



# Department of Health & Social Care

Freedom of Information Team  
Department of Health and Social Care  
39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

[www.gov.uk/dhsc](http://www.gov.uk/dhsc)

Mr Angus Files

**request-536265-  
119a929b@whatdotheyknow.com**

21 December 2018

Dear Mr Files

## **Freedom of Information Request Reference FOI 1158791**

Thank you for your request dated 30 November 2018 in which you asked the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC):

***Subject: Freedom of Information request - John Stone Letter MMR safety.***

***Please make available the text of the letter of Dame Sally Davies to John Stone quoted in Mr Stone's article I seen on Age Of Autism as link below.***

**<https://www.ageofautism.com/2018/11/the-junk-safety-science-which-underpins-uk-government-mmr-vaccine-policy.html>**

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

DHSC holds this information, and the text of this letter is provided below:

[starts]

*Vaccine safety is extremely important and taken seriously, and the safety of MMR vaccines has remained under continual review. As with any vaccine, MMR vaccines can have side effects in some people, and these are listed in the product literature. The potential for side effects has to be balanced against the benefits of protection against what can be very serious and potentially life-threatening infections. When safety issues have been confirmed in the past these have been acted upon. Your e-mail refers to the action taken with Urabe mumps-containing vaccines, and another example includes the identification and precautions around the risk of immune thrombocytopenic purpura with MMR vaccines. Should emerging evidence confirm any new risks, I can assure you that appropriate action would be taken.*

*Specifically in relation to whether MMR vaccines may be a cause of autism, a substantial body of population-based research has found no evidence to suggest a causal association. This evidence (not just for MMR, but other types of vaccine) is available for review in the published medical literature, and was summarised in a meta-analysis in 2014 which is free to download (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264410X14006367?via%3Dihub>).*

*In relation to vaccine safety monitoring more generally, I can assure you that systems are in place to keep safety under review. This includes continual review of suspected adverse reaction reports (such as those submitted through the Yellow Card Scheme), evaluation of GP and hospital-based health records linked to immunisations, review of worldwide data and close collaboration with international health authorities.*

*We know that confidence in the UK vaccine programme is at very high levels and the vast majority of parents choose to have their children protected by vaccination. Vaccines are one of the best public health interventions we have - saving lives and preventing millions of people from getting life-threatening diseases.*

[Ends]

If you are not satisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to appeal by asking for an internal review. This should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to the address at the top of this letter, or the email address at the end of this letter.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may complain directly to the Information Commissioner (ICO) who may decide to investigate your concerns. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have already appealed our original response, and received our internal review response. The ICO will not usually investigate concerns where there has been an undue delay in bringing it to their attention. You should raise your concerns with them within three months of your last meaningful contact with us.

The ICO can be contacted at:

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

<https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy Crowe

Freedom of Information Officer

E [FreedomofInformation@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:FreedomofInformation@dhsc.gov.uk)