

31 January 2022

s 9(2)(a)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H202117368

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 12 December 2021 for:

“Of the about 70,000 COVID vaccine exemption given out for various reason, can you please advise:

- 1, A breakdown of exemptions given out for the various reasons.*
- 2, A breakdown of exemptions that are:*
 - a. temporary (under 6 months)*
 - b. temporary (> 6months but <12 months)*
 - c. permanent exemptions”.*

As at 10 January 2022, 1,411 applications for Temporary Medical Exemptions had been received by the Ministry. Applications for medical exemptions are considered by the Temporary Medical Exemptions Panel, which is run by the Ministry. As of 10 January 2022, 490 temporary medical exemptions had been granted. Temporary Medical Exemptions are all granted for six months. Permanent exemptions are not available.

More information regarding the clinical criteria for temporary medical exemptions can be found at: www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/vaccine-temporary-medical-exemption-30nov21.docx

If someone is granted a temporary medical exemption, they will see a record of this in their ‘My Covid Record’ and be able to request a ‘My Vaccine Pass’. When their pass is scanned at venues the exemption status will not be disclosed to the business. They will be able to gain access to venues requiring a My Vaccine Pass in the same way as someone who is fully vaccinated.

In December 2021, immediately following the introduction of the My Vaccine Pass system, the Ministry also granted a temporary exemption to approximately 70,000 individuals who were experiencing difficulty with downloading their vaccine passes. This was a temporary exemption from the requirement to produce a vaccine pass to ensure that, while waiting for the assistance needed to obtain their vaccine pass, this group of people were not unfairly disadvantaged when New Zealand moved to the Covid Protection Framework. All of these exemptions were for a period of less than six months.

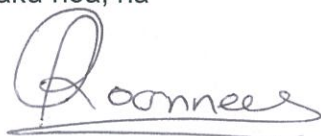
Finally, the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccination) Order 2021 also provides the Minister for COVID-19 Response with the power to provide exemptions from mandatory vaccination requirements in order to avoid a significant disruption to essential supply chains, health services, or the essential operations of a corrections prison. In relation to significant service disruptions to health services (the only part of this process the Ministry of Health is

involved in), a total of 11 exemptions had been granted as of 17 December 2020. All of these exemptions were for a period of less than six months.

I trust this fulfils your request. 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 or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry of Health website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases.

Nāku noa, nā



Astrid Koornneef
Director
National Immunisation Programme