

21 February 2022



**Re Request for Official Information – Omicron Planning Documents**

I refer to your official information request received by Auckland DHB on 20 January 2022 for the following information:

**Under the Official Information Act 1982 I request please:**

**A copy of all documents held by the Northern Region Health Coordination Centre relating to what the plan is for the health response in case of a community case/outbreak of the omicron variant of COVID-19. I also ask for the dates of these documents/plans please and who created them.**

I am responding on behalf of the Northern Region Health Coordination Centre (NRHCC), the COVID-19 response and vaccination team set up by the Northland, Waitematā, Auckland, and Counties Manukau District Health Boards (DHBs).

The Omicron variant was first detected in South Africa in late November 2021 ([CNBC](#) - 24.11.21) although it had probably been circulating for longer and more widely before this date.

Reporting shows it was a month later that Omicron took hold in Europe. The Guardian reported (23.12.21) – “*WHO’s Europe chief says ‘another storm coming’ as Omicron takes hold*” and advocated for widespread boosters. At this stage, Omicron was present in at least 38 countries.

COVID-19 planning in the Northern Region has been underway ever since the virus first emerged as a pandemic threat in March 2020. Every plan developed in the last two years has been aimed at addressing the immediate threat of a known variant, as well as building expertise and knowledge to deal with future unknown variants.

As you can appreciate the NRHCC is fully committed to responding to the current COVID-19 outbreak and as such we have not provided prior draft versions of documents as this would require resource to be pulled away from their present duties.

Due to the substantial amount of work that would be required to research and collate in full the information you have requested, we are refusing to provide *all* documents held by the Northern Region Health Coordination Centre relating to what the plan is for the health response in case of a community case/outbreak of the omicron variant of COVID-19 under section 18(f) of the OIA. However, we have provided the most recent versions of Omicron preparation documents held by NRHCC which have become part of the structure of our Omicron response since 26/11/2021, i.e. when the World Health Organisation designated the variant B.1.1.529, named Omicron, a variant of concern.

Appendices 1 through 8 include an overarching NRHCC Omicron Response Programme document and the most recent versions of individual work streams Omicron planning documents. Please note the status of many of these documents is “live”, meaning they are continuously reviewed and updated, and as such the version provided in this response may no longer be the most up to date version of the document.

In addition to the above planning documents, appendices 9 through 12 include papers written and presented to the Regional Executive Forum (REF) concerning Omicron preparation which have become part of the structure of the NRHCC Omicron response for the period 26/11/2021 – 20/01/22 (i.e. when the World Health Organisation designated the variant B.1.1.529, named Omicron, a variant of concern and receipt of the OIA request).

Parts of these documents have been redacted pursuant to s 9(2)(j) of the Official Information Act on the basis that it is necessary to withhold this information to enable NRHCC to carry on negotiations without prejudice or disadvantage. The need to withhold this information is not, at this time, outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable to make that information available in the public interest.

Other information has been redacted from minutes on the basis that it is not relevant to the request.

Please refer to the tables below in reference to documents held by the Northern Region Health Coordination Centre relating to what the plan is for the health response in case of a community case/outbreak of the omicron variant of COVID-19.

	Function	Created by:	Title	Document Last Updated	Document Status	
Appendix 1	NRHCC	PMO	Omicron Response Programme	11/02/2022	Live	
Appendix 2	NRHCC	Whanau HQ (CIQ)	Whanau HQ Omicron Plan_23_01_22 V6	29/01/2022	Live	
Appendix 3	NRHCC	Whanau HQ (CIQ)	Whanau HQ Model of Care	16/02/2022	Live	
Appendix 4	NRHCC	Maori Health	Maori Omicron Planning 2022	11/02/2022	Live	
Appendix 5	NRHCC	Planning & Intell - Testing	NRHCC Phase 2 Omicron Response Testing Guidance	14/02/2022	Live	
Appendix 6	NRHCC	Primary Care	Primary and Community Care Integrated Omicron Surge Plan	16/02/2022	Draft+Live	Out for Consultation
Appendix 7	NRHCC	Workforce	Workforce Redeployment Triggers	19/01/2022	Live	
Appendix 8	NRHCC	Vaccination	Vaccination Planning for Omicron Outbreak and Surge	14/02/2022	Live	

	Presented to:	Submitted by:	Title	Date Presented
Appendix 9 .1	NRHCC - Regional Executive Forum (REF)	NRHCC - Digital	Covid Testing Email Text Notifications	20/12/2021
Appendix 9 .2	NRHCC - Regional Executive Forum (REF)	ARPHS	Public Health Outbreak Management in response to Omicron variant	20/12/2021
Appendix 9 .3	NRHCC - Regional Executive Forum (REF)	Vaccination	Omicron contingency planning – Vaccination Booster Surge Capacity	20/12/2021
Appendix 9 .4	NRHCC - Regional Executive Forum (REF)	REF	Meeting Minutes	20/12/2021
Appendix 10	NRHCC - Regional Executive Forum (REF)	Vaccination	Scenario output for discussion - Preliminary <i>No Meeting Minutes for 23/12/21 - papers reviewed &amp; endorsed via email</i>	23/12/2021
Appendix 11 .1	NRHCC - Regional Executive Forum (REF)	NRHCC	DHB Infection and exposure management in Omicron outbreak	10/01/2022
Appendix 11 .2	NRHCC - Regional Executive Forum (REF)	NRHCC - Outbreak	Omicron preparedness update	10/01/2022
Appendix 11 .3	NRHCC - Regional Executive Forum (REF)	REF	Meeting Minutes	10/01/2022
Appendix 12 .1	NRHCC - Regional Executive Forum (REF)	NRHCC - MRCH + PaRCH + Finance	Highbrook Lease Extension	20/01/2022
Appendix 12 .2	NRHCC - Regional Executive Forum (REF)	NRHCC - Whanau HQ + Data & Digital	NRHCC Quality Management System	20/01/2022
Appendix 12 .3	NRHCC - Regional Executive Forum (REF)	NRHCC - MRCH	Māori Regional Coordination Hub (MRCH)	20/01/2022
Appendix 12 .4	NRHCC - Regional Executive Forum (REF)	REF	Meeting Minutes	20/01/2022

The above documents can be accessed here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/lnb6my6wh4yoy3r/AACWKBoVhfcH9MrtAjAKnOvwa?dl=0>

I trust this information answers your questions.

You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Yours sincerely,



Ailsa Claire, OBE

**Lead Chief Executive of Northern Region Health Coordination Centre (NRHCC)  
Chief Executive of Te Toka Tumai (Auckland District Health Board)**