷	15	57,900	2.59	16	59,400	2.69
Nelson ¹⁵	69	54,700	12.61	67	55,600	12.05
Marlborough	36	51,500	6.99	38	52,200	7.28
West Coast	16	32,700	4.89	19	32,900	5.78
Canterbury	535	649,800	8.23	551	666,300	8.27
Otago	248	246,700	10.05	245	254,600	9.62
Southland	67	102,700	6.52	60	103,900	5.77
Total	4,117	5,121,800	8.04	4,143	5,222,300	7.93

Auckland (+30) and Canterbury (+16) gained the most pharmacists, whilst Bay of Plenty (-11) and Northland (-9) lost the most. However, in terms of impact, the density gain (i.e. increase in pharmacists per 10,000 population) was greatest for West Coast whilst Southland had the greatest loss in density. The more rural regions (except for Otago) are below the national average density (7.93).

¹⁶ Statistics New Zealand. "NZ.Stat." Statistics New Zealand. Accessed November 20, 2023. [NZ.Stat \(stats.govt.nz\)](https://stats.govt.nz)

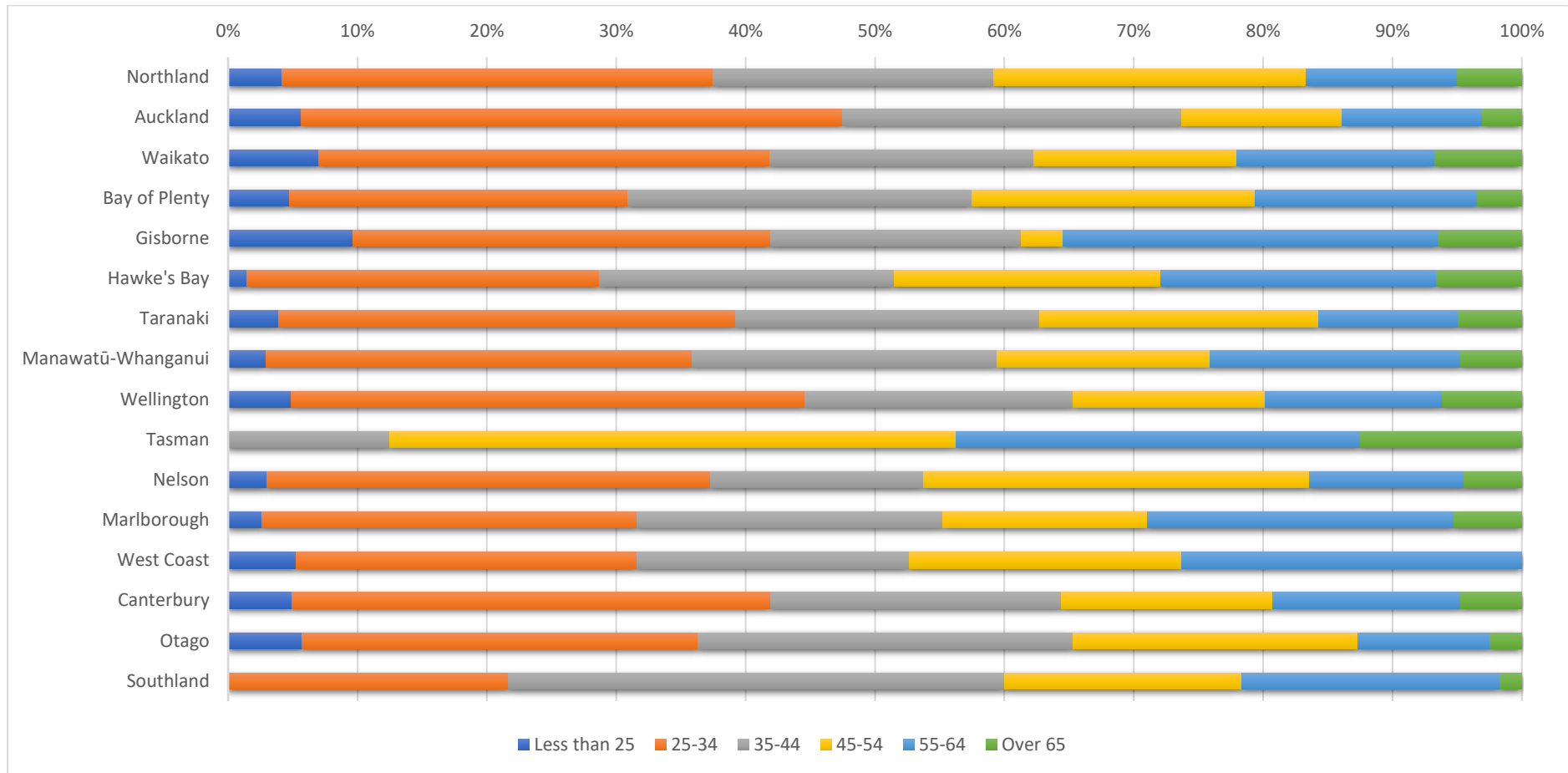
¹⁷ Tasman and Nelson regions respectively consistently return low- and high-density pharmacist numbers. However, when the regions are combined a more typical figure of 7.22 pharmacists per 10,000 population is calculated.

Figure 5 – Geographical distribution of the pharmacy workforce



Across Aotearoa New Zealand
5,222,300 estimated population 2023
4,143 practising pharmacists 2023
7.93 pharmacists per 10,000 people

Figure 6 – Practising pharmacists by regional council and age



As in 2022, there is a relatively consistent mix of early career and experienced pharmacists across regions. The four regions with the largest metropolitan areas (Auckland, Canterbury, Wellington, and Waikato) continue to show a relatively younger age profile.

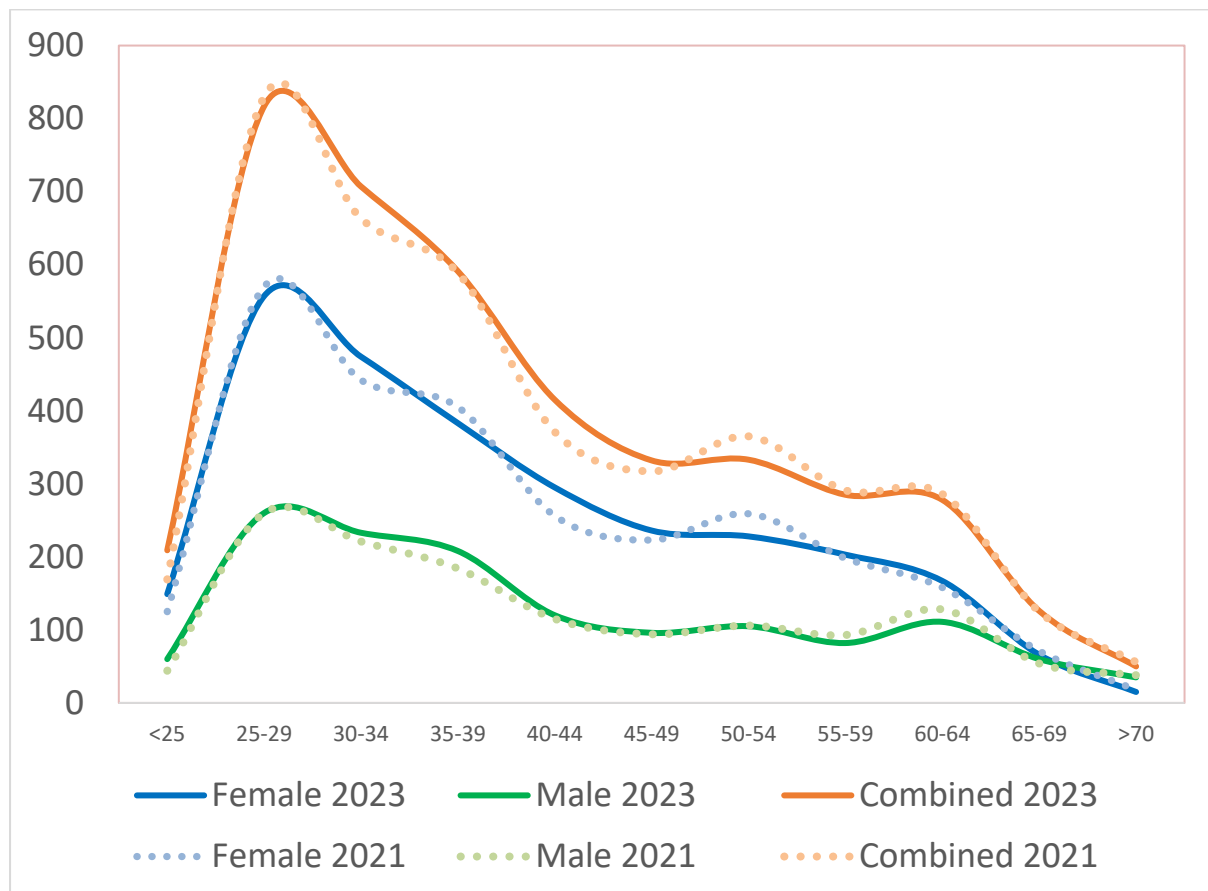
Table 11 – Distribution of practising pharmacists by regional council and age

Region	< 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	> 65	Total
Northland	5	40	26	29	14	6	120
Auckland	89	656	411	195	170	48	1,569
Waikato	22	109	64	49	48	21	313
Bay of Plenty	11	61	62	51	40	8	233
Gisborne	3	10	6	1	9	2	31
Hawke's Bay	2	37	31	28	29	9	136
Taranaki	4	36	24	22	11	5	102
Manawatū-Whanganui	5	56	40	28	33	8	170
Wellington	23	188	98	70	65	29	473
Tasman	0	0	2	7	5	2	16
Nelson	2	23	11	20	8	3	67
Marlborough	1	11	9	6	9	2	38
West Coast	1	5	4	4	5	0	19
Canterbury	27	204	124	90	80	26	551
Otago	14	75	71	54	25	6	245
Southland	0	13	23	11	12	1	60
Total	209	1,524	1,006	665	563	176	4,143

Diversity of the workforce

Age of pharmacists

Figure 7 – Comparison of age (smoothed) or practising pharmacists by gender¹⁸



On 30 June 2023, the median age of a practising pharmacist in Aotearoa New Zealand is 37.8 years. This is lower than the 2022 result (38.3), but similar to previous results: 2020 (37.6), and 2021 (37.5).

Figure 7 illustrates that most pharmacists are aged between 25 and 39 years old.

¹⁸ We use 2021 data as a baseline and intend to continue doing so for future reports for continuity.

Gender

For practitioner gender, Pharmacy Council uses the taxonomy described by the Ministry of Health.¹⁹ Two-thirds of pharmacists identify as female and one-third as male²⁰. The general trend over time has been that the proportion of male pharmacists has decreased and correspondingly the proportion of female pharmacists has increased. For example, in 2008 the split was 42 percent male and 58 percent female. However, since around 2020 the proportions have remained relatively similar.

Table 12 – Comparison of age profiles of practising pharmacists by gender

Age group (years)	2022				2023			
	Female	Percent	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Male	Percent
< 25	122	3%	47	1%	149	4%	60	1%
25-29	585	14%	251	6%	557	14%	260	6%
30-34	467	11%	235	6%	474	12%	233	6%
35-39	390	9%	191	5%	383	9%	208	5%
40-44	278	7%	126	3%	295	7%	120	3%
45-49	245	6%	94	2%	236	6%	96	2%
50-54	234	6%	99	2%	228	6%	105	3%
55-59	203	5%	85	2%	203	5%	82	2%
60-64	160	4%	117	3%	167	4%	111	3%
65-69	76	2%	62	2%	66	2%	60	1%
> 70	15	0%	36	1%	15	0%	35	1%
Total	2,775	67%	1,343	33%	2,773	67%	1,370	33%

¹⁹ Ministry of Health. "Sex Type Code Table." Ministry of Health. <https://www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/data-references/code-tables/common-code-tables/sex-type-code-table>.

²⁰ No pharmacists have identified as 'indeterminate' or 'unknown' gender.

Ethnicity

We report to Level 2 of the Ethnicity Data Protocols for the health and disability sector.²¹ The top three ethnic groups selected are NZ European (42.0 percent), Chinese (15.3 percent) and other Asian (9.5 percent). A further 8.8 percent of pharmacists identify as “other ethnicity.” The proportion of the profession that report Māori (2.1 percent) or Pacific (0.7 percent) as their primary ethnicity remains low.

Table 13 – Practising pharmacists by primary ethnicity (Level 1 and Level 2)

Level 1 Ethnic group code description	Level 2 Ethnic group code description	Pharmacists
European	European not further defined	12
	NZ European	1,739
	Other European	212
	Total	1,963
Māori	NZ Māori	89
	Total	89
Pacific	Pacific Island not further defined	1
	Samoaan	6
	Cook Island Māori	1
	Tongan	4
	Niuean	0
	Tokelauan	0
	Fijian	13
	Other Pacific Island	2
	Total	27
Asian	Asian not further defined	27
	Southeast Asian	70
	Chinese	634
	Indian	367
	Other Asian	395
	Total	1,493
Middle Eastern/ Latin American/ African/ Indian	Middle Eastern	163
	Latin American/ Hispanic	1
	African	42
	Total	206
Other	Other ethnicity	365
	Total	365
Grand total		4,143

²¹ Ministry of Health. 2017. HISO 10001:2017 Ethnicity Data Protocols. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

Table 14 – Practising pharmacists by primary ethnicity and age

Primary ethnicity	Age group						Total
	Less than 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Over 65	
European	79	493	381	436	429	145	1,963
Māori	7	35	21	14	9	3	89
Pacific	2	11	12	1	1	0	27
Asian	96	771	427	134	56	9	1,493
MELAA ²²	6	79	77	24	18	2	206
Other	19	135	88	56	50	17	365
Total	209	1,524	1,006	665	563	176	4,143

Table 14 shows a relatively young cohort of Asian pharmacists in current practice, while older pharmacists tend to identify as European.

Requests for a certificate of current professional status

Pharmacy Council issues Certificates of Current Professional Status on behalf of pharmacists seeking registration with overseas jurisdictions.

Table 15 – Certificates of current professional status issued

Country	Certificates issued
Australia	82
New Zealand	1
Other countries	15
Total	98

Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023, Pharmacy Council issued 98 Certificates of Current Professional Status. Other than in 2021, when only 11 were issued, the number of certificates issued has ranged between 57 and 65 since 2018. The increase this year relates to the increase in certificates issued for pharmacists seeking registration in Australia under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997 (TTMRA).

²² MELAA = Middle Eastern, Latin American and African

Sources of additional registered, practising pharmacists

New registrations in the Pharmacist scope of practice

Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023, 194 pharmacists registered as pharmacists for the first time. The majority were intern pharmacists who met requirements to register in the Pharmacist scope of practice, but also includes overseas pharmacists issued practising certificates. This figure is lower than previous years and is probably associated with the relatively low number of intern pharmacists who registered in the Pharmacist scope of practice.

Table 16 – Initial registrations in the Pharmacist scope of practice 2019-2023

Year	Pharmacists registering for the first time	Percent change
2023	194	-11.0%
2022	218	-17.4%
2021	264	32.0%
2020	200	-11.1%
2019	225	

Table 17 shows the four possible routes to register as a pharmacist in Aotearoa New Zealand:

- New Zealand (and Australian) graduate route
- TTMRA route
- Recognised Equivalent Qualification Route (REQR)
- Non-Recognised Equivalent Qualification Route (Non-REQR).

Graduates from Aotearoa New Zealand universities has historically been the main source for new registrations, and 85 percent of newly registered pharmacists trained in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Table 17 – Initial registrations by route of registration

Registration route	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Graduates (New Zealand and Australia)	200	161	242	191	165
Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997	8	10	2	6	6
Recognised Equivalent Qualification	11	20	10	10	14
Non-Recognised Equivalent Qualification	6	9	10	9	9
Total	225	200	264	216	194

Table 18 shows that in the year to 30 June 2023, 174 intern pharmacists met the registration requirements and registered in the Pharmacist scope of practice. New Zealand graduates totalled 165 and 19 overseas pharmacists followed the non-REQR route to register in the Pharmacist scope of practice.

Table 18 – From Intern to Pharmacist scope of practice

Origin of qualification	New pharmacists
New Zealand:	165
- University of Auckland	57
- University of Otago	108
Other country	9
Total	174

Table 19 provides further detail on overseas pharmacists who registered as a pharmacist in Aotearoa New Zealand. Six Australian applicants registered under TTMRA in the year to 30 June 2023. Registered pharmacists from Ireland, the United Kingdom, Canada, or the United States of America may apply to register as pharmacists in Aotearoa New Zealand via the REQR route. This route recognises that the qualifications and practice in these countries are similar to Aotearoa New Zealand, allowing a simpler registration process.

Table 19 – Registrations granted by country of first registration

Country of first registration	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Australia	7	10	2	6	6
Ireland and the United Kingdom	8	14	6	9	12
Canada and the United States of America	3	6	2	1	2
Total	18	30	10	16	20

Return to practice

A registered pharmacist may apply for a practising certificate and return to practice at any time. The requirements depend on the period away from practice in Aotearoa New Zealand, and whether and where they have practised overseas.

Table 20 – Return to practice applicants by number of years since last practice

Years since last practice in New Zealand	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Less than three years	88	86	75	82	94
Three to eight years	12	12	12	11	26
More than eight years	2	0	1	1	8
Total	102	98	88	94	128

The number of pharmacists returning to practice in the year to 30 June 2023 was similar to previous years. The timeframes in table 20 align to the return to practice categories detailed in Council’s Return to Practice Policy.²³

Practice settings

We gather information on the types of work carried out by pharmacists with the Annual Practising Certificate (APC) applications in March each year. Pharmacists are asked to describe their practice over the previous 12 months. Therefore, this data reflects practice for the year to 31 March 2023.

We received 4,024 applications for an APC in March 2023. By 30 June 2023 the total had increase to 4,143, as we also registered overseas pharmacists, intern pharmacists in the Pharmacist scope of practice after they passed the May Assessment Centre, as well as issuing practising certificates to pharmacists returning to practice. These applicants had not practised as pharmacists in the previous year and did not have workforce data to declare.

This data is self-reported by pharmacists along with a declaration that all information is complete and correct.

Table 21²⁴ – Primary type of pharmacy practice undertaken by practising pharmacists

Primary type of pharmacist work	Pharmacists	Percentage
Community pharmacy	3,054	75.9%
Government / Regulatory health organisation	77	1.9%
General practice	64	1.6%
Hospital pharmacy	555	13.8%
Other	100	2.5%
Pharmaceutical industry	45	1.1%
Pharmacy professional association	20	0.5%
Primary Health Organisation	36	0.9%
Teaching / research	73	1.8%
Total	4,024	100.0%

Community pharmacy remains the most common practice setting for pharmacists. Since 2018, the proportion of community pharmacists has remained between 75 and 80 percent. Hospital pharmacy remains the second most common practice setting at 14 percent.

²³ Pharmacy Council. [Return to Practice Policy \(pharmacycouncil.org.nz\)](https://www.pharmacycouncil.org.nz)

²⁴ The table reflects the pharmacist’s primary practice setting only. For example, a pharmacist who reports that 51 percent of time is spent in “community pharmacy” practice and 49 percent in “general practice” will be categorised as a community pharmacy.

Table 22 – Average hours per week worked in scope by practising pharmacists

Hours worked per week	10 or fewer	11-19 hours	20-29 hours	30-39 hours	40-49 hours	50+ hours	Total
Community pharmacy	90	165	368	542	1,521	368	3,054
Hospital pharmacy	11	19	77	79	346	23	555
Other	6	6	20	27	38	3	100
Government / Regulatory health organisation	1	1	2	20	51	2	77
Teaching/research	4	3	7	20	26	13	73
General practice	2	6	11	19	23	3	64
Pharmaceutical industry	2	1	3	11	23	5	45
Pharmacy professional association	0	0	6	1	12	1	20
Primary Health Organisation	0	2	4	16	14	0	36
Total	116	203	498	735	2,054	418	4,024

Table 23 – Number of weeks worked in scope by practising pharmacists

Weeks worked per year	10 or fewer	11-19 weeks	20-29 weeks	30-39 weeks	40-49 weeks	50-52 weeks	Total
Community pharmacy	77	99	103	131	1,527	1,117	3,054
Hospital pharmacy	15	24	17	23	348	128	555
Other	3	4	3	8	65	17	100
Government / Regulatory health organisation	0	2	0	2	52	21	77
Teaching / research	1	1	3	1	48	19	73
General practice	0	0	9	0	47	8	64
Pharmaceutical industry	0	0	0	2	28	15	45
Pharmacy professional association	0	0	1	0	16	3	20
Primary Health Organisation	0	0	1	2	23	10	36
Total	96	130	137	169	2,154	1,338	4,024

Hours practised

The full-time equivalent analysis is calculated by multiplying each practitioner's total weeks practised by average hours practised per week to give the total number of hours practised in the year. We define part-time as 1,440²⁵ hours or less in a year, full-time is defined as more than 1,440 hours and up to 1,920 hours, and more than full-time is defined as more than 1,920 hours.

This analysis only places a pharmacist into one practice setting (i.e., their primary practice setting), but gives further insight into workforce capacity. In the year to 31 March 2023, around 30 percent of pharmacists report practising part-time, 30 percent full-time, and 40 percent more than full-time. Less pharmacists have reported practising more than full-time hours (down from 45 percent in the year to 31 March 2022).

Additionally:

- 1599 (39.7%) reported working 49 weeks for the year to 31 March 2023
- 420 (10.4%) reported working 50 hours or more per week on average
- 333 (8.3%) reported total annual hours equalling 2450 hours or greater, i.e. equivalent to working for 49 weeks at 50 hours per week on average.

The information raises questions about the impact that long hours might be having on the wellbeing of some pharmacists and the increase in overall risk of harm of pharmacists' practice to the public.

Table 24 – Full-time equivalents worked in scope by practising pharmacists

Full-time equivalents	Part-time ≤ 1,440 hours per year	Full-time > 1,440 and ≤ 1,920 hours per year	> Full-time > 1,920 hours per year	Total
Community pharmacy	919	773	1,362	3,054
Hospital pharmacy	166	216	173	555
Other	43	43	14	100
Government / regulatory health organisation	9	45	23	77
Teaching / research	20	28	25	73
General Practice	24	31	9	64
Pharmaceutical industry	12	16	17	45
Pharmacy professional association	8	6	6	20
Primary Health Organisation	12	17	7	36
Total	1,213	1,175	1,636	4,024

²⁵ 30 hours per week over 48 weeks.