

Media release – embargoed until 5am Tuesday 18 January 2022

Application for Judicial Review of Pfizer vaccine rollout for 5 to 11-year-olds

Legal action has been launched by a group of concerned parents calling for an urgent review of Medsafe's decision to roll out the Pfizer vaccine to 5 to 11 year olds.

Following lodgement at Wellington's High Court last week of an application for a Judicial Review, Justice Rebecca Ellis held the first court conference yesterday and granted anonymity to the applicants and their families.

The applicant families stated they wish to protect themselves and their children from further bullying that has been apparent in school, as well as socially, due to their decision not to vaccinate.

The application for a preliminary order to immediately halt the rollout to children aged 5 to 11 was not granted. However a substantive hearing for orders halting the rollout is scheduled to proceed next Thursday 27 January before Justice Ellis.

Vaccine manufacturer Pfizer will be served with the proceedings and will be given an opportunity to be heard in court.

The legal action has been brought by the group of parents who have questions for the government that they feel have not been properly answered.

Some have experienced reactions to the Pfizer vaccine themselves, have children at risk, or are simply concerned about the new technology used. They draw attention to Pfizer's very small trials for this age group which the New Zealand Government appears to have relied in provisionally approving this vaccine, as well as the lack of robust safety information generally.

Further questions arise given the recommendations currently on the WHO website that state: *"There are currently no efficacy or safety data for children below the age of 12 years. Until such data are available, individuals below 12 years of age should not be routinely vaccinated."* <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/who-can-take-the-pfizer-biontech-covid-19--vaccine>

An organisation called The 'Hood is supporting the applicants by facilitating the case. Made up of a wider group of 1500 concerned parents, doctors, nurses, academics, scientists, lawyers and others, The 'Hood said in a media statement that it shares a common goal: to make the best decision for their children and young people.

"Like the applicants calling for a Judicial Review, we want the government to answer the many questions we've also been raising.

"The 'Hood has filed numerous OIA requests and sent letters sent to the Children's Commissioner, Government Ministers and agencies, requesting clarification of the specific criteria and data that Medsafe used to approve this latest rollout of the Pfizer vaccine.

"Too many of these questions remain unanswered unsatisfactorily, or not addressed at all.

"There are just too many unknowns with the Pfizer vaccine and not enough evidence to satisfy us that the benefits of vaccination outweigh the risks."

"These parents are not 'anti-vax' – in fact, many have vaccinated their children against measles, mumps, rubella and other childhood illnesses."

The 'Hood website launched this month www.thehoodnz.com to act as a resource for parents and children to find answers to their concerns and questions. It features a video of parents (none of whom are applicants in the court case) talking openly on camera about their concerns. See: <https://thehoodnz.com/watch>.

A 'Hood survey currently underway via the website shows 900 out of the 1400 people who have completed it so far know someone who has had an adverse reaction to the Covid-19 vaccination.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

The 'Hood is happy to answer any queries sent to us at info@thehoodnz.com. Please make the subject line MEDIA QUERY and be sure to state both your name and your media organisation.

Because The 'Hood is a community of concerned parents, our children's social, mental and physical wellbeing is our priority. The current highly charged social climate around Covid-19 means many of our children are experiencing harassment due to their vaccination status.

Unfortunately, this means we must remain anonymous to protect them from further harm.

We acknowledge this is not ideal from a media perspective.

Thanks for your interest in The 'Hood. We look forward to answering any questions and will respond as soon as we can.