

Erika Whittome
fyi-request-23986-4e20ad57@requests.fyi.org.nz

19 September 2023

Dear Erika,

Re: Official Information Act Request: COVID-19 policies placed on grant funding

Thank you for your online request of Tuesday 29 August 2023, in which you requested information under the Official Information Act 1982. You requested:

Any communications between you and receivers of your grant money and employment policies from Oct 2021 until the present time. Please include any information packs supplied to these receivers for c19 vaccination policies; and

Any health policies for receivers of your grant money from Oct 2021 until the present time.

On Wednesday 30 August 2023, you confirmed our interpretation of your initial request as:

Any communications, policies, or information relating to conditions or requirements placed upon EECA grant funding, in regard to COVID-19 or Health.

EECA did not place any conditions or requirements upon its grant funding with regards to COVID-19 or Health. Therefore, we are refusing your request under Section 18e - that the document alleged to contain the information does not exist.

While outside the scope of your request (as it does not pertain to grant funding), the following information may be of interest to you.

Based on best practice guidance supplied by the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE), EECA introduced a requirement for our Warmer Kiwi Homes programme Service Providers to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 if they were entering households. The requirement was effective from 17 January 2022. This was implemented through variations of contracts, with words to the effect of:

*“The Service Provider must ensure that all Personnel who may enter a House to provide Services or have any other face-to-face interaction with Households (**relevant Personnel**) under this agreement are vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine by 17 January 2022.*

The Service Provider must ensure that all new relevant Personnel that it engages after 17 January 2022 are vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine.

The Service Provider must provide a declaration in the form required by EECA by 17 January 2022 to confirm the Service Provider's compliance with this clause.

In all other respects, the Funding Agreement continues with full force and effect."

This requirement was later repealed in all instances, effective 1 July 2022.

In addition to the vaccination requirement for frontline Service Provider employees, we introduced a 'Customer Interaction Protocol' for Warmer Kiwi Homes programme Service Providers. This protocol required Service Providers to complete screening calls with customers prior to any household visits, to ascertain whether the customer was experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, and/or whether they were required to self-isolate. In the case that the screening call revealed the customer was either unwell or self-isolating, the visit would be rescheduled.

This protocol requirement was also repealed in all instances, effective 14 September 2022.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly at <https://www.eeca.govt.nz/about/news-and-corporate/official-information/> with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Marcos Pelenur
EECA Chief Executive