



Home Office

Crime, Policing and Fire Group
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Tel: 020 7035 4848
Fax: 020 7035 4745
www.gov.uk/home-office

Mr Kenneth Heskin
request-617186-c3a2d379@whatdotheyknow.com

20 February 2020

Dear Mr Heskin

Freedom of Information request reference: 57676

Thank you for your email of 5 February, in which you ask;

- 1. Please provide me with copies of 'clear scientific evidence' (held by the government at that time) that cannabis holds no medicinal values.*
- 2. If you didn't hold 'clear scientific evidence' that cannabis holds no medicinal values, please explain why you deliberately misled the public.*
- 3. If you did hold 'clear scientific evidence' that cannabis holds no medicinal values then please explain why Theresa May and drugs minister Victoria Atkins' husbands were directly involved with the largest medical cannabis farm in Europe.*

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

In regard to your first request; I confirm that the Home Office holds the information which you have requested. However, we believe that the information is already reasonably accessible to you.

The Government's position in 2018 was not that cannabis holds 'no medicinal value'. In 2018, Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer for England and Chief Medical Adviser to the UK government, reviewed evidence for the therapeutic benefit of cannabis-based medicinal products. The report concluded that there was 'conclusive evidence of the therapeutic benefit of cannabis-based medicinal products for certain medical conditions'. Part 1 of the Review is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/722010/CMO_Report_Cannabis_Products_Web_Accessible.pdf.

You will note however, that the Review also acknowledges 'the evidence that cannabis and some of its derivatives can be addictive and harmful has been known for some time and is not disputed by recent science, so I believe the reasons it is a controlled drug in the UK stand'. In line with the advice of expert advisors, from 1 November 2018 the Government changed legislation to allow

patient access to cannabis-based products for medicinal use (CBPM) under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 for specific patient conditions.

Section 21(1) of the FOIA exempts the Home Office from having to provide you with this information, because it is already reasonably accessible to you. If you have any difficulties in accessing this information at the source which I have indicated, please contact me again.

In regard to your second question, as covered in the point above, the Government acknowledged that there was 'conclusive evidence of the therapeutic benefit of cannabis-based medicinal products for certain medical conditions.'

On your third question, when Victoria Atkins was appointed as Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability in November 2017, the Minister voluntarily recused herself from policy or decisions relating to cannabis, including licensing.

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to foirequests@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk, quoting reference 57676. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request would be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you were to remain dissatisfied after an internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the FOIA.

Yours sincerely

Drugs and Alcohol Unit