

16 September 2021

John

By email: fyi-request-16458-5aff8138@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H202110795

Tēnā koe John

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 20 August 2021 for information in relation to National Health Index (NHI) and COVID-19 vaccine eligibility.

You will find a response to each part of your request below.

“1. Do people have to have NHI to book/get the vaccine?”

The NHI number is a unique identifier assigned to every person who uses health and disability Services in New Zealand. This accurately identifies people and links them with the right health records. Persons using health services in New Zealand will be given an NHI number. You do not need to have a NHI to book or receive a vaccine. If you do not have an NHI or you cannot be matched to your NHI you will be given a new one.

“2. As we know, some vaccination centres refuse to vaccinate persons who have no NHI. Could you confirm it is the case? and the reason.”

Vaccination Centres should not be declining people who cannot provide an NHI number as the system will give them one.

“3. As the government announced, every person can get the vaccine. Does it include the overstayers who have no NHI? or persons are not willingly to get the NHI?”

As above, everybody in New Zealand is eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of immigration status or whether they have an NHI number. Persons using health services in New Zealand will be given an NHI number.

“4. If overstayers need to have NHI to be vaccinated, what information will be collected, and what other government agencies will get such information?”

The following details will be recorded in the COVID Immunisation Register (CIR):

- your name, date of birth, gender, ethnicity and NHI – if you do not already have an NHI, a new NHI will be recorded against your profile.
- your address and contact details
- details about the vaccination/s you receive
- any reactions you have to the vaccine
- confirmation of priority category for vaccination eg. Group 1.

The CIR will also record if you decide not to get a COVID-19 vaccine, including if there are medical reasons why you don't, or if you do not want to be contacted further by the vaccination programme. Details of citizenship or immigration status (e.g. visa and/or residency status) are not recorded in the CIR.

The information collected as part of the vaccination process may be used for:

- managing your health
- keeping you and others safe
- planning and funding health services
- carrying out authorised research
- training health care professionals
- preparing and publishing statistics
- improving government services.

Information such as reactions to the vaccine, will be shared with other organisations who provide health services such as General Practitioners and District Health Boards. Information held in the CIR is not shared with any other government agencies.

"5. On your privacy statement, it states that "Fraudulent bookings: Information may be shared with other agencies where we have reason to believe that a fraudulent booking has been made, or where one person attempts to use the identity of another person." What information will be shared? to which agencies?"

The key driver of the COVID-19 Vaccination and Immunisation Programme is to enable everyone in New Zealand to get vaccinated. Each case where suspected fraudulent activity is identified would be looked at in terms of the circumstances of the case, the risk it posed, and any public interest considerations.

The intention of the reference to 'fraudulent' booking was to let people know that information could be shared with other agencies if necessary, and there may be a consequence. For example, if a group of individuals made a series of false bookings to exhaust resources, and stop others accessing vaccination it is possible a referral may be made to the NZ Police to consider a response.

"6. If overstayers make booking with alias, will you consider these as fraudulent bookings?"

If a person made a booking using an alias and followed through with the vaccination event, the programme would want to maintain an accurate immunisation record, including in the invented name. Neither the Booking System nor the vaccination team would be able to tell from immunisation record whether a person was an overstayer.

"7. As questions 5 and 6, how the government assure the vaccination campaign can cover everyone?"

We are making a COVID-19 vaccination available for free to everyone over the age of 12 in New Zealand. It does not matter what your visa or citizenship status is. Information about eligibility can be found on the Unite Against COVID-19 Website at: <https://covid19.govt.nz/covid-19-vaccines/how-to-get-a-covid-19-vaccination/who-can-get-a-covid-19-vaccination/>.

We are encouraging vaccine uptake through a range of methods. The Unite Against COVID-19 national public information campaign has been designed to ensure information about the

COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme is available to everyone in Aotearoa. This includes content on television, radio, social media, in newspapers and maildrops in letterboxes.

I trust this information fulfils your request. 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Gibbs', followed by a period.

Jo Gibbs
National Director
COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme