



By email

request-779766-b78ffe5@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref: 05/08/21/ag/956

20 August 2021

Dear Brian Martin,

Re: Freedom of Information request – Evidence that Covid-19 virus exists

Thank you for your request received on 05 August 2021 addressed to Public Health England (PHE). In accordance with Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), I can confirm that PHE does hold the information you have specified.

Request

Please provide proof that Covid 19 has been isolated and exists.

Response

In accordance with Section 1(1)(a), I can confirm that PHE does hold the information you have specified.

PHE's microbiology teams use the term "isolation" to mean culture in the laboratory. It is used sometimes interchangeably to mean isolation from a patient or clinical material – but usually implies that the organism has been grown in culture. An organism is identified by looking for its unique genetic material in a clinical sample and further identification is refined and confirmed by whole genome sequencing.

The Virus Reference Laboratory at PHE, Colindale, London has grown the virus, SARS-CoV-2. The virus culture method has been published in the following peer-reviewed paper: <https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2020.25.32.2001483>

Several strains of the SARS-CoV-2 virus has been deposited to the European Virus Archive by PHE.

PHE's culture work on other SARS-CoV-2 variants is in progress and has not been published in any peer-reviewed papers at present.

Under Section 16, a public authority has a duty to provide advice and assistance. Accordingly, please find the following links below regarding evidence of COVID-19:

- SARS-CoV-2 has been cultured and then subjected to electron microscopy. Evidence of the Electron Micrograph is available at the following link: <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2021/02/05/what-do-we-know-about-the-new-covid-19-variants/>
- General information pertaining to SARS-CoV-2, which causes the disease known as COVID-19: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-background-information/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-epidemiology-virology-and-clinical-features>

If you have any queries regarding the information that has been supplied to you, please refer your query to me in writing in the first instance. If you remain dissatisfied and would like to request an internal review, then please contact us at the address above or by emailing foi@phe.gov.uk.

Please note that you have the right to an independent review by the Information Commissioner's Office if a complaint cannot be resolved through the PHE complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner's Office can be contacted by calling the ICO's helpline on 0303 123 1113, visiting the ICO's website at www.ico.org.uk or writing to the ICO at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely
FOI Team