

2 July 2024

Erika Whittome
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Tēnā koe Erika

I refer to your email of 28 May 2024 to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki), requesting information regarding COVID-19. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted communities globally. The resulting disruption and uncertainty have required services to learn to adapt and respond proactively. Further information on how Oranga Tamariki are continuing to respond to impacts of the pandemic can be found on our website [here](#).

I have addressed each of your questions below.

Between December 2021 to sometime in Sept 2022, OT had in place a mandated vaccination policy for staff, yet the Ministry of Children workers were not listed as one of the affected groups in the Covid-19 Public Health (Vaccinations) Order 2021. Under the Official Information Act, provide the following information:

1. *Was Covid 19 a disease reported to Worksafe by OT?*
2. *Did Covid 19 arise out of the nature of work at OT?*

Oranga Tamariki does not hold reports to Worksafe regarding COVID-19; and COVID-19 did not arise out of the nature of work at Oranga Tamariki. As such these parts of your request are refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information requested does not exist.

However, it should be noted that Oranga Tamariki is responsible for the health and safety of kaimahi whilst at work. This includes eliminating and/or minimising risks faced by kaimahi as part of Oranga Tamariki's obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. These obligations are reflected in the organisation's approach to COVID-19,

as set out in Oranga Tamariki's COVID-19 Vaccination Policy dated January 2022 [here](#). The policy applies to both staff members and caregivers who have contact with children in their care.

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

Oranga Tamariki is not and has not previously been involved in "any genetic gain of function work taking place on corona viruses, or the nursing of corona virus patients". As such, this part of your request is also refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information requested does not exist.

- 4. The written authorisation from the Director General specifying persons at OT 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); and*

No Oranga Tamariki personnel were authorised enforcement person(s) under section 18(2) of the COVID-19 Public Health Response Act 2020, and therefore this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information requested does not exist.

- 5. Number of exemptions issued to OT workers under clause 9 of the Covid 19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021; and*
- 6. Any other exemptions issued to staff, please provide grounds and number issued and;*

Oranga Tamariki has no record of applications for exemption under clause 9 of the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021; nor of any other exemptions being issued to staff. As such, these parts of your request are refused under section 18(e) of the Act on the ground that the requested information does not exist.

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

Oranga Tamariki did not receive any payment for staff vaccinations and did not lease or provide spaces for vaccination events. As such, these parts of your request are refused under section 18(e) of the Act on the ground that the requested information does not exist.

Oranga Tamariki may make the information contained in this letter available to the public by publishing this on our website with your personal details removed.

I trust you find this information useful. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise them with Oranga Tamariki. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cassandra Anderson'.

Cassandra Anderson
Deputy Chief Executive
People, Culture and Enabling Services