

133 Molesworth Street  
PO Box 5013  
Wellington 6140  
New Zealand  
T+64 4 496 2000

28 May 2024

s 9(2)(a)

Ref: H2024040466

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) to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 30 April 2024 for information regarding COVID-19 vaccination data. Please find a response to each part of your request below.

*1. Prior to 26 November 2021, the delay in a person being classified as vaccinated was defined as 14 days after the dose was delivered. Please confirm whether a person was defined as vaccinated 14 days after the second dose of the two-dose primary Comirnaty vaccine schedule prior to 26 November 2021. At any time before the expiry of 14 days from the second dose, please confirm the person was categorised as unvaccinated.*

We have interpreted this request as referring primarily to COVID-19 Pfizer vaccinations. Five documents have been identified in scope of this part of your request. The documents and decisions regarding release are outlined in Appendix 1. For context, there were generally three potential descriptions for a person's vaccination status (regarding the primary vaccination course): unvaccinated (0 doses), partially vaccinated (having received 1 dose of a 2-dose course) or fully vaccinated (having received a complete primary course of a vaccine). Therefore, a person who had received 1 or 2 doses of Pfizer vaccine was not considered "unvaccinated".

As such, when referring the primary course of vaccination, the term "vaccinated" was usually combined with "partially" or "fully" for clarity. Additionally, the term "fully immunised" was, by late 2021, used to refer to those who were at least 7-14 days after the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine (by which time the body would have mounted an immune response), while "fully vaccinated" status was gained on the day of the second dose.

To answer whether a person was defined as vaccinated 14 days after the second dose of the two-dose primary Comirnaty vaccine schedule prior to 26 November 2021, a timeline is outlined below pertaining to vaccination status:

On 26 November 2021, the COVID-19 vaccines provisionally approved by Medsafe for use in New Zealand were Pfizer (2-dose primary course), Janssen (1-dose primary course), and AstraZeneca (2-dose primary course). Additionally, there were numerous other COVID-19 vaccines in use around the world, which complicated the definition of "fully vaccinated" in New Zealand for purposes such as reporting the number of vaccinated people or determining the meeting of vaccination requirements.

To publicly formalise the type of COVID-19 vaccine and numbers of doses that would be considered fully vaccinated for the purposes of the COVID-19 Public Health Response Act 2020, the following notice was published in the New Zealand Gazette on 26 November 2021: [gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2021-go5122](https://www.gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2021-go5122).

This notice was subsequently updated on 25 February 2022 as the international COVID-19 vaccine landscape changed over time (please refer to link pasted above).

Within these Gazette publications, you can see that the number of doses required to be considered (fully) vaccinated varied according to vaccine type. For the COVID-19 vaccines that were provisionally approved for use in New Zealand the definition of “fully vaccinated” required completion of the full primary course (that is, 2 doses for Pfizer, 1 dose for Janssen, or 2 doses for AstraZeneca).

Prior to 26 November 2021, we have identified several memos that contain early working definitions for what constituted fully vaccinated/immunised. These were produced by the Ministry’s independent expert group, the COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV TAG) (6 September, 1 October, and 5 November 2021). The definitions in these memos form the basis of the 26 November 2021 Gazette publication (although each memo was for slightly different purpose). Unchanged throughout these preceding memos, is the recommendation that a “full primary course” is needed to be considered “fully vaccinated”, and therefore, as above, 2 doses for Pfizer, or 1 dose for Janssen, or 2 doses for AstraZeneca were needed both before and after 26 November 2021.

There is some variation between these memos about time since last dose in the primary course at which a person could be considered fully vaccinated or fully immunised (for example immediately after receiving the vaccine, 7 days later, or 14 days later). In late 2021, the Ministry moved towards referring to being “fully vaccinated” from the date the last dose in the primary series was received, and “fully immunised” referring to 7 or more days after the last dose (in order to account for the time for the body to mount the full immune response).

*2. Since 26 November 2021, please confirm that a person is defined as vaccinated after the lapse of 7 days from the second dose of the two-dose Comirnaty vaccine schedule.*

As described above, a person was considered “fully vaccinated” from the date the last dose in the primary series was received, and “fully immunised” from 7 or more days after the last dose. After a single dose of the Pfizer vaccine, a person was considered “partially vaccinated”.

*3. Please advise whether there were only two categories operating for Government vaccination data in 2021 and 2022, that is vaccinated or unvaccinated?*

As described above, there were generally three potential descriptions for a person’s vaccination status (regarding the primary vaccination course): unvaccinated (0 doses), partially vaccinated (having received 1 dose of a 2-dose course) or fully vaccinated (having received a complete primary course of a vaccine).

*4. I refer to your OIA reply to question one, Please advise what kind of Government reporting combined zero dose people with one dose group under the category of 'not fully vaccinated'. When did this combination reporting commence and end?*

5. Please advise whether Government data in respect of Covid-19 infections, Covid-19 hospitalisations and Covid-19 deaths (with or of Covid-19) in 2021 and 2022 reflected these definitions of vaccinated?"

On 21 May 2024, these parts of your request were transferred back to Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora under section 14(b)(i) of the Act. Please note, you can expect a response for their agency in due course.

I trust this information fulfils your request. If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on: [oiagr@health.govt.nz](mailto:oiagr@health.govt.nz).

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](mailto: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 Manatū Hauora website at: [www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests](http://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests).

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ross Bell', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Ross Bell  
**Acting Deputy Director-General**  
**Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui**

## Appendix 1: List of documents for release

#	Date	Document details	Decision on release
1	6 September 2021	Memo: <i>COVID-19 vaccines recognised for work at the Aotearoa New Zealand Border</i>	Refused in full under section 18(d) of the Act as the information is publicly available here: <a href="http://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Who-we-are/Expert-groups/COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG/6-September-2021.pdf">www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Who-we-are/Expert-groups/COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG/6-September-2021.pdf</a> .
2		Memo: <i>Guidance for the potential use of an extension/third dose in the context of a missed vaccination incident</i>	Refused in full under section 18(d) of the Act as the information is publicly available here: <a href="http://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Who-we-are/Expert-groups/COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG/Guidance-for-the-potential-use-of-an-extension-third-dose-in-the-context-of-a-missed-vaccination-incident.pdf">www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Who-we-are/Expert-groups/COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG/Guidance-for-the-potential-use-of-an-extension-third-dose-in-the-context-of-a-missed-vaccination-incident.pdf</a> .
3	29 September 2021	Memo: <i>COVID-19 vaccines for arrivals to Aotearoa New Zealand: COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV TAG) Recommendations</i>	Refused in full under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information requested is publicly available here: <a href="http://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Who-we-are/Expert-groups/COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG/29-September-2021-COVID-19-vaccines-for-arrivals-to-Aotearoa-New-Zealand.-COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG-Recommendations-PDF-884-KB.pdf">www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Who-we-are/Expert-groups/COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG/29-September-2021-COVID-19-vaccines-for-arrivals-to-Aotearoa-New-Zealand.-COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG-Recommendations-PDF-884-KB.pdf</a> .
4	1 October 2021	Memo: <i>COVID-19 vaccines for arrivals to Aotearoa New Zealand: COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV TAG) Recommendations</i>	Refused in full under section 18(d) of the Act as the information is publicly available here: <a href="http://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Who-we-are/Expert-groups/COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG/1-October-2021-COVID-19-vaccines-for-arrivals-to-Aotearoa-New-Zealand.-COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG-Recommendations-PDF-137-KB.pdf">www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Who-we-are/Expert-groups/COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG/1-October-2021-COVID-19-vaccines-for-arrivals-to-Aotearoa-New-Zealand.-COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG-Recommendations-PDF-137-KB.pdf</a> .
5	5 November 2021	Memo: <i>New Zealand definition of fully vaccinated for use inside the New Zealand border</i>	Refused in full under section 18(d) of the Act as the information is publicly available here: <a href="http://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Who-we-are/Expert-groups/COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG/New-Zealand-definition-of-">www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Who-we-are/Expert-groups/COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG/New-Zealand-definition-of-</a>

#	Date	Document details	Decision on release
			<a href="#">fully-vaccinated-for-use-inside-the-New-Zealand.pdf</a>