

29 April 2022

Campbell Larsen

By email: campbell.larsen@gmail.com
Ref: H202111241

Tēnā koe Campbell

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 27 August 2021 for information regarding the COVID-19 response. The Ministry apologises for the delay in responding to your request. I will respond to each part of your request in turn.

1. The details of all organisations authorised to communicate with the public on behalf of the Ministry of Health, specifically in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic vaccination programme and response.

There is no specific organisation authorised to communicate with the public about COVID-19. However, credible sources for information regarding COVID-19 would include General Practitioners (GPs), private hospitals, Healthline, or any public health institution such as the Ministry, district health boards (DHBs) or Māori health providers.

2. The email addresses, phone, cell phone, text or other numbers used to contact members of the public by the Ministry and any organisations with communications functions delegated to it by the Ministry in relation to the Covid-19 vaccination programme and response.

There are a large number of agencies and organisations involved in the COVID-19 vaccine programme and the COVID-19 response.

A key organisation involved in supporting this is Healthline. Healthline is funded by the Ministry and managed by Whakarongorau Aotearoa (previously called Homecare Medical). They run a number of telehealth services including:

- The COVID Healthline – supporting people with information and advice about COVID.
- The COVID Welfare – provide health and well-being checks for people in self-isolation.
- The COVID Vaccination Healthline – provide vaccination information and help people who are unable to book online.

Individuals may be contacted by Healthline from the numbers (09) 306 8750, (09) 414 8689, (09) 306 8745, (09) 302 0408, (09) 306 8748, (09) 374 6939, (09) 306 8740, (09) 414 8686, (09) 414 5828 or (09) 448 0066 or by the Ministry directly from the numbers 0800 358 5453 or 09 956 1009.

Individuals may receive text messages relating to the COVID-19 vaccine programme and the COVID-19 response. Examples of these are from 2328 or 2648 regarding COVID-19 vaccinations or from 4835 regarding the Post Vaccine Symptom Check Survey.

Emails sent by the Ministry will end with health.govt.nz or health.nz. Examples of these include noreply@ncts.health.nz, COVID-19ContactTracing@health.govt.nz or noreply@vaccine.covid19.health.nz.

Additionally, individuals may also be contacted by their healthcare provider, local District Health Board or local Public Health Unit, through the contact methods of those organisations.

3. Details of the Information retention and audit policies of the Ministry of Health in relation to the information held by the Ministry, and by any organisation delegated communication functions by it, in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic vaccination programme and response.

Information held by the Ministry regarding COVID-19 is subject to the Ministry's standard information management policies.

The Ministry is required to manage information within a legislative framework. The following legislation governs the Ministry's recordkeeping:

- The Public Records Act 2005
- The Privacy Act 1993
- The Official Information Act 1982
- The Electronic Transactions Act 2002.

The Ministry's information management also complies with the Archives New Zealand ISO 15489 International Standard for Records Management.

The following rules apply to all business records generated or received by the Ministry, in all formats and all media.

Maintenance and use of records:

- Records must be accessible for as long as required.
- Vital and archival records must be identified and recoverable in the event of a disaster.
- The circulation of physical files must be recorded in the Records Management and Tracking System, Provider Contract System or, if you are taking a file from a records room, using the file transit card.

Storage of Records:

- Offsite records must be stored at a facility that complies with the Archives New Zealand Storage Standard.
- Archival records must be stored in conditions that ensure their long-term preservation and comply with the Archives New Zealand Storage Standard.

Disposal of records:

- Only the Chief Archivist of Archives New Zealand can authorise the disposal of records.
- Ministry staff members must get authorisation from the Team Leader of Records Services before disposing of records.

You can find more information on Archives New Zealand's website:

www.archives.govt.nz/manage-information/how-to-manage-your-information/disposal/general-disposal-authorities

Information regarding the audit process for the public sector in New Zealand is available on the Audit New Zealand website: auditnz.parliament.nz/public-sector-auditing

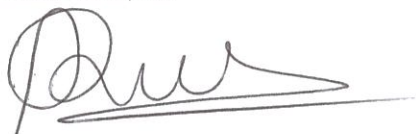
4. Details of any dose interval recommendations, data, decisions, and supporting research used in arriving at these decisions, specifically in relation to the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine vaccination programme and pandemic response

The Ministry is releasing eight documents to you. Five documents have been identified in scope of this part of your request. The Ministry has identified three additional documents you may be interested in. These are memoranda outlining the data to support COVID-19 vaccine boosters. All documents are itemised in Appendix 1 and copies of the documents are enclosed. Where information is withheld, this is outlined in the appendix and noted in the document itself. I have considered the countervailing public interest in release in making this decision and consider that it does not outweigh the need to withhold at this time.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests

Nāku noa, nā



Astrid Koornneef
Director
National Immunisation Programme

Appendix 1: List of documents for release

#	Date	Title	Decision on release
1	5 August 2021	The Request for Advice: Rapid review of current data on extended dosing intervals for the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine	Released with some information withheld section 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons
2	3 August 2021 and 5 October 2021	COVID-19 Vaccine TAG Minutes	Information released under section 16(1)(e) of the Act by giving an excerpt or summary of the contents
3	6 August 2021	Memorandum: Decision to increase the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine interval to six weeks (HR20211788)	Released with some information withheld section 9(2)(a).
4	20 August 2021	Memo: The use of COVID-19 vaccines during an outbreak: COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV TAG) recommendations for prioritisation of first doses nationwide	Released in full.
5	November 2021	Science Overview of Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine	
6	17 December 2021	Memo: COVID-19 booster vaccinations in specific situations: COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV TAG) recommendations	
7	19 December 2021	Aide-Memoire: Cabinet Oral Item: Changing intervals for COVID-19 booster doses with the emergence of the Omicron variant 20212767	Released with some information withheld under the following sections of the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 9(2)(a); and • Section 9(2)(h) to maintain legal professional privilege.
8	21 December 2021	DG Memorandum: Implementation and delivery of COVID-19 booster doses at shorter interval with the emergence of the Omicron variant	Release with some information withheld under section 9(2)(h) of the Act.