

19 August 2021

Ross Francis

By email: fyi-request-16112-253b7f9b@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H202109625

Dear Ross

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) which was transferred to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 28 July 2021 for information relating to the COVID-19 vaccine. Please find a response to each part of your request below:

“Before it agreed to purchase the vaccine, did the New Zealand Government ask Pfizer, or any of its representatives, to pay (either partly or fully) for the cost of treating possible serious side-effects in New Zealand? If so, what was the value of any suggested contribution and what was Pfizer’s response?”

On 16 August 2021, this part of your request was transferred to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) on 16 August 2021 in accordance with section 14(b)(ii) of the Act. You can expect a response from MBIE in due course.

“According to information held, how many people (if any) may suffer serious side-effects from the Covid-19 vaccines in New Zealand?”

For information relating to the COVID-19 vaccine in New Zealand, please refer to the following data sheet: www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/Datasheet/c/comirnatyinj.pdf

“On 22 October 2020, Steven Anderson (Director, Office of Biostatistics and Epidemiology) presented various slides to the FDA’s Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee. One slide, which appeared for no more than half a second, stated that there were possible adverse events from Covid-19 vaccines. The adverse events included but were not limited to: Arthritis and arthralgia/joint pain, Convulsions/seizures, Stroke, Narcolepsy and cataplexy, Anaphylaxis, Acute myocardial infarction, Autoimmune disease, Pregnancy and birth outcomes, Kawasaki disease, Vaccine enhanced disease, Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children Deaths. On 11 December 2020, the Food and Drug Administration in the US approved the Pfizer vaccine. According to information held by your department, what information was produced between 22 October and 11 December 2020 to diminish concerns about the above adverse events?”

The conditions referred to in this part of your request are known as *adverse events of special interest* (AESIs). AESIs are not known side effects, they are conditions that may turn out to be caused by a vaccine however, it is unconfirmed. AESIs are an important part of being prepared for safety monitoring. Weekly reports summarising the number and type of AESIs reported with COVID-19 vaccination can be found at: www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/vaccine-report-overview.asp

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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris James', is positioned above the typed name.

Chris James
Group Manager
Medsafe