

11 January 2024

Chris McCashin

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Tēnā koe Chris

Your Official Information Act request, ref: HNZ00031860

Thank you for your email on 31 October 2023, asking for the following which has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please see outlined below a response to your request.

"I would also like to add that Ministry of Health granted themselves 11,005 vaccine exemptions to themselves - why was that?"

The Significant Service Disruption (SSD) exemption process was established to operationalise Clause 12A of the COVID-19 Public Health (Vaccinations) Order 2021. It was managed first by the Ministry of Health and then by Te Whatu Ora from 1 July 2022. Decisions to grant or decline SSD exemption requests were made by the Minister for COVID-19 Response.

Clause 12A allowed Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) in the health and disability sector to apply for an SSD exemption in a situation where the lack of vaccinated staff could severely disrupt the delivery of health and disability services. The health and disability sector is made up of Te Whatu Ora/Ministry of Health and privately-run businesses.

This provision was in force from 15 November 2021 until 26 September 2022 and during this time, 102 applications were granted covering 8,051 health and disability workers. Please note that this differs from the total number of applications and affected workers previously released in OIA HNZ00023978, which stated that 103 exemptions were granted covering 11,005 workers. These discrepancies are each due to administrative data input errors recently discovered in a review of SSD exemption data. We apologise for the misunderstanding.

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at hnzOIA@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.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Alana Ewe-Snow
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Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand