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Vaccine mandate for border and corrections workers to end

HON DR AYESHA VERRALL(/MINISTER/HON-DR-AYESHA-VERRALL)

COVID-19 Response (/portfolio/labour-2020-2023/covid-19-response)

The Government has announced an end to the requirement for border workers and corrections staff to be fully vaccinated. This will come into place from 2 July 2022.

100 per cent of corrections staff in prisons, and as of 23 June 2022 97 per cent of active border workers were fully vaccinated.

"As we have previously said we keep vaccine mandates under continuous review and remove them when safe to do so," COVID-19 Response Minister Dr Ayesha Verrall said.

"Vaccination has been one of our strongest and most effective defences to protect against COVID-19. It's helped protect our border and corrections workers and their whānau. But we feel the requirement has served its purpose well.

"The risk COVID-19 poses at the border is much lower than it was previously. Alongside high rates of vaccination amongst border workers the number of passengers arriving by air with COVID-19 is less than 3%.

"Corrections staff will also no longer be included in the Vaccination Order. Currently all corrections staff in prisons are fully vaccinated and 72% of people in prison have been fully vaccinated.

"How we manage COVID-19 in Aotearoa continues to change and as certain protections are no longer required we have shown we will remove them.

"We have high levels of vaccination amongst the general population and we have increasing protection in the population from prior infection, so tools like vaccine mandates in most settings are no longer necessary.

"Our corrections and border workers have played an extremely important role throughout the pandemic. I can't thank them enough for their dedication and commitment to keeping us all safe," Dr Ayesha Verrall said.

The Vaccination Order remains in place for health and disability workers as they continue to have close interactions with people who are at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19. The settings for health and disability workers are reviewed regularly.