

8 June 2023

AI

fyi-request-22352-b2d23a0c@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe AI

You request for Official information, reference: HN200015486

Thank you for your email on 30 March 2023 asking for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

“Recently some people got a (long!) text or email encouraging them to get MMR doses if they had not to date. I'd appreciate it if you could answer a few questions - I've listed them below to help the search as I'd like to include any documents in my request that might also answer these questions:

- 1. Was this sent from Health NZ or the Ministry of Health? If not - can you, please provide advice on who I should direct this request to instead?*
- 2. And if you didn't send it - please confirm that there were no communications or documents in scope of this request at Health NZ in case there was discussion or engagement with Health NZ in order to send it.*
- 3. How was it decided that it should be sent - I'd like any emails or documents that clearly show who (the role and team) made the decision and what was the outcome that was expected?*
- 4. If so - how did you get people's email or phone number in order to send it where was that stored and how was it originally collected?*
- 5. What permissions did you use to enable it to be sent - what did people agree to in order to get this?*
- 6. Was there any demographic information used in order to decided who to send it to? For instance gender/ethnicity/age/region etc?*
- 7. Was it only sent to people who you knew did not have any MMR doses - if so how did you know?*
- 8. How much did this cost if it was sent via text to people (it was quite long)*
- 9. Finally if this is part of a wider communications for vaccination strategy are there any documents that describe or put this MMR text/email in context of that?”*

Please see outlined below a response to each part of your request.

- 1. Was this sent from Health NZ or the Ministry of Health? If not - can you, please provide advice on who I should direct this request to instead?*
- 2. And if you didn't send it - please confirm that there were no communications or documents in scope of this request at Health NZ in case there was discussion or engagement with Health NZ in order to send it.*

Te Whatu Ora can confirm that we reached out to people born between 1989 and 2004, some of whom may not have received both doses of the MMR vaccine.

Te Whatu Ora takes its responsibility to ensure its communication messages are responsible and appropriate very seriously. Direct communications enable messaging to be targeted, personal and secure.

In the period leading up to the delivery of messages to people about measles, New Zealand faced a serious threat of a measles outbreak with the identification of confirmed measles cases in Aotearoa. Measles is a highly contagious disease that can be life threatening.

Increasing immunisation of those most vulnerable to measles is a priority.

Contact happened primarily via email, with text message as a backup where we did not have people's email addresses. There was also an outbound calling campaign. This contact took place between 17 February and 17 April 2023.

3. *How was it decided that it should be sent - I'd like any emails or documents that clearly show who (the role and team) made the decision and what was the outcome that was expected?*

Please see attached documents “**Appendix 1**” and “**Appendix 2**”

Objectives of this campaign:

- Raise awareness to the eligible audience born between 1989-2004 who may have missed their childhood measles immunisation
- Make it easy for this cohort to understand the risks of measles and why it is so important to get fully immunised against the measles
- Direct these people (and their children) to get their measles vaccination at their doctor, health provider or selected pharmacies
- Deliver messages and information that resonates (with particular focus on Māori and Pacific people) and in a way that is easily understood
- Achieve an engagement rate in line with average open and delivery rates of other immunisation direct programmes - ~40% open rate
- Achieve 1% uptake rate of vaccinated to those contacted. Assess uptake of vaccines by additional people residing at the same address (e.g. children).

Though the uptake rate was not achieved, 800 people did get vaccinated

4. *If so - how did you get people's email or phone number in order to send it where was that stored and how was it originally collected?*

5. *What permissions did you use to enable it to be sent - what did people agree to in order to get this?*

The Ministry prepares an annual Health Service Utilisation (HSU) dataset for all individuals who have used the New Zealand health system within the last two years. The HSU also includes the National Enrolment Service (NES) which has information (like your basic contact details) from everyone who has enrolled with a general practitioner. Using the NES contact details to offer you a vaccine complies with the requirements under the Privacy Act 2020 and the Health Information Privacy Code 2020. We use the information consistently with the purpose for which it was collected by keeping you and others safe. Emails contain an option to 'unsubscribe', and text messages now contain an option to “STOP”/opt out.

6. *Was there any demographic information used in order to decided who to send it to? For instance gender/ethnicity/age/region etc?*

All eligible and registered people born between 1 January 1989 and 31 December 2004 inclusive, who are eligible for free healthcare in New Zealand where no record existed in the National Immunisation Register (NIR) of an individual having had a 2-dose course of MMR.

The campaign was initially targeted toward regions where the recorded case resided or travelled to and to those individuals deemed more vulnerable (Māori and Pacific people). That included Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, followed soon after to Northland and areas excluded from the initial send (Coromandel/certain areas in Auckland heavily impacted by Cyclone Gabrielle).

The campaign was then rolled out nationally for two weeks.

Phasing of campaigns to large volumes regularly occurs in order to not overwhelm the health provider network (e.g. demand on doctors clinics and pharmacies).

7. *Was it only sent to people who you knew did not have any MMR doses - if so how did you know?*

Communications were sent to eligible people for whom there was no record of having had the 2-dose course. Individuals may have had the vaccinations but not had them recorded in the National Immunisation Register. Anyone that was recorded as having had their MMR was removed from the data extract.

8. *How much did this cost if it was sent via text to people (it was quite long)?*

The length of the SMS was required to provide all relevant information to the recipient. Cost was approximately 30c per text. 222,678 SMSs were sent - total estimated cost \$66.8k.

9. *Finally if this is part of a wider communications for vaccination strategy are there any documents that describe or put this MMR text/email in context of that?*

Please see attached Document “**Appendix 3**”

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at h.nzOIA@health.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Te Whatu Ora may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



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