

11 February 2026

Erika Whittome

fyi-request-33353-aa6bf83a@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Erika,

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00107031

Thank you for your email which was transferred to Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora on 15 January 2026, asking for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

Another response to an OIA lists all the exemptions not to be vaccinated under clause 12A of the Covid-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021. These are recorded in this document

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ffyi.org.nz%2Frequest%2F25319%2F...>

Please share the full meeting minutes for the following "Panel Assessment Dates" (column 3 of the above pdf) of these clause 12A (service disruption exemptions)

1. November 2021 on 13,14, 15,16,17,18,22, 24 and 29th.
2. December 2021 on 1,3,6,10,14 and 20th
3. 3. January 2022 on 11 and 18th.
4. February 2022 on 15 22 and 23th
5. March 2022 on 1st.
6. Please include the minutes of the decision to abandon exemptions for individuals and instead to accept applications for exceptions for groups of people made by PCBU.
7. Please share further details on the column "Other" which contains various objections for being vaccinated such as "Religion", "Health", "Family", "Vaccine Concern", "Vaccine Trial", "Freedom of choice" for not getting vaccinated.

Response

The Significant Service Disruption (SSD) Exemption process was established to operationalise Clause 12A of the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021 (the Order). Exemptions under this clause were granted so essential health care services could continue to be delivered. Only Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBUs) in the health and disability sector/industry could apply for an SSD exemption. These exemptions were intended to allow workers to work for a limited period of time until vaccinated.

It was possible for applicants to provide supplemental information, to give a more complete description of the service disruption in the SSD application form. However, this was optional, and this information was not taken into account when decisions were made to grant an exemption or not. The only consideration for granting an SSD exemption was whether or not a PCBU would be significantly impacted should their staff not be allowed to provide services.

The supplemental information provided within application forms was highly personal and private to the applicants and was provided to the Ministry of Health by applicants under an obligation of confidence. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under Section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA, as releasing this information would be likely to prejudice the future supply of information. We have

considered any countervailing public interests in the release of this information. We do not believe that the public interests outweigh the need to withhold it in this instance.

SSD exemptions for individuals were never abandoned. There were large numbers of individuals requiring SSD exemptions from a number of District Health Boards (DHB), and for the sake of efficiency, group applications were always accepted. A DHB could make an application covering just one individual if that was all that was required. There are no meeting minutes about this aspect of the SSD exemption process, therefore the information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as it does not exist.

Regarding your request for minutes from the Significant Service Disruption Exemption Panel meetings, please refer to our previous Official Information Act response (HNZ00035461).

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at h.nzOIA@tewhatuora.govt.nz. If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Health NZ may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Sara Freitag

**Manager, Government Services
(National Public Health Service)**

TeWhatuOra.govt.nz

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government