



Department of Health

30/08/2016

FOI-1046450

Dear A Clerk,

Thank you for your request of 15th August 2016 under the Freedom of Information Act (2000). Your exact request was:

"In your response you stated

The Government's position on cannabis in its raw form is clear.

There are many health harms associated with using cannabis, such as insomnia, depression, anxiety, chronic bronchitis, lung damage, and an increase in the risk of later developing a psychotic illness or triggering a relapse in an individual with a pre-existing mental health illness. There are also societal harms, such as crime and a lack of personal motivation and attainment. It is for these reasons that the Government believes that cannabis should not be legalised or decriminalised.

Please provide documentary evidence to support your unjust claims. I hold professional documentary evidence to the contrary. I feel your comments amount to scaremongering.

1: Insomnia. Sativa could cause insomnia. Indica is a fantastic sleep aid used by insomniacs worldwide.

2: Depression and anxiety. Cannabis is effectively used to treat depression and anxiety worldwide.

3: Chronic bronchitis, lung damage:. More and more people now use vaporizers and edibles which cause no lung damage whatsoever.

4: Lack of personal motivation. This is strain dependant. Indica can induce lack of motivation but obviously this is down to personal choice and should be no concern of the government. Sativa does not induce lack of motivation, in fact Sativa opens up ones creativity.

5: Lack of attainment? Totally without foundation but should be no concern of the government unless we now live in an Orwellian society.

6: Crime? Please elaborate.

7: Once again I request you to please provide me with the evidence that cannabis in its raw form has no medicinal values. I don't wish for your Opinions. I would like concrete medical evidence which I very much doubt you can provide because this is an out and out Lie!

9: If an individual chooses to use cannabis in their own home surely this is a victimless crime?

According to your comment... It is for these reasons that the Government believes that cannabis should not be legalised or decriminalised.

Therefore if I can provide medical evidence from medical professionals that your opinions are without foundation (which I can) then can we assume that cannabis should be decriminalized?

Incidentally, Tobacco and Alcohol cause more death and self destruction than cannabis does ten thousand fold.

Why then are they still legal?

A full history of my FOI request and all correspondence is available on the Internet at this address:

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/cannabis_policy

The Department holds some information relevant to your request. However, as the information held by the Department is in the public domain, we will under Section 21 of the FOI Act (information accessible to the applicant by other means) refer you to the published source.

The former National Treatment Agency, now part of Public Health England, produced a key document summarising the health harms of drugs and this is available at: <http://www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/healthharmsfinal-v1.pdf>.

Cannabis is defined as a Class B drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (the 'Act'). This Act is the main law to control and classify drugs that are 'dangerous or otherwise harmful' when misused. The Home Office is responsible for the operation of the Act, and you would need to address to that Department any points that you wish to make in relation to the reclassification of cannabis under that legislation.

If you have any queries about this email, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to:

Head of the Freedom of Information Team
Department of Health
Room 520
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Email: freedomofinformation@dh.gsi.gov.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner (ICO) for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Department. The ICO can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Anna Coundley

Freedom of Information Officer
Department of Health

freedomofinformation@dh.gsi.gov.uk