



20 September 2024

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Tēnā koe Erika Whittome

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 25 August 2024, requesting information about the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) and its actions in regard to Covid 19. I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request set out below.

1. Was Covid 19 a disease reported to WorkSafe by MSD?

The Ministry has not notified WorkSafe of any cases of COVID-19.

2. Did Covid 19 arise out of the nature of work at MSD?

COVID-19 did not arise in New Zealand or because of the nature of Ministry work. Without genomic testing it is not possible to know if transmission of the virus occurred at a Ministry workplace.

3. Is there or was there in the past, any genetic "gain of function" work taking place at MSD on corona viruses, or the nursing of corona virus patients?

The Ministry is not an agency that undertakes work involving genetic testing, nor has it been involved in the nursing of corona virus patients.

4. Please provide: the written authorisation from the Director General specifying persons at MSD who were authorised enforcement person(s) under section 18 (2) the Covid-19 Public Health Response Act 2020. Please provide the functions and powers that could be carried out by the authorised enforcement person(s).

The Ministry was not one of the agencies included in this section of the Act. The Public Health notice, with list of authorised agencies, is here: [COVID-19 Public Health Response Act 2020 No 12 \(as at 15 December 2022\), Public Act 18 Authorised enforcement persons – New Zealand Legislation](#).

5. Please provide: number of exemptions issued to MSD workers under clause 9 of the Covid 19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021, eg clause 9, 9A, 12A.

We have a record of one staff member who applied for and was successfully granted an exemption by the Ministry of Health.

6. Any other exemptions issued to staff, please provide grounds and number issued.

See above.

7. In relation to covid 19 vaccines, any payment MSD and/or its subsidiaries received for each staff member that was vaccinated, the amount and the scheme the payment was provided under

The Ministry did not make any payment to Ministry staff regarding COVID-19 vaccinations.

8. Any payment the MSD and/or its subsidiaries received for leasing or renting floor space for vaccination in 2021 and 2022 , eg super Saturdays events at any of your facilities. Please include the amount and the scheme the payment was provided under.

Ministry offices were not leased or rented for vaccination in 2021 and 2022, including super Saturday events.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services