

Pharmacy Workforce Demographic 2024



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Contact us

If you have any queries about this report, please contact Pharmacy Council:

Email: enquiries@pharmacycouncil.org.nz

Phone: +64 4 495 0330

Address: PO Box 25137
Wellington 6140

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Introduction

This annual Pharmacist Workforce Demographic Report provides an overview of movements in the pharmacist register during the year 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. In addition, it provides a point in time (30 June 2024) analysis of the profession's registered practitioners.

Background

Pharmacy Council | Te Pou Whakamana Kaimatū o Aotearoa compiles this report to provide the profession and all relevant stakeholders a reliable source of demographic data to assess the status of the profession and to provide a sound basis for any necessary change initiatives. This accurate basis to affirm or make change continues to ensure pharmacists can achieve the best possible outcomes for their consumers.

Council is the Responsible Authority in Aotearoa New Zealand, established under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, responsible for regulating pharmacists. 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
- determining the scopes of practice
- ensuring that pharmacists are competent to practise safely
- setting qualifications
- monitoring and accrediting education programmes.

For further information on our functions and how we perform these please visit our [website](#).

Council compiles the report from the data provided by practitioners when they apply for annual registration to practise as an intern, pharmacist, or prescribing pharmacist. As part of the annual registration process the practitioner is required to complete their recertification requirements and detail their relevant workforce activity.

In our role as the Responsible Authority, we are required to provide workforce-related information to the Director-General of Health.¹ However, we take this requirement further and provide a useful overview of the pharmacist workforce for the wider sector and interested stakeholders.

An overview of the data

Many in the sector will be delighted to learn that the number of practising pharmacists grew by 2.4 percent over the year to 30 June 2024. This growth is more in line with previous years, following a lower than usual percentage increase in the year to 30 June 2023. Despite this slight increase in numbers, the profession continues to face capacity issues, as pharmacists are being asked to offer an increasing number of health services while the number of pharmacists per 10,000 of the population remains low relative to other neighbouring jurisdictions.

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

We experienced the highest number of verification requests from Australia, which is an indicator of the number of pharmacists potentially moving to practise there. Pharmacy continues to be a young, female dominated profession, with 56 percent of pharmacists under the age of 40, and 67 percent female.



Michael A Pead
Chief Executive



Christine Anderson
Registrar

Pharmacy register

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

On 30 June 2024, there were 4,245 *registered, current* pharmacists in Aotearoa New Zealand. In the year prior there were 266 new pharmacists who registered with Council for the first time.

Table 1 – Composition of the Register on 30 June 2024

Practising status	Scope of practice	Practitioners
Registered, current ²	Intern pharmacists	213
	Pharmacists (includes 74 pharmacist prescribers) ³	4,245
	Subtotal	4,458
Registered, inactive ⁴	Intern pharmacists	70
	Pharmacists (includes two pharmacist prescribers)	1,092
	Subtotal	1,162
Suspended ⁵	Pharmacists	6
	Subtotal	6
Registered practitioners		5,626

Note: 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. Also, 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 2020-2024

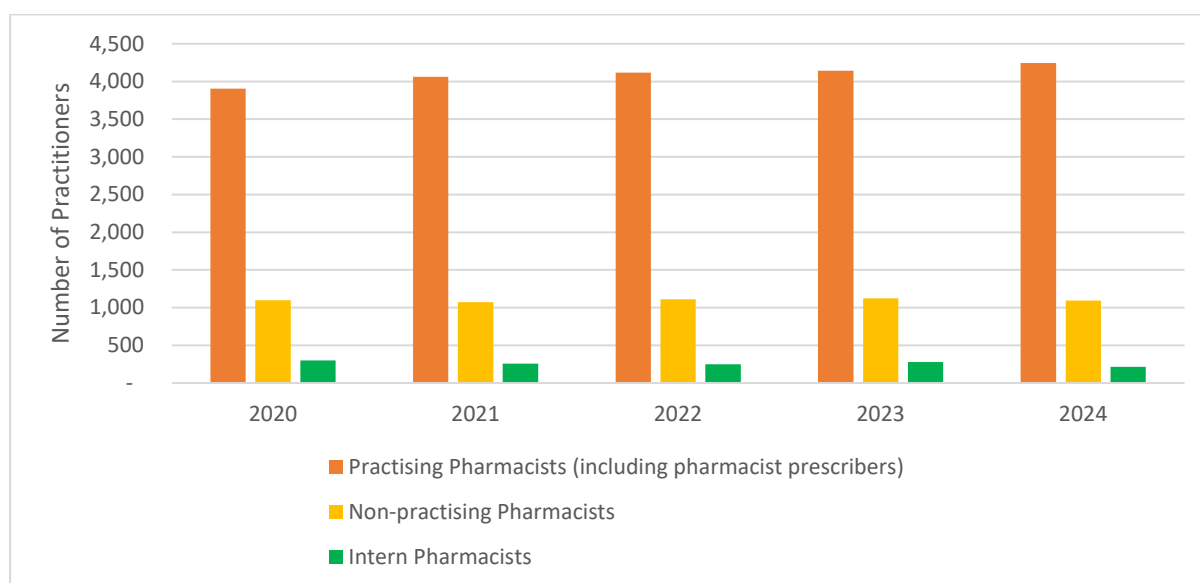


Table 2 – Register composition on 30 June 2020-2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Registered, current					
Intern pharmacists	300	256	249	278	213
Pharmacists	3,906	4,062	4,118	4,143	4,245
^L incl. Pharmacist prescribers	(34)	(37)	(46)	(51)	(74)
Registered, inactive					
Intern pharmacists	24	30	40	52	70
Pharmacists	1,100	1,074	1,109	1,123	1,092
^L incl. Pharmacist prescribers	(0)	(3)	(3)	(2)	(2)
Suspended					
Intern pharmacist	-	-	-	-	1
Pharmacists	8	9	8	6	5
Registered practitioners	5,338	5,431	5,524	5,602	5,626

Number of practising pharmacists

In the year to 30 June 2024, the number of *registered, current pharmacists* in Aotearoa New Zealand increased from 4,143 to 4,245. This increase of 102 pharmacists represents a 2.46 percent increase on last year. In 2023 we reported growth of 0.6 percent and commented that this was less than the long-term average of 2.0 percent per annum growth observed. This year's result shows growth slightly above the long-term average previously reported. The average growth over the last five years has now increased to 2.1 percent per year.

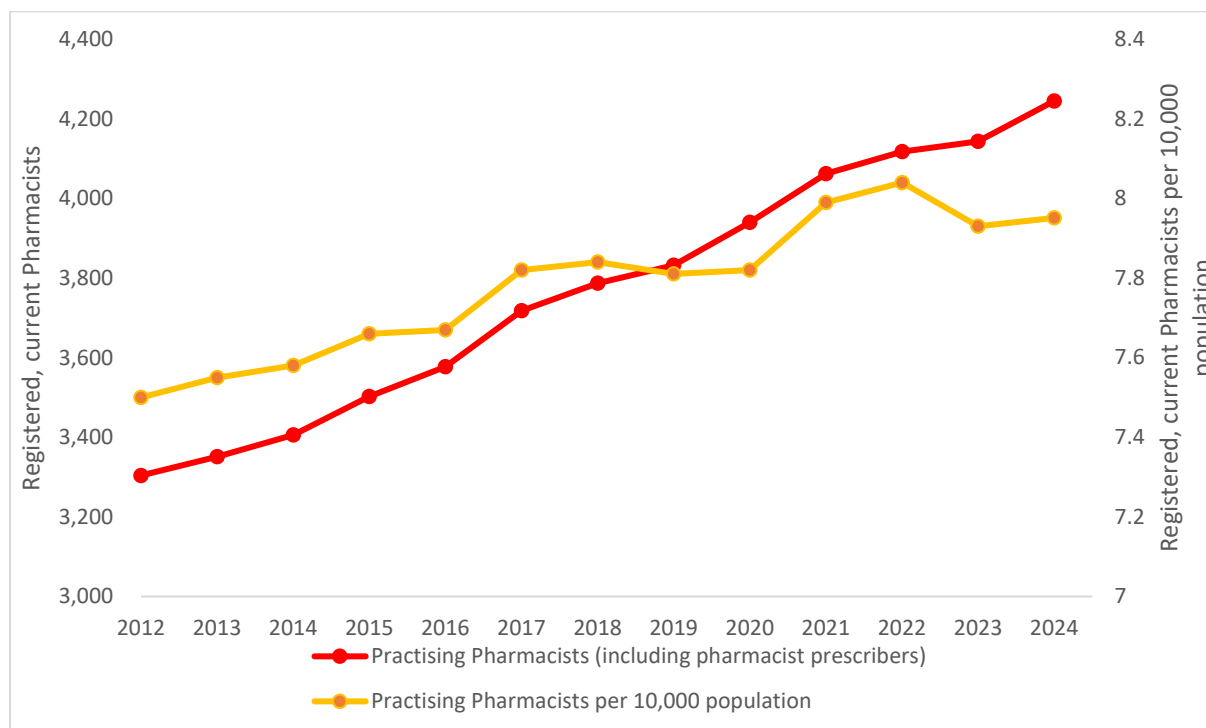
Of the 4,245 pharmacists registered and entitled to practise, 74 were pharmacist prescribers. The increase in the number of pharmacist prescribers (23) was because the University of

Auckland offered its prescribing programme in 2023. Previously the programme was offered every two years, with the next offering originally scheduled for 2024.

Table 3 – Number of registered, current pharmacists on 30 June 2020-2024

Year	Registered, current pharmacists	Percent change
2024	4,245	2.4%
2023	4,143	0.6%
2022	4,118	1.4%
2021	4,062	4.0%
2020	3,906	

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



There were 7.95 practising pharmacists for every 10,000 people in Aotearoa New Zealand on 30 June 2024. This represents a minimal increase from 2023 (7.93) to a value in between that reported in 2020 (7.81) and 2021 (7.99). This negligible growth rate for practising pharmacists in 2024 is out of step with the national population growth rate of 2.23 percent.

The density of pharmacists per 10,000 people in Aotearoa New Zealand⁶ is less than that reported for comparable jurisdictions: Australia (9.3 in 2021), Canada (10.4 in 2022), Ireland (11.4 in 2022), United Kingdom (9.1 in 2022), and United States of America (9.6 in 2022).⁷

⁶ The metric we use (pharmacists per 10,000 population) is used internationally by other health organisations including the World Health Organization.

⁷ World Health Organization. "Pharmacists (per 10 000 Population)." World Health Organization. <https://data.who.int/indicators/i/C668579/45CA7C8>

Figure 3 – Summary of changes to the number of registered, current pharmacists⁸

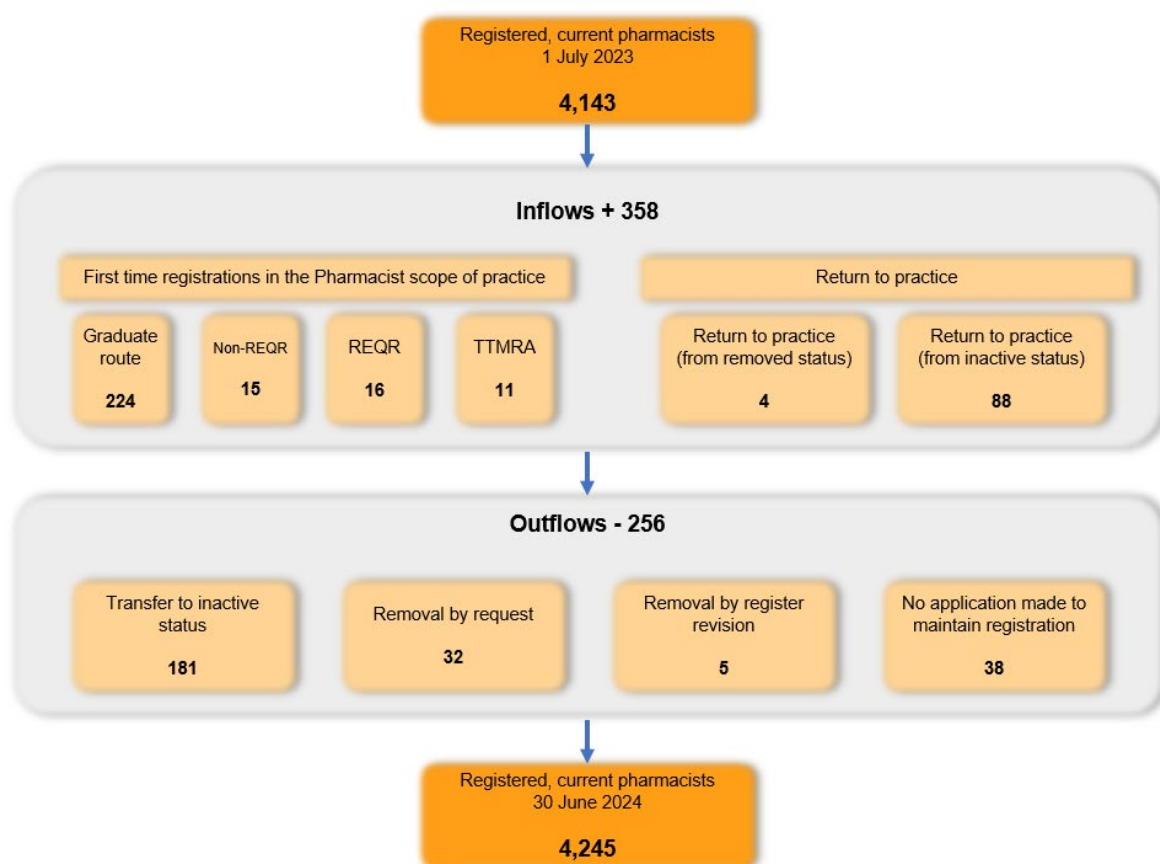


Figure 3 illustrates changes to the number of practising pharmacists between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024. The number of additional practising pharmacists (358) marginally outweighed those no longer practising (256).

In this period, 224 new pharmacists (62.5 percent of inflow) were intern pharmacists (New Zealand or Australian graduates) registering in the Pharmacist scope of practice for the first time. A further 92 (25.7 percent of inflow) were pharmacists returning to practice.

Over the same period, 256 pharmacists holding a practising certificate until 31 March 2024 did not apply to continue practising beyond 1 April 2024. Of these, the majority (70.7 percent) applied to remain on the register but not to practise. As of 30 June 2024, a further 38 pharmacists who held a practising certificate until 31 March 2024 (14.8 percent of outflow), had not made an application to either practise or remain on the register as non-practising.

⁸ 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 done annually.

Table 4 – Number of registered, inactive pharmacists on 30 June 2020-2024

Year	Registered, inactive pharmacists	Percent change
2024	1,092	-2.8%
2023	1,123	1.3%
2022	1,109	3.5%
2021	1,071	-2.6%
2020	1,100	

Despite growth in the total register over time, the number of *registered, inactive* pharmacists has remained within a range of about 900 to 1,100 pharmacists since 2005. Of the 1,092 pharmacists with *registered, inactive* practising status, 874 made an application to retain their registration, while, as of 30 June 2024, 170 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 874 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 (979) exceeding the number of respondents (874) 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 reasons for discontinuing practice

Reason for not practising	2024	Percentage
Overseas - practising	341	34.8%
Overseas - not practising	142	14.5%
Working in a non-health role	111	11.3%
Parental leave	80	8.2%
Other	89	9.1%
Retired	76	7.8%
Working in another health profession	76	7.8%
Full-time study	22	2.2%
Seeking employment in a non-pharmacy profession	34	3.5%
Seeking employment as a pharmacist	8	0.8%
Total reasons provided	979	100.0%

Intern pharmacists

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

Table 6 shows that there were 213 intern pharmacists registered and holding a practising certificate on 30 June 2024.

The number of intern pharmacists is determined by two key 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 2020-2024

Year	Intern pharmacists	Percent change
2024	213	-23.38%
2023	278	11.65%
2022	249	-2.73%
2021	256	-14.67%
2020	300	

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 requirements of the Non-Recognised Equivalent Qualifications Route (Non-REQR).^{9,10}

Table 7 shows that of the 213 intern pharmacists registered on 30 June 2024, 178 (83.5 percent) held a qualification from a New Zealand university, compared with 256 (92.1 percent) in 2023 and 231 (92.1 percent) in 2022.

The number of intern pharmacists reported in Tables 6 and 7 is the total number of intern pharmacists holding a practising certificate on 30 June 2024. This represents a mix of graduates from various university cohorts. Therefore, the count of *registered, current* intern pharmacists is not a reliable measure of the number of graduates for a given year.

⁹ 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>.

¹⁰ 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 United States of America), who are pursuing pharmacist registration in New Zealand.

Table 7 – Origin of pharmacy qualification for intern pharmacists

		Number of interns by university or country of university		
		2022	2023	2024
New Zealand and Australian pharmacy graduates	University of Auckland	65	95	66
	University of Otago	166	161	112
	Australian universities	1	1	1
Overseas pharmacists	Non-REQR	17	21	34
Total intern pharmacists		249	278	213

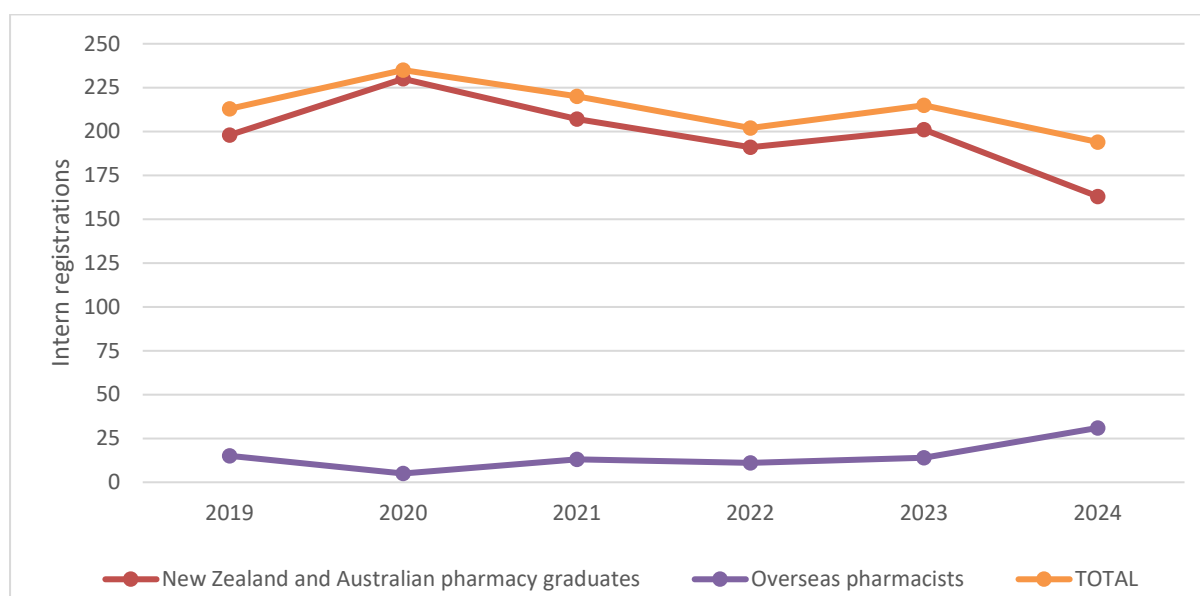
Table 8 – Origin of newly registered intern pharmacists

Newly registered interns	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
New Zealand and Australian pharmacy graduates	198	230	207	191	201	163
Overseas pharmacists	15	5	13	11	14	31
Total	213	235	220	202	215	194

Table 8 shows the number of new interns (registering for the first time) from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. Interns can remain registered practising for a second year while they work towards achieving pharmacist registration. Therefore, the number of interns registered as of 30 June 2024 is greater than the number of newly registered interns.

There has been a significant increase in the number of overseas newly registered interns during the period 30 June 2023 to 1 July 2024 compared to previous years. There has been also a significant decrease in the number of newly registered interns from New Zealand and Australian universities. The percentage of New Zealand and Australian graduates registering for the first time represented 93 to 98 percent of the cohort between 2019 to 2023 while it represents 84 percent in 2024. A smaller graduating cohort from both New Zealand universities is a major reason for a lower number of registered interns in 2024.

Figure 4 – Number of newly registered intern pharmacists per year



During April 2023, Immigration NZ added ‘Pharmacist’ as a Tier 1 role for a Straight to Residence Visa (Green list occupations).¹¹ The majority (58 percent) of the 31 overseas pharmacists registering as interns completed their pharmacy degree in India (29 percent), Philippines (16.1 per cent) and South Africa (12.9 percent).

Pharmacists removed from the register

Pharmacists may request removal from the register at any time and apply for reinstatement if they want to return to the register. Pharmacists who fail to apply for either an Annual Practising Certificate or to remain on the register as non-practising by the end of April each year, are included in the Council’s register revision process.¹² If no application is received from the pharmacist after attempts to contact them, Council may remove them from the register, typically nine months later.

Table 9 – Removed from the register

Removals	2022	2023	2024
Register revision process	75	109	135
Removed at own request	66	55	59
Total pharmacists removed	141	164	194

In the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, 194 pharmacists were removed from the register. Of these, 37 pharmacists (19 percent) held a practising certificate until 31 March 2024 (32 of these 37 pharmacists requested removal from the register and five were removed following the register revision process).

¹¹ Immigration New Zealand - <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/government-announces-more-health-roles-to-be-added-to-the-green-list>
¹² Section 144 of the HPCAA 2003.

When a pharmacist requests removal from the register, we collect information on the reason (or reasons) for wanting to be removed. Table 10 shows the reasons provided by pharmacists requesting removal. Consistently, most pharmacists requesting removal indicate retirement as their reason. Table 10 shows total reasons (74) exceeding the number of respondents (59) as some pharmacists provided multiple reasons for not practising.

Table 10 – Reason provided by pharmacists requesting removal from the register¹³

Reasons for requesting removal	2024	Percentage
Retired	39	52.70%
Overseas – practising	12	16.22%
Working in a non-health role	6	8.11%
Overseas – not practising	2	2.70%
Parental leave	3	4.05%
Seeking employment in a non-pharmacy profession	2	2.70%
Working in another health profession	3	4.05%
Other	7	9.46%
Full-time study	0	0%
Total reasons provided	74	100%

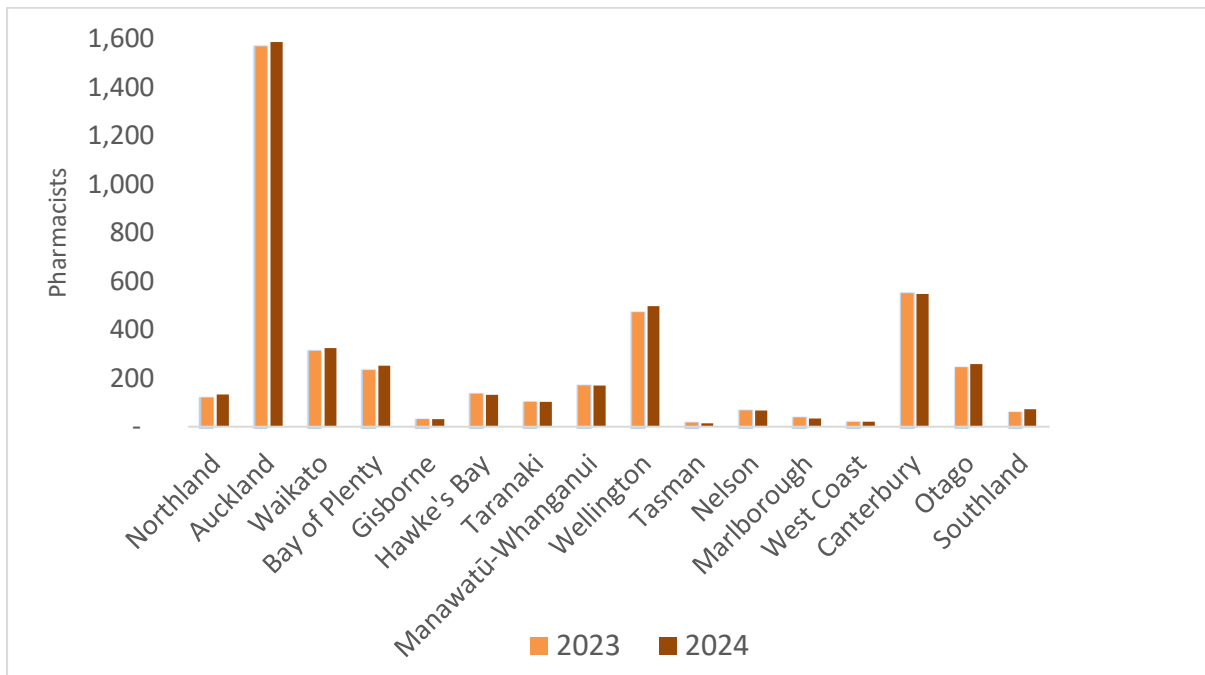
13 Only applies to pharmacists requesting removal.

Practising pharmacists in detail

Where pharmacists practise in Aotearoa New Zealand

Aotearoa New Zealand has 16 regional and unitary councils.¹⁴ To understand the distribution of pharmacists, 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 2023 to 31 March 2024. Previously we have also reported geographical distribution by district health board (DHB). With DHBs disestablished in 2022, we will no longer be reporting by DHB.

Figure 5 – Distribution of practising pharmacists by regional council



¹⁴ Local Government New Zealand. "Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa." Ko Tātou Local Government New Zealand. <https://www.lgnz.co.nz/regionals/>.

Table 11 – Distribution of practising pharmacists by regional council

Regional population has not been updated by Statistics New Zealand for the year 2024. Therefore, the regional population information used for the purpose of this report remains the same as for the 2022-2023 period. Pharmacist density per region for the 2023-2024 period should only be used as a guide as we do not hold up to date information about regional population changes.

Regional council	2022-2023			2023-2024		
	Pharmacists	Population	Pharmacists per 10,000	Pharmacists	Population ¹⁵	Pharmacists per 10,000
Northland	120	203,900	5.89	133	203,900	6.52
Auckland	1,569	1,739,300	9.02	1587	1,739,300	9.12
Waikato	313	522,600	5.99	325	522,600	6.22
Bay of Plenty	233	354,100	6.58	252	354,100	7.12
Gisborne	31	52,600	5.89	31	52,600	5.89
Hawke's Bay	136	184,800	7.36	132	184,800	7.14
Taranaki	102	128,700	7.93	103	128,700	8.00
Manawatū-Whanganui	170	260,900	6.52	170	260,900	6.52
Wellington	473	550,500	8.59	498	550,500	9.05
Tasman ¹⁶	16	59,400	2.69	14	59,400	2.36
Nelson ¹⁶	67	55,600	12.05	67	55,600	12.05
Marlborough	38	52,200	7.28	34	52,200	6.51
West Coast	19	32,900	5.78	21	32,900	6.38
Canterbury	551	666,300	8.27	548	666,300	8.22
Otago	245	254,600	9.62	258	254,600	10.13
Southland	60	103,900	5.77	72	103,900	6.93
Total	4,143	5,222,300	7.93	4,245	5,338,900¹⁷	7.95

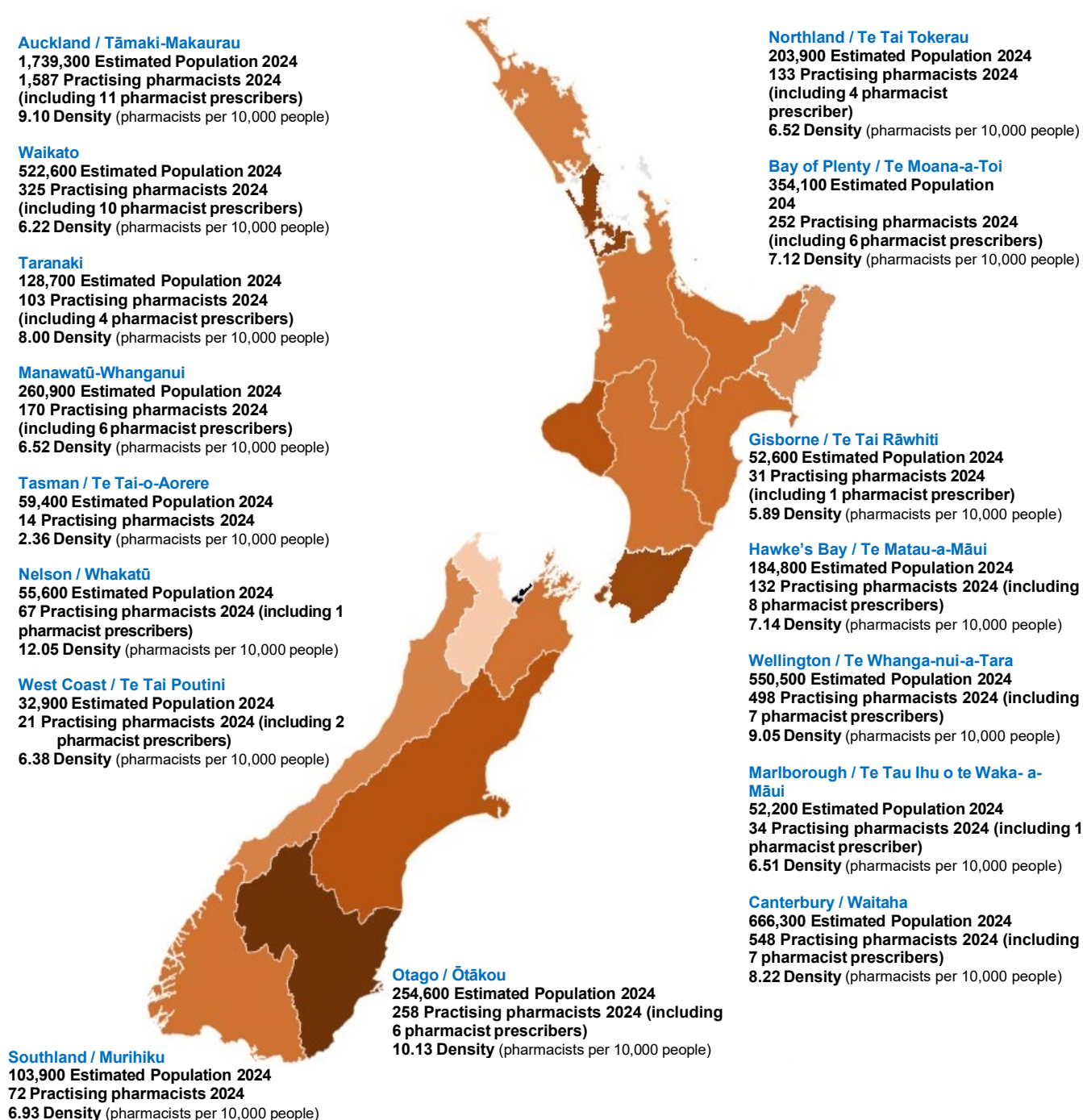
The regions which gained the most pharmacists are Wellington (+25) and Bay of Plenty (+19), while Hawke's Bay (-4) and Marlborough (-4) lost the most pharmacists.

¹⁵ Statistics New Zealand. "NZ.Stat." Statistics New Zealand. Last updated October 2023. NZ Statistics will not update 2024 figures until 2023 census data is available in 2025. [NZ.Stat \(stats.govt.nz\)](https://www.stats.govt.nz)

¹⁶ 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.

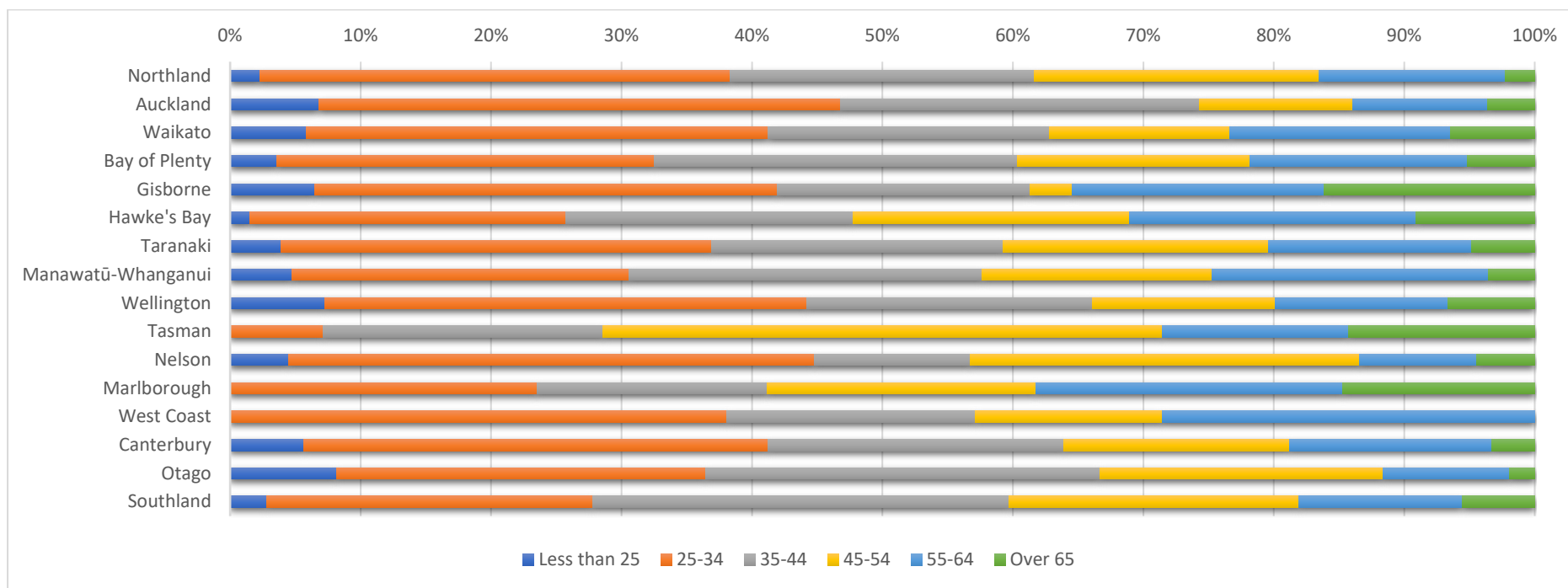
¹⁷ Statistics New Zealand. Estimated resident population as of March 2024. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/topics/population/>

Figure 6 – Geographical distribution of the pharmacy workforce



Across Aotearoa New Zealand
5,338,900 estimated population 31 March 2024
4,245 practising pharmacists 30 June 2024
7.95 pharmacists per 10,000 people

Figure 7 – Practising pharmacists by regional council and age



As in 2023, 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 younger age profile.

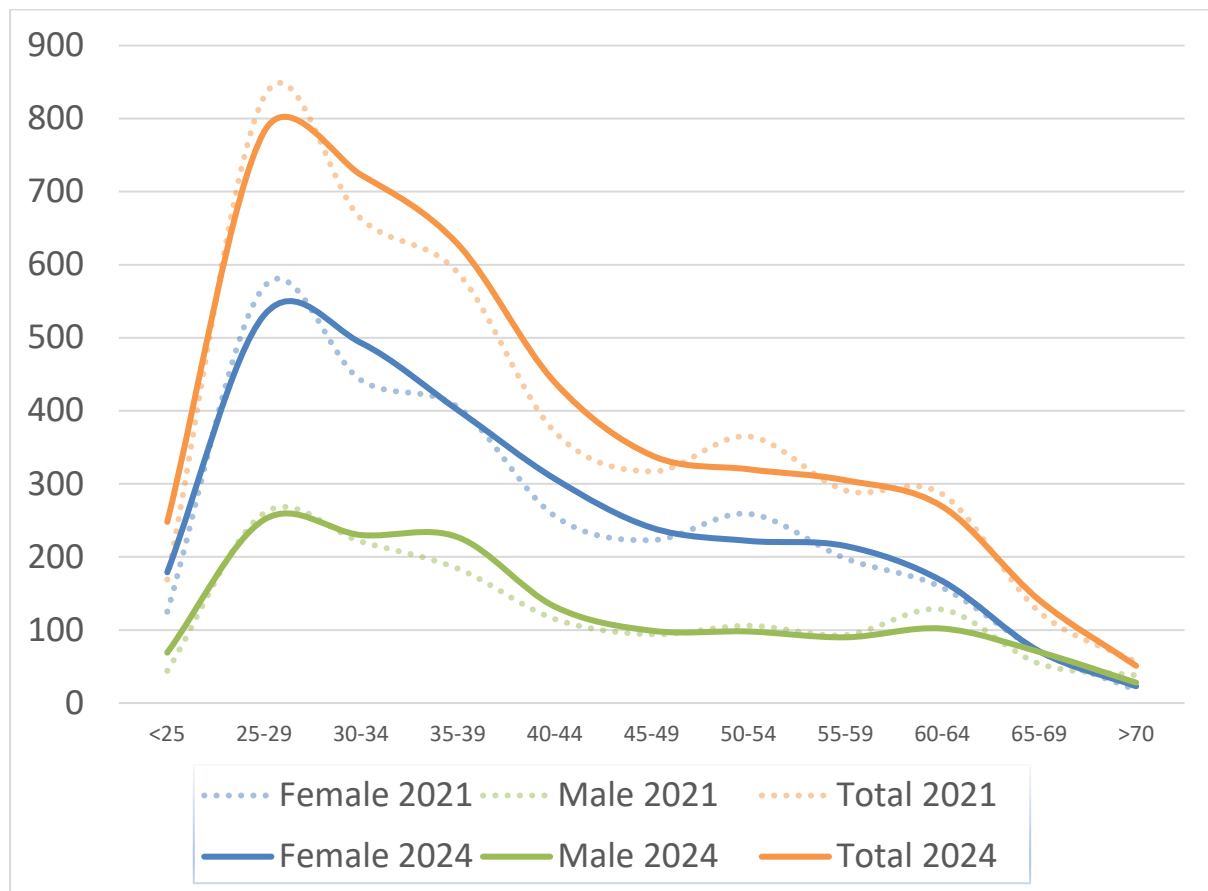
Table 12 – Distribution of practising pharmacists by regional council and age

Region	< 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	> 65	Total
Northland	3	48	31	29	19	3	133
Auckland	108	634	437	187	164	57	1,587
Waikato	19	115	70	45	55	21	325
Bay of Plenty	9	73	70	45	42	13	252
Gisborne	2	11	6	1	6	5	31
Hawke's Bay	2	32	29	28	29	12	132
Taranaki	4	34	23	21	16	5	103
Manawatū-Whanganui	8	44	46	30	36	6	170
Wellington	36	184	109	70	66	33	498
Tasman	0	1	3	6	2	2	14
Nelson	3	27	8	20	6	3	67
Marlborough	0	8	6	7	8	5	34
West Coast	0	8	4	3	6	0	21
Canterbury	31	195	124	95	85	18	548
Otago	21	73	78	56	25	5	258
Southland	2	18	23	16	9	4	72
Total	248	1,505	1,067	659	574	192	4,245

Diversity of the workforce

Age of pharmacists

Figure 8 – Comparison of age (smoothed) or practising pharmacists by gender¹⁸



On 30 June 2024, the median age of a practising pharmacist in Aotearoa New Zealand was 38 years. This is similar to results for 2023 (37.8), 2022 (38.3) and 2021 (37.5).

Figure 8 shows that most pharmacists are aged between 25 and 39 years old with 56 percent of pharmacists under 40 years of age.

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

Gender

For practitioner gender, Council uses the taxonomy described by the Ministry of Health.¹⁹ Two-thirds of pharmacists identify as female and one-third as male.²⁰ 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, from about 2020 to currently, the ratios have remained steady.

Table 13 – Comparison of age profiles of practising pharmacists by gender

Age group (years)	2023				2024			
	Female	Percent	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Male	Percent
< 25	149	4%	60	1%	179	4%	69	2%
25-29	557	14%	260	6%	531	13%	251	6%
30-34	474	12%	233	6%	493	12%	230	5%
35-39	383	9%	208	5%	401	9%	227	5%
40-44	295	7%	120	3%	307	7%	132	3%
45-49	236	6%	96	2%	240	6%	99	2%
50-54	228	6%	105	3%	222	5%	98	2%
55-59	203	5%	82	2%	215	5%	90	2%
60-64	167	4%	111	3%	167	4%	102	2%
65-69	66	2%	60	1%	71	2%	70	2%
> =70	15	0%	35	1%	23	1%	28	1%
Total	2,773	67%	1,370	33%	2,849	67%	1,396	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 number of answers reported is greater than the number of registered current pharmacists (4,245) as multiple ethnicities per pharmacist can be selected. The top three ethnic groups selected are NZ European (39.1 percent), Chinese (14.7 percent) and other ethnicity (9.4 percent). The proportion of the profession that identify as Māori (2.5 percent) or Pacific (2.16 percent) as their ethnicity remains low and similar to previous years.

Table 14 – Practising pharmacists by ethnicity (Level 1 and Level 2)

Level 1 Ethnic group code description	Level 2 Ethnic group code description	Pharmacists
European	European not further defined	36
	NZ European	1,847
	Other European	249
	Total	2,132
Māori	NZ Māori	124
	Total	124
Pacific	Pacific Island not further defined	3
	Samoan	13
	Cook Island Māori	2
	Tongan	8
	Niuean	4
	Tokelauan	0
	Fijian	66
	Other Pacific Island	6
	Total	102
Asian	Asian not further defined	26
	Southeast Asian	38
	Chinese	696
	Indian	399
	Other Asian	513
	Total	1,672
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	Middle Eastern	172
	Latin American/Hispanic	2
	African	58
	Total	232
Other	Other ethnicity	447
	Don't know	3
	Total	450
Grand total		4,712

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

Table 15 – Practising pharmacists by ethnicity and age

Ethnicity	Age group						Total
	Less than 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Over 65	
European	102	566	400	448	452	164	2,132
Māori	4	49	27	20	17	7	124
Pacific	13	34	43	7	5	0	102
Asian	137	807	504	151	59	14	1,672
MELAA ²²	10	81	85	32	23	1	232
Other	18	186	117	55	53	21	450
Total	284	1,723	1,176	713	609	207	4,712

Table 15 shows that most pharmacists aged under 44 identify as Asian (45.4 percent), while most pharmacists aged over 45 identify as European (69.5 percent).

Requests for a certificate of current professional status

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

Table 16 – Certificates of current professional status issued

Country	Certificates issued
Australia	89
New Zealand	5
Other countries	17
Total	111

Between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, Council issued 111 Certificates of Current Professional Status. Apart from 2021, when only 11 were issued, the number of certificates issued has ranged between 57 and 65 since 2018. The increase this year, and in 2023, relates to the rise 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 2023 and 30 June 2024, 266 pharmacists registered 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.

Table 17 – Initial registrations in the Pharmacist scope of practice 2020-2024

Year	Pharmacists registering for the first time	Percent change
2024	266	37.1%
2023	194	-11.0%
2022	218	-17.4%
2021	264	32.0%
2020	200	

Table 18 shows the four possible routes to register as a pharmacist in Aotearoa New Zealand:

- New Zealand (and Australian) graduate route
- Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997 (TTMRA) route
- Recognised Equivalent Qualification Route (REQR)²³
- Non-Recognised Equivalent Qualification Route (Non-REQR).

Graduates from Aotearoa New Zealand universities have historically been the main source for new registrations, and 84 percent of newly registered pharmacists graduated in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Table 18 – Initial registrations by route of registration

Registration route	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Graduates (New Zealand and Australia)	161	242	191	165	224
TTMRA	10	2	6	6	11
REQR	20	10	10	14	16
Non-REQR	9	10	11	9	15
Total	200	264	218	194	266

²³ Registered pharmacists from Ireland, the United Kingdom, Canada, or the United States of America.

Table 19 shows that in the year to 30 June 2024, 239 intern pharmacists met the registration requirements and registered in the Pharmacist scope of practice. Of these, 225 were New Zealand and Australian graduates and 15 were overseas pharmacists who followed the non-REQR route to register in the Pharmacist scope of practice.

Table 19 – From Intern to Pharmacist scope of practice

Origin of qualification	New pharmacists
New Zealand:	224
- University of Auckland	84
- University of Otago	139
Australia	1
Other country	15
Total	239

Table 20 provides further detail on overseas pharmacists who registered as a pharmacist in Aotearoa New Zealand. Eleven Australian applicants registered under TTMRA in the year to 30 June 2024. 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 for a simpler registration process than for pharmacists from non-recognised countries. Table 20 shows that the number of overseas registrations in 2024 remains consistent with those reported in previous years. During 2021 and 2022, there was a significant decrease in overseas registrations presumably due to Aotearoa New Zealand's border restrictions.

Table 20 – Registrations granted by country of first registration

Country of first registration	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Australia	10	2	6	6	11
Ireland or the United Kingdom	14	6	9	12	13
Canada or the United States of America	6	2	1	2	3
Total	30	10	16	20	27

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 21 – Return to practice applicants by number of years since last practice in New Zealand

Years since last practice in New Zealand	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Less than three years away from New Zealand practice	86	75	82	94	68
Three to eight years away from New Zealand practice	12	12	11	26	16
More than eight years away from New Zealand practice	0	1	1	8	8
Total	98	88	94	128	92

The total number of pharmacists returning to practice in the year to 30 June 2024 was similar to previous years. In the past two years, there has been an increase in the number of pharmacists returning to practice after more than eight years away from practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. From 2017 to 2022 this number fluctuated from zero to two. The timeframes in table 21 align to the return to practice categories detailed in Council’s Return to Practice Policy.²⁴

Practice settings

We gather information on the types of work carried out by pharmacists with 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 2024.

We received 4,164 applications for an APC by 31 March 2024. By 30 June 2024 the total number of registered pharmacists had increased to 4,245 as we also registered intern pharmacists in the Pharmacist scope of practice after they passed the May 2024 Assessment Centre, as well as issuing practising certificates to overseas pharmacists and returning to practice New Zealand pharmacists. These applicants had not practised as pharmacists in New Zealand the previous year and, therefore, 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.

²⁴ Pharmacy Council. [Return to Practice Policy \(pharmacycouncil.org.nz\)](https://pharmacycouncil.org.nz)

Table 22 – Primary type of pharmacy practice undertaken by practising pharmacists²⁵

Primary type of pharmacist work	Pharmacists	Percentage
Community pharmacy	3,158	75.8%
Hospital pharmacy	572	13.7%
Other	80	1.9%
Government/Regulatory health organisation	74	1.8%
Teaching/research	84	2.0%
General practice	94	2.3%
Pharmaceutical industry	51	1.2%
Pharmacy professional association	19	0.5%
Primary Health Organisation	32	0.8%
Total	4,164	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 13.7 percent.

Table 23 – 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	101	169	395	587	1,605	301	3158
Hospital pharmacy	17	24	88	105	293	45	572
Other	3	1	9	13	41	13	80
Government/Regulatory health organisation	2	2	7	15	35	13	74
Teaching/research	3	4	11	16	42	8	84
General practice	2	4	11	20	50	7	94
Pharmaceutical industry	0	4	4	12	27	4	51
Pharmacy professional association	1	0	7	4	6	1	19
Primary Health Organisation	2	1	6	6	11	6	32
Total	131	209	538	778	2,110	398	4,164

²⁵ 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 24 – 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	98	152	98	147	1,840	823	3,158
Hospital pharmacy	21	22	20	30	325	154	572
Other	4	4	2	5	43	22	80
Government/Regulatory health organisation	1	2	4	3	40	24	74
Teaching/research	3	1	3	6	50	21	84
General practice	3	3	5	2	56	25	94
Pharmaceutical industry	1	2	1	1	30	16	51
Pharmacy professional association	0	2	0	0	13	4	19
Primary Health Organisation	1	2	0	2	18	9	32
Total	132	190	133	196	2,415	1,098	4,164

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 1,440²⁶ 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 2024, around 32.9 percent of pharmacists reported practising part-time, 30.9 percent full-time, and 36 percent more than full-time. Pharmacists who reported practising more than full-time hours continues to be high, although decreasing from what was reported in previous years (down from 45 percent in the year to 31 March 2022 and 40 percent in 2023) while there is an increase in part-time reporting (up from 27.7 percent in 2022 and 30 percent in 2023).

Additionally:

- 2,415 (57.9 percent) reported working 40-49 weeks for the year to 31 March 2024
- 398 (9.5 percent) reported working 50 hours or more per week on average
- 238 (5.7 percent) reported total annual hours equalling 2,450 hours or greater, i.e. equivalent to working for 49 weeks at 50 hours per week on average.

While the percentage of pharmacists reporting they work 50 hours or more per week is slightly less than in 2023, it still raises questions about the impact of long hours on pharmacists' wellbeing and the risk of harm of pharmacists' practice to the public.

Table 25 – 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	1,033	985	1,140	3,158
Hospital pharmacy	193	185	194	572
Other	28	18	34	80
Government/Regulatory health organisation	23	19	32	74
Teaching/research	32	20	32	84
General practice	30	31	33	94
Pharmaceutical industry	12	19	20	51
Pharmacy professional association	8	6	5	19
Primary Health Organisation	12	7	13	32
Total	1,371	1,290	1,503	4,164

²⁶ 30 hours per week over 48 weeks.