



Auckland Long-Service Awards

Over 300 Visionwest Home Healthcare Support Workers from West Auckland and the North Shore gathered for a special lunch on Tuesday 25th July to celebrate and receive long service awards.

Once a regular gathering, Covid means that the awards presentation hasn't been held for a few years. Awards were presented to Support Workers who had amassed over five years of service with Visionwest.

We have 318 Support Workers in the region who have over five years of service. 35 of them have been providing in-home care to Visionwest clients for over 20 years; their combined service adds up to a whopping 809 years of experience and expertise! Our longest serving Support Worker is Judith Boland; she's been

taking care of Visionwest clients for an amazing 32 years.

In speaking to the Support Workers during the presentation, Murray Penman, Head of Health and Community Services, spoke of how each of those present had dedicated themselves to creating relationships with the people they care for so that those whānau have the support and confidence to remain in their own homes when, without this, it would not be possible.

It's hoped similar events will be held in the other regions in the future.



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Kia ora koutou, Talofa, Mālō e lelei, नमस्ते, 안녕하세요,
你好, ཕེམ མི, ഏലോ and பெயர்



Last month, we successfully completed the installation of our new phone system. This is the first of a number of changes we are working through to improve the quality of our communication with our clients and Support Workers.

As shared in a previous newsletter, one of these changes involves the move to a single CMS system. You will have received separate communications detailing the proposed changes and how these will impact you. The biggest impact, however, will be the improvement in the way we communicate and schedule work which will lead to an improvement in the quality of services we deliver.

Finding adequate Support Workers to meet the demand for our services remains a challenge. Both our Marketing Team and our Recruitment Team are working through some strategies to increase our presence in the market and attract more staff. If you know of people who have a passion to serve and support our older community, please ask them to contact us.

It was lovely meeting some of you at the recent Waikato forums. I look forward to connecting Support Workers from other areas as we organise forums across the regions. The forums are great opportunities for you to connect with your peers and meet your branch team to chat and share some kai together.

We recently had a get together recognising long-service Support Workers in Auckland. This included honouring Judith who has passionately supported Visionwest clients for 32 years. We will be organising similar get togethers for our long-service staff in Waikato and Tauranga in the next month or two. Look out for more information on this from your branches.

As mentioned previously, if you are not getting the hours you would like and are available for extra work, particularly during the weekends, please reach out to your Coordinator and Team Leader. We are always in the need for Support Workers to cover additional hours and meet the growing demands.

I want to finish by emphasising how valued you are as a member of the Visionwest Home Healthcare team and the wider Visionwest whānau. Your work and dedication are greatly appreciated.

Kind regards, *Noel*



From our Wellbeing Team

From Leanne, our Wellbeing General Manager.

Recently, I attended Support Worker Forums across Waikato and Glen Eden. We talked about what Visionwest is doing to support Support Worker wellbeing. We have a few ideas so watch this space!

I will be attending the Support Worker Forums in other regions when they take place.

The Wellbeing Champs programme is well underway. Groups are ready to meet for social times in Waihi Beach, Hamilton, Morrinsville and Glen Eden. We are looking to find Wellbeing Champs in all regions so that everyone has the opportunity to have regular catch ups with the other Support Workers in their area.

Please don't forget, if you have an issue in the workplace EAP (Counselling) is available if needed. Just contact your Coordinator if you need to know more.

Introducing Carmen Basallote

Carmen Basallote has been appointed to the position of Wellbeing Advisor working with Leanne our GM Wellbeing.



Previously one of our Health and Safety Coordinators, Carmen has been with Visionwest for four years. Her new role will include ensuring Visionwest staff have access to Wellbeing resources. She will also be working to develop the Wellbeing Champs programme. This will include the Support Worker Wellbeing Champs and so you may get to meet her some time.

Coming into this new position, Carmen says, "I'm really looking forward to growing the wellbeing opportunities for all Visionwest staff, including our Home Healthcare Support Workers, and working with them to support their wellbeing in the workplace."

It's awesome to have Carmen on board and to know that the wellbeing of Support Workers is being taken seriously.

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Message from the Regional Managers

Eliza Benfell, our Bay of Plenty Acting Regional Manager, recently commented, "Over the past few months, I have had the privilege of visiting several clients in their homes. Each visit has left me thinking, 'Wow, what a team we have.' Every client I visited has sung your praises and talked about how wonderful and how caring you all are; and how appreciative they and their families are to have the support you provide."

Comments like this put another perspective on the work you all do. It is often said that your clients could not live in the comfort of their own homes if not for their Support Worker and that is true! The work you do every day, changes your clients' lives.

Updated phone system

Many of you will know of the improvements to our phone system which has already made it easier to contact your Coordinator and help with other communication. More changes are coming that will improve your work conditions and make the booking system easier.

From the Auckland Office

We had an awesome afternoon honouring the long-service of a number of our workers. That is reported on elsewhere in this newsletter. We do want to acknowledge, however, an incredible 32 years of service by Judith Boland. That is a long time to have dedicated to helping others. Thank you, Judith for caring for your clients so well and for being such an awesome example for the rest of us!

From the Bay of Plenty Office

By now, Bay of Plenty Support Workers will have had your invitations to our first Support Worker Forum. Covid means that these have not been conducted for several years and the team is excited to be getting out and about again. For Support Workers, this will give you the opportunity to meet your Team of Nurses, Coordinators and other Managerial members from your office and Head Office, and will give you the chance to have your say on how things are for you.

The dates are:

- **Rotorua** - 23rd August 2023 – Netherland Society, Nell Park. 12:30pm – 2:30pm.
- **Tauranga** – 24th August 2023 – Oak Tree Restaurant, Cameron Road, Greerton. Midday – 2.00pm.

Learning and Development in Bay of Plenty has been reorganised by Nidhi and Tania and is working well. They also have some great ideas for further

improvement. It has been a pleasure to meet all new Support Workers and those on refresher courses. Another initiative of Nidhi and Tania's is to have Support Workers come downstairs to chat or meet with your Coordinators. It has been a pleasure to watch the interaction as you meet for the first time or renew acquaintances.

Vacancies within the Tauranga and Rotorua offices are slowly being filled which will help us all.

In closing

In closing, please know that whatever region you are in, your hard work does not go unnoticed, and your contributions have a lasting impact on the lives of our clients and their whānau. Thanks again to all of you for your invaluable contribution and for being an integral part of the Visionwest Home Healthcare team. I encourage you to reach out if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Remember, we are here to support you just as much as you support others.

We want to extend our heartfelt appreciation for your unwavering dedication and exceptional efforts during the challenging times of COVID-19 and the current influenza season. Your commitment to providing essential support to our clients has been nothing short of remarkable.

While we're pleased to announce that COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, we want to emphasise that certain precautions are still necessary to ensure the safety of both our clients and our support staff. In light of this, all Support Workers must continue to wear face masks when visiting clients. Additionally, the adherence to standard Infection Prevention Controls, such as using gloves when dealing with any bodily fluids, remains of paramount importance. These measures are crucial to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for everyone.

We'd also like to inform you about a recent change in government policy settings that affects the way we handle sick leave for COVID-related absences. The government have stopped reimbursements to organisations when staff needed to isolate due to COVID-19 exposure. As a result, any staff members who contract COVID-19 and need to be away from work are required to take this leave as 'sick leave'.

More information on what to do if you have COVID can be found on this page <https://covid19.govt.nz/testing-and-isolation/if-you-have-covid-19/>

Stay safe, stay well, and let's keep working together to make a positive impact.

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Health and Safety Matters

Please take care of yourselves as you go about your daily work. It's very easy to take shortcuts or to rush and have an accident. Even small accidents can have a big effect on us and our ability to work, so it pays to do all things as safely as possible.



Two areas we need to take particular care are slips and trips, and the use of heaters.

Slip and Trip

Winter is here, and with it comes wet and slippery conditions. Remember to wear appropriate, sturdy non-slip footwear, walk slowly and avoid rushing, and choose to walk on paths that are well-lit.

If you come across paths, flooring or steps that are slippery or need repair, please report it to your coordinator so they can notify the client or next of kin.

Heaters

Follow these guidelines when using or operating client's portable heater in their private homes:

- Place heaters a safe distance from combustible materials, including curtains, furniture, and walls.
- Place heaters on the floor not on tables or chairs.
- Make sure the electrical cord is being the heater and not exposed to heat.
- Use only wall or ceiling heaters during Personal Cares.
- If a heater is used to heat a bathroom, remove it before showering or bathing begins.

Timely Reporting of Health and Safety Concerns

Support Workers must report all hazards, near misses, incidents, injuries, illnesses, discomfort to their Coordinators or Team Leaders within 24 hours of the event. This will help us eliminate hazards and ensure all staff are working in a safe and healthy environment.

Introducing Nadia – your new Health and Safety Coordinator

Hello, I am Nadia your new Home Healthcare Health and Safety Coordinator. I moved to New Zealand from the UK four years ago – it's the best decision I ever made.

For two years I was a Support Worker with Visionwest before becoming a Care Placement Coordinator in Hamilton. Outside of work, when I'm not playing hockey or other sport, I'm out and about with my partner and our three dogs, taking any opportunity for a swim.

I am excited for this new challenge and look forward to meeting more of you as I travel around the regions.

Infection Prevention



In our line of work, the need to be aware of Infection Prevention and Control practices and wearing PPE in the workplace is very important. In particular we must:

- **Wear a mask at all times** – if a client asks you not to, explain that it is for their safety because we go into lots of different homes and don't always know if someone may be sick.
- **Take advantage of the free Flu jab.** Because Visionwest cares about your wellbeing, several pharmacies have been organised to provide the flu vaccination, or you can go to your local pharmacy, ask for a receipt, and request that Visionwest Home Healthcare refunds the cost.

Here is a list of pharmacies within the Visionwest Home Healthcare regions where you can show your Visionwest ID and receive free immunisation:

ROTORUA

- **Unichem Central Pharmacy,**
1181 Amohia Street, Rotorua

TAURANGA

- **Unichem Greerton Pharmacy,** 221 Chadwick Road, Greerton
- **Unichem Chadwick Pharmacy,** 120 Chadwick Road, Greerton
- **Unichem Cherrywood Pharmacy,** 52/54 Cherrywood Drive, Otūmoetai
- **Unichem Excelsa Pharmacy,** 5 Golden Sands Drive, Papamoa Beach, Papamoa
- **Life Pharmacy Te Puke,** 61 Jellicoe Street, Te Puke
- **My Pharmacy Te Puke,** 96 Jellicoe Street, Te Puke

HAMILTON

- **Unichem Hamilton Pharmacy,**
1/173 Anglesea Street, Hamilton Central

NORTH SHORE

- **Apollo Pharmacy,** 119 Apollo Drive, Rosedale (Monday to Friday)

WEST AUCKLAND

- **Unichem Kelston,** 8a Archibald Road, Kelston
- **Unichem Massey,** 396 Don Buck Road, Massey
- **Life Pharmacy, NorthWest Shopping Centre,** 7 Fred Taylor Drive, Westgate

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When you're a Support Worker, you're like part of the family.

In the past we have interviewed and filmed Home Healthcare clients to help communicate our Visionwest story. Whenever these clients talk about their Support Workers, they usually say something like, *"My Support Worker is like part of the family,"* or *"When my Support Worker visits, it's like a friend dropping by."* That's pretty awesome; to know that the people you visit see you as more than a service – they see you as a close friend who is dropping by to help them and add something lifechanging to their day.

When Linda visited the regions recently, she found that many of you feel the same way about the people you care for – they start out as clients but quickly become friends.

Here's what Linda discovered when she met with some of you last month.

Sitting here reflecting on my amazing trip around the different Visionwest Home Healthcare regions, I feel a sense of pride. Each one of our Support Workers does an incredible job and you should be proud what you do for your clients and the love and care you show to them.

During the various café stops, I heard many stories, some funny and some more serious, but all of them full of compassion and caring for those you look after.

At each stop on the trip, Support Workers were asked, "What do you love about being a Visionwest Home Healthcare Support worker?" Here are some of your responses:

- It's like caring for my own family.
- Visionwest gives me people contact; I like people.
- I might be the only person my clients see that day.
- It's being able to help them get up and eat in the mornings ... helping them get dressed and getting breakfast and having a chat. It's so rewarding.
- I'm lucky I get to make my hours. My job is super flexible around my life.
- We hear history and some brilliant stories - we learn so much.
- As cliché as it sounds, I love that I'm making a difference in the lives of these people.
- I love the people and hearing their history. Their stories are compelling. I love my job.
- After a while, my clients and I become family.
- I love the new colour and logo.
- You get to build friendships with people and help with their day-to-day care, and that's so good.



A common theme from most Support Workers is the relationships they form with clients. In the past, my team have interviewed a number of your clients and asked how they feel about the care they receive. Almost every person has responded in the same way – saying that their Support Worker feels like part of the family and the Home Healthcare visit is often the highlight of their day. Every client is aware that, without the help of their Support Worker, they would find staying in the comfort of their own home very difficult.

Isn't it great to know that your clients really value everything you do! As an organisation, Visionwest also appreciates all you do in your role as a Support Worker. Personally, I'm in awe of you all. Meeting you and hearing your stories was inspirational.



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Long Service Awards



Regional Road Trip



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