



3 July 2025

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 30 May 2025, requesting information for the number of staff at the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) who were terminated in 2022 due to not being vaccinated for COVID-19.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out separately below.

- 1. It has come to my attention that a worker in the Northland Region MSD was terminated on 9 March 2022 with a "Covid-19 Vaccination Policy - Final Decision" letter for not being vaccinated.*
- 2. Would you please share the total number of staff who were terminated at MSD in 2022 due to not being vaccinated for covid-19?*

As of 8 March 2022, there were 258 Ministry employees who did not meet the requirements of the MSD COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (the "Policy"). The Ministry issued approximately 150<sup>1</sup> letters of termination to employees for breach of the Policy on that date. Termination was on notice, with a final date of employment of 8 April 2022.

On 1 April 2022, based on new guidance, the Ministry rescinded all notices of termination. Therefore, no employees working for the Ministry on 1 April 2022, were terminated for breaching the Policy. Of the approximately 150 employees who received notices of termination on 8 March:

- some chose to vaccinate and had their notices rescinded
- some chose to leave during the notice period (notice in lieu) and prior to notices being rescinded
- some chose to retire

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<sup>1</sup> Of the remaining employees who did not meet the policy requirements, approximately 100 employees had indicated that they were waiting for the Novovax vaccine, were on Parental Leave or were on Leave Without Pay. The 150 is approximate because the figure was constantly changing.

- some subsequently returned to work at MSD after having left
- some simply carried on working having had their notice rescinded.

Of the approximately 150 employees who received a notice of termination, there were 43 that left during the notice period, electing to take payment in lieu of notice. Because they had already left and were no longer a Ministry employee on 1 April 2022, they did not have the notice to terminate rescinded. Of the 43:

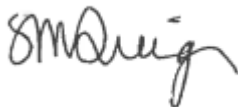
- 3 requested to return to work (agreed to by the Ministry and their service was treated as continuous)
- 5 requested to retire (agreed to by the Ministry and their reason for departing was recorded as 'retirement').
- 35 neither retired nor returned to work for the Ministry.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Anna Graham  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**