



Department of Health & Social Care

Freedom of Information Team
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
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www.gov.uk/dhsc

Mr Phil Booth
[request-696875-
2184a06b@whatdotheyknow.com](#)

4 November 2020

Dear Mr Booth,

Freedom of Information Request Reference FOI-1261423

Thank you for your request dated 7 October 2020 in which you asked the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC):

Subject: Freedom of Information request - Joint Biosecurity Centre agreements, data sources and DPIAs

Dear Department of Health and Social Care,

With regard to the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) as described on GOV.UK here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/joint-biosecurity-centre>

I would like to make a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. For the purposes of the Act, please take the date of your receipt of this request as 7 October 2020.

Please provide:

1) A copy of the framework agreement or 'establishing document' that defines how DHSC and the JBC work to serve the public and the taxpayer, and how they discharge their responsibilities. To be clear, I am asking for the *equivalent* to the framework agreement that exists between, e.g. DHSC Public Health England (PHE):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/framework-agreement-between-the-department-of-health-and-public-health-england> - and also between DHSC Health Education England, DHSC the Health Research Authority, etc.

2) A copy of the partnership agreement, MoU and/or any other documents defining the relationship and/or arrangements - including data sharing arrangements - between the JBC and PHE.

3) A complete list of the health and non-health sources, as well as other information feeds on which the JBC draws for its analysis.

4) A copy of any and all Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) that the JBC has performed, and - if this is not covered in the DPIAs - a description of the operational steps JBC has taken to ensure robust privacy and ethical standards are upheld.

Please do not delay your response on the basis that you cannot provide some or any of the information for any one of the items above; I am happy for you to provide partial information in a timely manner, on the understanding that you will provide more complete information as soon as it is available.

If the number of DPIAs for (4) is too many for you to provide copies within the legal cost limit, or if they are not yet completed or in place, please could you provide instead a full LIST of all such Assessments that will be required.

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

DHSC holds this information. However, to comply with your request as it is currently framed would incur disproportionate cost as defined by Section 12(1) of the FOIA, which sets out that a public authority can refuse a request, if complying with it would exceed the appropriate limit of £600 (which represents 24 staff hours). This represents the estimated cost of one person spending this time in determining where the information is held, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

It may help if I explain that locating all the information relevant to Questions 1, 2 and 3 would be an extremely time-consuming exercise (for example, in relation to Question 3, several hundred data sources are drawn upon), and a large volume of documentation would need to be individually reviewed in order to determine if it falls within scope of your questions, which we have assessed would exceed the section 12 limit.

If you were to refine your request, then we may be able to process it. We suggest that you may wish to narrow it by reducing the range of the documentation requested in Question 2, and by omitting Question 3. However, I cannot guarantee that Section 12 or any other exemptions will not apply to a reframed request.

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 this letter and sent to FreedomOfInformation@dhsc.gov.uk, or to the address at the top of this letter.

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

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have already appealed our original response and received our internal review decision. You should raise your concerns with the ICO 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