

15 June 2022

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Mr Jones

By email: [fyi-request-19224-c68bfe82@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-19224-c68bfe82@requests.fyi.org.nz)  
Ref: H202206546

Tēnā koe Mr Jones

### **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 19 May 2022. You requested:

*“full disclosure on the document/s of how and where behavioural insights have been implemented/integrated into the COVID-19 response and also what behavioural insights have been determined to be used and why”.*

The Ministry has interpreted your request as relating to documentation showing how behavioural insights have been implemented, through policies relating to the COVID-19 response.

The information you have requested has been refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the Act. However, if there is a specific area of behavioural science within the COVID-19 response you are interested in, we would be happy to consider a new request.

The Ministry’s Evaluation and Behavioural Science team was formed in mid-2021 as part of the COVID-19 response, as part of the health reform we now sit within the Intelligence, Surveillance & Knowledge function of the interim Public Health Agency. We support other teams by providing a behavioural perspective to policy and operations, conduct research to generate new insights, and in future run applied and operational research. At present, the evidence and advice from our team forms part of the combined evidence and advice from various teams and hence there is no feedback loop to track if/how our advice influenced the policy created or operational changes (i.e., there are no documents that show which documents have been used and where).

Considering your request, you may be interested to know that on a regular basis, we run population-based surveys. Survey topics have included knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards self-isolation and other COVID-19 protection measures such as testing, the impact of COVID-19 on mental health and addiction, and understanding the health seeking behaviour of the population among others.

There are plans to release all projects and survey reports soon. At this stage, due to the health reforms and transition of health entities we are unable to confirm when the documents will be released but we aim to release them as soon as possible within the next 6 months (end December 2022). Evaluation & Behavioural Science work in the COVID-19 response is ongoing, and future work will also be released to the public either on the Ministry website or the future Public Health Agency website.

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](mailto: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](http://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests).

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gill Hall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Gill Hall  
**Transition Lead, Intelligence, Surveillance and Knowledge  
Public Health Agency, Ministry of Health**