

Freedom of Information request 236-23

Request

It states on the NHS INFORM website under the heading 'Vaccine exemptions' "An exemption scheme was in place to help people who were unable to be vaccinated while the domestic COVID Status certification scheme was in use."

1. Please could you outline the exemption scheme application process put in place while the domestic COVID Status certification scheme was in use?
2. Were Vaccination Centre staff informed of the vaccine exemption scheme application process, so they were able to inform potential applicants of the steps involved?
3. How were Vaccine Exemption Certificates issued?

Response

1. Requests for medical exemption required a clinical judgement to determine whether an individual was medically unable to receive a vaccine or exemption from COVID-19 testing. This may also have required additional medical evidence to be provided by other medical practitioners for the individual, with their consent. Immunisation Co-ordinators or equivalent roles in NHS Borders assessed each request for medical exemption from COVID-19 vaccination.
2. Information to the public on applying for a medical exemption was provided via NHS Inform and the National Contact Centre helpline rather than Vaccination Centre staff. Applicants who requested but were not granted an exemption were given additional support to safely access and progress with their vaccination at the local Vaccination Centres.
3. Medical exemption printed certificates were provided via Royal Mail. Most exemptions were time limited for 6 months to 1 year.

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **236-23** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the

Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle,
Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.