

18 June 2024

C182306

Colin Whiting

fyi-request-25058-784ad16e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Colin,

Thank you for your email of 21 May 2024 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting clarification on a response previously provided to you relating to COVID-19 exemption clauses (Our reference C177729 & C176430). Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You requested:

For those fully vaccinated staff who were granted the 14 day 'special leave' prior to 15th May 2022, was this 'special leave' for frontline staff who had contracted Covid19 and were therefore absent as being sick, or was it also for any staff member who had tested positive for Covid19 without showing any symptoms, and therefore not being absent as sick?

Or did both of these above categories qualify for the 14 day 'special leave', awaiting the outcome of a Booster Exemption or extension application, submitted to the Director General of The Ministry Health?

Both categories qualified for the 14-day special leave.

Once a staff member had contracted or tested positive for Covid19, and a Booster Exemption was submitted to the Director General of The Ministry of Health, was their booster date extended for 6 months following the time they had tested positive for Covid19, or for 6 months extending on from the date of their next Booster?

Prior to 15 May 2022, the due date for a COVID 19 booster vaccine would be extended by three months from the date that a staff member first tested positive for COVID 19.

*Can you also clarify that the Booster extension was for 6 months and not the 3 months, as mentioned in an earlier paragraph of your reply quoted below?
"As you are aware, the Ministry of Health advised that people who tested positive for COVID19 should wait three months after they test positive before receiving their booster vaccination."*

As we have previously advised, under the Vaccinations Order prior to 15 May 2022, staff who tested positive for COVID-19 were unable to return to work inside the security perimeter of a prison for up to three months without a Ministry of Health temporary medical exemption. Furthermore, prior to 15 May 2022, the due date for a COVID-19 booster vaccine would be extended by three months from the date said staff member first tested positive for COVID-19.

Finally, how many successful Covid19 Booster Exemptions ("temporary medical exemption") were granted by The Director General of the Ministry of Health, for Corrections Staff prior to May15th 2022? (Subtracted from the overall 220 following May 15) Also how many Corrections staff were unsuccessful in being granted the "temporary medical exemption" for the Covid19 Booster prior to May 15th 2022, from The Director General of The Ministry of Health?

169 Corrections staff members were granted a temporary medical exemption by the Director General of the Ministry of Health prior to 15 May 2022. No staff were unsuccessful in being granted a temporary medical exemption.

Please note that this response may be published on Corrections' website. Typically, responses are published quarterly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. I encourage you to raise any concerns about this response with Corrections. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Ngā mihi



Nic Barkley
Manager Ministerial Services
People and Capability