

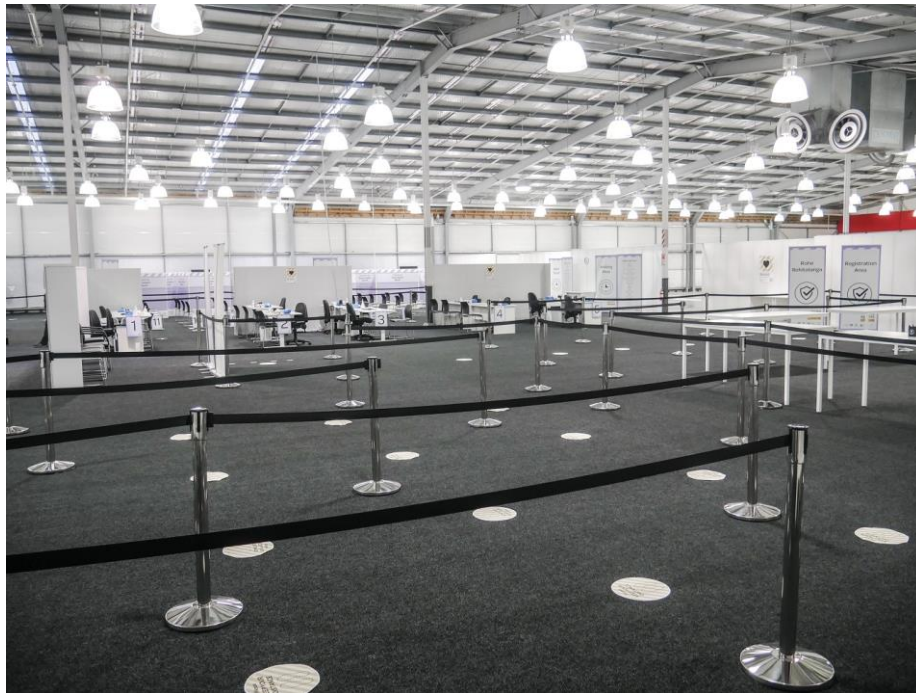
10 May 2021

Note: this centre has now closed

### **Birkenhead community COVID-19 vaccination clinic open for business**

The North Shore's first community COVID-19 vaccination clinic opened at Birkenhead this morning, making another important milestone in the rollout of the programme to protect the public.

Operated by Waitematā District Health Board (DHB), the Birkenhead clinic will be capable of vaccinating up to 1,000 people per day once it is fully up-to-speed, with 10 specially trained vaccinators working at-a-time to provide first and second doses.



*Above: open for business.*

The Birkenhead clinic is in a prominent position in Highbury Shopping Centre, occupying the site of a former Warehouse outlet that has been transformed into a high-flow vaccination space.

Waitematā DHB CEO Dr Dale Bramley said the high-profile location would make it easy for members of the public to receive their vaccinations when they become due.

“As this is the first large vaccination clinic to open on the North Shore, it will serve a large and diverse population,” Dr Bramley said.

“In particular, it will be of benefit to members of our large and rapidly growing Asian community, which makes up 28 per cent of our district's population of around 650,000 people.

“The concentration of people of Asian ethnicity is even higher on the North Shore where more than half of the people in some suburbs identify as Asian, so this clinic will be especially important for Asian communities based north of the Harbour Bridge.”

Dr Bramley thanked the DHB’s iwi partner, Ngāti Whātua, for leading the opening of the Birkenhead clinic, which will serve people of all ethnicities on the North Shore.

Waitematā DHB is following national sequencing guidance to ensure those most likely to be exposed or at-risk to COVID-19 receive their vaccination first.

As such, the initial focus of the Birkenhead clinic will be on border workers and household contacts, MIQ staff and health workers, including GPs. Next will be people with underlying health conditions and older Māori and Pacific people before the general public are invited for their vaccinations.

Waitematā DHB Asian Health Service Manager Grace Ryu said the Government had been very clear in saying there was plenty of vaccine for everyone and no one would miss out on their opportunity.

“We know people generally are very keen to receive their vaccinations and that many from our Asian communities will be wanting to know when it will be their turn,” she said.

“We are methodically working through the national priority groups. Please be patient and you will be contacted when we begin vaccinating the priority group you are in over the coming weeks.

“People should avoid coming to the Birkenhead clinic without an appointment in order for our team to continue to efficiently vaccinate those who do have a booking scheduled due to where they sit in the national sequencing framework.”

Waitematā DHB will also be working with The Fono to support the opening of a second West Auckland vaccination clinic later this week at NorthWest Shopping Centre, following last week’s opening of a clinic in Henderson which the DHB is operating in partnership with Te Whānau O Waipareira Trust.

**Ends.**