



Newcomer Settlement Checklist

A calm, practical guide for your first weeks and months in New Zealand.

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Free eligibility check + match with a licensed adviser

Newcomer Settlement Checklist

Arriving in New Zealand is exciting, but the first few weeks can feel busy. This checklist helps you organise the main settlement tasks in a sensible order, so you can build routines, avoid common delays, and know where to ask for help. Yimin is an independent information and matching service, not a licensed immigration adviser, and we can connect you with an IAA-licensed adviser or immigration lawyer if you need personalised immigration guidance.



Start with identity, IRD and tax

Your IRD number is used for tax, salary payments, bank interest, KiwiSaver if eligible, student loans if relevant, and many dealings with Inland Revenue. You can usually apply through Inland Revenue once you have the required identity documents and visa details. If you start work before your IRD number is ready, tell your employer and follow Inland Revenue instructions so the correct tax process can be applied.

Keep digital copies of your passport, visa approval, entry evidence, birth and marriage certificates, qualifications, employment records, rental documents and translations. For immigration matters, use certified translations where required and check whether a copy needs to be certified by an authorised person. Requirements can differ by agency, and immigration document rules change often — confirm with INZ or a licensed adviser.

- Apply for an IRD number early
- Create a secure document folder
- Check tax residency questions carefully

Open a bank account and set payments

A New Zealand bank account makes daily life easier because employers normally pay wages into a local account, landlords may ask for automatic rent payments, and many services use online banking. Banks commonly ask for your passport, visa, proof of address and information about your overseas tax residency. Some banks allow you to begin the process before arrival, but activation usually requires identity checks.

When you compare banks, look at account fees, mobile banking, international transfer options, card access, branch locations and language support if needed. Be careful with urgent payment requests from strangers or unofficial agents. If someone asks you to transfer money to secure a job, visa outcome or rental property before you can verify it, pause and seek independent help.

- Bring passport and visa evidence
- Prepare proof of address
- Use secure online banking habits



Find work safely and understand your rights

Before you accept work, make sure your visa allows the job, employer, location and hours involved. Some visas allow open work rights, while others have conditions attached. If you are unsure, do not rely only on verbal promises from an employer or recruiter. Immigration rules change often — confirm with INZ or a licensed adviser before making decisions that could affect your visa.

New Zealand employers usually expect a clear, concise CV, a short cover letter tailored to the role, and referees who can be contacted. You can search through employer websites, recruitment agencies, professional networks, Seek, Trade Me Jobs, LinkedIn and community referrals. Learn the basics of employment agreements, minimum employment rights, payslips, leave and workplace safety through Employment New Zealand.

- Check your visa work conditions
- Prepare a New Zealand style CV
- Get a written employment agreement

Arrange housing, rent and utilities

Most newcomers begin with temporary accommodation while they inspect areas, commute times, schools and public transport. Long-term rentals are commonly advertised on property websites, through agencies, community groups and noticeboards. Never pay money for a home you have not properly verified, and be cautious if a landlord refuses a viewing, avoids a tenancy agreement or pressures you to pay quickly.

For a standard tenancy, you should receive a written tenancy agreement and clear information about rent, bond, start date, responsibilities and property condition. Bonds are generally lodged with Tenancy Services, and rental homes must meet New Zealand tenancy requirements, including Healthy Homes

standards where applicable. Take photos when you move in, keep receipts, and set up power, internet, contents insurance and rubbish collection as needed.

- Inspect before paying where possible
- Read the tenancy agreement
- Keep rent and bond records



Enrol children in school and routines

If you have school-aged children, contact local schools as soon as you know where you will live. Many public schools have enrolment zones, so your address may affect which school your child can attend. Schools may ask for passports, visas, proof of address, previous school reports, immunisation records and emergency contact details.

Your child's fee status depends on visa type and policy settings. Some children may be treated as domestic students, while others may need to enrol as international students and pay fees. Rules change often — confirm with INZ or a licensed adviser, and check directly with the school before you sign a tenancy or make financial plans. Ask about ESOL support, uniforms, devices, lunches, transport and after-school care.

- Check school zones before renting
- Prepare visa and address documents
- Ask about ESOL and uniforms

Register for healthcare and emergency support

In New Zealand, many everyday health needs are handled by a general practice, often called a GP clinic. Enrolling with a GP can make appointments simpler and may reduce costs if you are eligible for publicly funded health services. Eligibility depends on your visa, stay length and other rules, so check official health guidance and, for immigration-related questions, remember rules change often — confirm with INZ or a licensed adviser.

Pharmacies can help with common medicines and advice, while hospitals handle serious or urgent care. For urgent emergency help, call 111; rules and access settings can change, so confirm immigration-related eligibility with INZ or a licensed adviser and health service details with official health providers. Keep a note of allergies, regular medicines, vaccination records and your nearest after-hours clinic.

- Choose and enrol with a GP
- Keep medical records handy
- Know your nearest after-hours clinic



Drive, translate documents and connect locally

If you plan to drive, check whether your overseas licence can be used in New Zealand and whether you need an approved English translation or an International Driving Permit. Many newcomers can drive on an overseas licence for up to 12 months from their last entry, but rules change often — confirm with INZ or a licensed adviser for immigration-related issues and check Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency for current driver licensing details. Conversion requirements depend on your licence country and class, and you may need theory or practical tests.

Settlement is easier when you build a local support network. Chinese community groups, Chinese language media, libraries, Citizens Advice Bureau, local councils, churches, temples, parent groups and hobby clubs can help you learn about neighbourhood life. Use community recommendations wisely, but verify immigration, tax, rental and legal information through official sources or qualified professionals. Yimin can help you understand the pathway landscape and match you with licensed support when personalised immigration advice is needed.

- Check licence translation requirements
- Learn local road rules
- Join trusted community networks





Your next steps

- 1 Make a simple first-month plan covering IRD, bank, housing, school, healthcare and work tasks.
- 2 Save official websites for Inland Revenue, INZ, Tenancy Services, Employment New Zealand, Health New Zealand and Waka Kotahi.
- 3 If your visa, work, family or study situation is complex, ask Yimin to match you with an IAA-licensed adviser or immigration lawyer.

Take it step by step — New Zealand will feel more familiar each week.

Yimin is a free, independent information and matching service. It is NOT a Licensed Immigration Adviser and does not provide personalised immigration or legal advice. Everything here is general information and indicative only — New Zealand immigration policy changes often, so always confirm current rules and your own situation with Immigration New Zealand (INZ) or an IAA-licensed immigration adviser or lawyer.