



BRIEFING

Transitioning complex groups in MIQ to a 7 day stay

Date:	10 November 2021	Priority:	High
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2122-1773

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response	<p>Note the transitional arrangements for some complex groups from 14 November</p> <p>Agree to forward a copy of this briefing to the Minister of Sport and Recreation for his information.</p> <p>Note that MIQ will continue to operate an exemptions process for early and temporary release but that the bar for approval will be very high due to public health considerations</p>	15 November 2021

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Kara Isaac	General Manager, MIQ Policy	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Privacy of natural persons	Senior Policy Advisor, MIQ Policy	persons	

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
The Ministry of Health

Minister's office to complete:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |

Comments



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Transitioning complex groups in MIQ to a 7 day stay

Date:	10 November 2021	Priority:	High
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Purpose

This briefing sets out further advice on transitioning complex groups in Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) in transitioning to a 7 day stay. We also include information relating to how exemption requests will be managed from 14 November.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) recommends that you:

- a **Note** that we will support vulnerable complex groups (Afghanistan evacuees and refugees) with 10 day MIQ stays on a transitional basis, while their self-isolation arrangements are finalised. ✓
Noted
- b **Note** that most group arrivals will be required to leave MIQ on day 7 and make their own self-isolation arrangements. However, we will support some cohorts of fishers, Antarctic workers, and cargo crew travelling to the Pacific arriving in November with 10 day MIQ stays as a transitional measure. ✓
Noted
- c **Note** that concerns have been raised that the Bangladesh cricket team, arriving in MIQ on 10 December, may not be able to train on days 8-10 while in self-isolation. ✓
Noted
- d **Note** that decisions about training exemptions for sports teams are administered by the Ministry of Health ✓
Noted
- e **Note** that given the Bangladesh cricket team is not arriving in New Zealand until 10 December that we intend to require their departure on 17 December (assuming they meet low risk indicators), as their ability to train is not part of the public health considerations that inform the length of MIQ stay.
Note / Discuss
- f **Agree** to forward this briefing to the Minister for Sport and Recreation for his information
Agree / Disagree
- g **Note** that MBIE will continue to operate an exemptions process for temporary or early release from MIQ from 14 November.
Noted

h **Note** that currently where exemptions are approved it is almost always for day 7 or later and that, as such, it is expected that a very high bar will apply to requests from people to leave prior to day 7.

Noted

i **Note** that there will be no process established for people to apply for an exemption from the three day self-isolation requirements, but that that the new Order will make it clear when a person can leave self-isolation during the three days (e.g. risk to health or safety)

Noted

j **Agree** to proactively release this briefing with any withholding consistent with the Official Information Act 1982.

Agree / Disagree



Kara Isaac
General Manager, MIQ Policy
MIQ, MBIE

10 / 11 / 2021



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

19 / 11 / 21

Regarding rec (e) if the team want to stay in MIQ we should facilitate that.

Regarding rec (h) I would like to see a greater emphasis on the risk profile of the individual traveller (eg. a fully vaccinated returnee from Perth wanting to visit a dying relative will be pretty low risk after a negative Day 0/1 test).



Background

1. On 5 November, MBIE officials informed you of the operational implications for the Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) system in transitioning from 14 to 7-day stays [2122-1661]. This included matters related to transitioning Managed Isolation Facilities (MIFs) into a new cycle, exiting people from MIQ on 14 November, cohorting, MIQ fees, individuals remaining in MIQ for longer than 7 days, and early advice on groups that may need to remain in MIQ for longer than 7 days.
2. This briefing provides you with further information relating to groups remaining in MIQ past day 7. We also include information relating to how exemption requests will be managed from 15 November.

Remaining in MIQ past day 7

Individuals/families remaining in MIQ past day 7

3. MBIE's expectation is that all individuals and groups exit MIQ on day 7 if they meet the low-risk indicators¹ set out in the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Isolation and Quarantine) Order 2020 (the Isolation and Quarantine Order). This will allow MIQ to plan for ongoing border arrivals, and free up and utilise capacity gains in shifting to a 7 day operating model as much as possible within workforce constraints.
4. However, there are a small number of individuals and families/whānau currently in MIQ who have advised up that they are unable to safely self-isolate after day 7 (due to limited time to arrange self-isolation locations or due to having complex health needs). In exceptional circumstances we will support individuals and families/whānau to stay in MIQ for up to 10 days for a transitional period up to the end of November [2122-1661 refers]. These individuals will be managed on a case-by-case basis out of operational contingency.
5. We are aware of concerns about accommodating unaccompanied minors during the three days self-isolation. We are continuing to work with parents/guardians and schools to ensure a clear understanding of the self-isolation requirements for unaccompanied minors and that they are appropriately cared for after departing managed isolation.
6. From December it will be the responsibility of the individual or family/whānau, or another government agency, employer, or industry body, to make suitable self-isolation arrangements.

Groups remaining in MIQ past day 7

7. Some groups present a particular challenge due to their size and complexity. It is particularly difficult for some groups to make suitable arrangements to self-isolate on short notice and in accordance with the Ministry of Health's (MOH's) self-isolation requirements [HR-2021-2389 refers].
8. While our expectation remains that groups exit MIQ on day 7, due to the short transition period to the 7 day stay model some complex group cohorts may need to remain in MIQ for 10 days, as it has not been possible to make arrangements for them to safely self-isolate in the time provided. This arrangement will cover transitional periods only (mostly until the end of November). Following this period, it will be the responsibility of groups, employers and/or other agencies (eg MFAT, INZ) to arrange suitable self-isolation locations after day 7 in MIQ.

¹ Medical examination and testing determine a person is at low risk of having or transmitting COVID-19.

9. We have previously advised you that we will have no ability to charge groups who enter MIQ on or after 14 November for MIQ stays longer than 7 days [2122-1661 refers].

Complex groups anticipated to need to remain in MIQ for ten days on a transitional basis

10. Refugees and Afghanistan evacuees are the two groups that need the greatest amount of ongoing support. These groups are particularly vulnerable and many in these populations have untreated underlying health conditions.
11. Currently after 14 days managed isolation, Afghanistan evacuees move to the Nesuto hotel and refugees move to the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre. INZ and MOH are working to ensure that these locations meet MOH's self-isolation criteria or an alternative. Due to the limited time available to assess these locations (or find alternative locations), we will support these groups in the interim to remain in managed isolation for 10 days. We are aiming for this transitional period to conclude by 5 December, but there may be a requirement to extend this period until early January if suitable arrangements have not been finalised by the end of November.
12. The cohorts that we are planning to support for 10 day MIQ stays are:
- **Afghanistan evacuees:** 186 people (112 rooms) arriving in MIQ between 8-28 November. Additionally, another 215 rooms between 29 November and mid-December will be required if the Nesuto hotel isn't suitable for self-isolation and an alternative isn't found by the end of November.
 - **Refugees:** 59 people (34 rooms) arriving in MIQ between 6-28 November, and approximately 15 rooms between 29 November – 5 December. Additionally, another 44 rooms in the December intake will be required if the Resettlement Centre doesn't meet isolation requirements.
13. We will also support the following groups with 10 day MIQ stays until the end of November, due to the limited time available for other agencies and/or employers to find a suitable location for self-isolation in the time provided:
- **Fishers:** one cohort of 65 people who arrived on 9 November (if they cannot self-isolate on the fishing vessel).
 - **US, European and Korean Antarctic Programmes Workers:** four cohorts of 198 total people (197 rooms) arriving between 12-20 November.
 - **Cargo crew servicing the Pacific:** two cohorts of 28 rooms each across November.
14. Additional cohorts of these groups arriving from December onwards are expected to arrange their own locations of self-isolation that meet MOH's self-isolation criteria. We will not be able to provide MIQ stays beyond 7 days after this point in order to utilise capacity gains under the new operating model.
15. Groups that need to stay in MIQ for 10 days will be provided for by powers of the Chief Executive of MBIE under the Isolation and Quarantine Order.

Groups that do not require longer MIQ stays

Sports team for training purposes

16. Some sports teams apply for exemptions to train while in MIQ, and in many cases may be travelling to New Zealand on the understanding that they will be able to train while in isolation. There are Ministerial powers to grant exemptions to allow for training, but work is still being undertaken by the Ministry of Health about how conditions associated with an

exemption can make training possible in self-isolation (the conditions that work in an MIQ setting may be quite difficult to replicate for self-isolation).

17. We are aware that concerns have been raised that the Bangladesh cricket team, arriving in MIQ on 10 December, may not be able to train under appropriate conditions while in the three days of self-isolation. Given the Bangladesh cricket team is not arriving until 10 December we intend to release them on 17 December, as their ability to train is not relevant to public health considerations that inform the length of MIQ stay and there is sufficient time for self-isolation arrangements to be made for them.
18. The Ministry of Health is the agency responsible for training exemptions and are aware of the concerns raised about the uncertainty about whether the Bangladesh training team will be able to train while in self-isolation.

501 deportees

19. Currently we have 31 501 deportees in MIQ, departing MIQ on 14 November, and another two cohorts arriving in November. As there is no public health grounds to hold 501 deportees longer than 7 days, and the Australian Border Force is making arrangements for self-isolation accommodation, we intend to release 501 deportees on day 7.
20. We note that that there may be a risk that 501 deportees will not comply with self-isolation requirements, but this is not a justifiable basis for us to detain them as a group.

Implications of 7+3 for exemptions to managed isolation

21. Under the Isolation and Quarantine Order, a person may be allowed to leave their place of isolation in a MIF for an exceptional reason (eg to visit a dying loved one). Exemption to leave MIF applications are considered by MBIE and a Medical Officer of Health (where MBIE has formed a conditional view to approve the application). The chief executive of MBIE can place conditions on the exemption.
22. We will continue to operate an exemptions process for temporary or early release from managed isolation from 14 November. However, because exemptions that are approved for temporary or early release are currently almost always on day 7 or later, public health considerations mean that a very high bar will apply for anyone to be approved for release prior to day 7 from MIQ.
23. No process is being established for people to apply for exemptions from the three days of self-isolation after they have left MIQ. This is because the resources required to operationalise such a process would be significant and in most instances the process itself (applying, assessing application, seeking evidence, decision or determination) may well take three days.
24. In the absence of an exemptions process from the three days self-isolation requirements, the new Isolation and Quarantine Order will make it clear the situations where a person can leave self-isolation during that period (eg due to risk to health and safety). Further advice to you on the proposed changes to the Isolation and Quarantine Order is expected later this week.
25. How exemptions from self-isolation would operate under a probable longer period of self-isolation from 2022 will be developed as part of the further advice to Reconnecting New Zealanders Ministers in late November.