

8 March 2022

Subject: Official Information Act request re: media access to Lakes DHB sites

Thank you for your request for information under the Official Information Act received by Lakes DHB on 15 February 2022. Please see the following answers to your questions.

What was your board's policy regarding media access to your DHB premises to interview staff and patients, and take photographs and video before any COVID-19 restrictions were introduced?

Our media policy states that all access to DHB sites is to be through the Communications Manager

Were any new conditions for media access introduced as a result of COVID-19? If so, how was this decision made and why?

As part of changes made to our COVID-19 visitor policy, it was decided that all business visitors were to show a vaccine pass before entering Lakes DHB sites. The decision was made to keep our staff, patients and visitors as safe as possible.

What were the new conditions and how did they affect access at different alert levels and under the current traffic light system?

See above

What is your board's intentions for the future regards media access under COVID-19?

The requirements to be vaccinated will remain under COVID-19 restrictions.

Do you feel your media access rules are consistent with the media's responsibilities to report accurately and promptly on issues, and also with the right of patients and staff to interact freely with the media if they consent?

Yes. When the communications team is asked for information or access to sites for photos, they work closely with relevant managers to make this possible, as long as it will not affect hospital operations.

In normal times, access to patients is sometimes supported, however it is preferred that the focus of a stay in hospital is getting well and patients are free to liaise with the media when they go home.