



By email

request-502672-ea753081@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref: 03/09/ab/526

17 October 2018

Dear Ms Kneale

Re: Review of Public Health England report on the Health Risks of Shale Gas Extraction

Thank you for your email dated 3 September 2018. Your request for information has been handled under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

I have answered the questions in the ordered it has been raised:

1. What evidence has been considered since 2014 ?

*Your answer stated that "PHE reviews published peer reviewed scientific literature...
" I would like to see a full list of all the articles that have been reviewed since
2014 and any comments on why they are not relevant.*

Please find attached a list of the articles which have been reviewed since 2014. The review is currently on-going and this may therefore not a be complete list of all publications under consideration.

2. How has that evidence been identified?

I would like copies of your literature searches on Pubmed, Scopus and any other resource that has been used to identify evidence. Not just the names of the databases that you use!

The search strategy uses the following terms across all fields 'hydraulic fracturing' OR 'hydraulic fracturing fluids' OR 'shale gas development' OR 'shale gas' OR 'shale gas extraction' OR 'shale gas drilling' OR 'shale gas exploration' OR 'shale gas production' OR 'shale gas industry' OR 'unconventional gas' OR 'unconventional gas extraction' AND 'health'. The review focuses on references in the English language and consideration of human health impacts.

In addition cross checks are made against review studies or databases and grey literature to identify relevant publication, which may not have been identified through the main search strategy.

3. *Who assessed this evidence and what criteria has been used?*

I would like to know the names of the individuals with work titles (including principal professional qualifications) , names of any committees, and a copy of the written remit that was given to them in order to decide whether or not it was relevant to reviewing the report.

The evidence is assessed by a group of scientists within the Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards (CRCE). The review is ongoing, therefore membership of the group changes annually. PHE takes corporate responsibility for decisions made by staff. Please note in accordance with Section 40 – *personal information* exemption, all names have been substituted with the organisations they represent with the exception of those at Senior Civil Service level 3 or equivalent.

The attached document (literature review objectives) provides details of the information considered when assessing whether a publication is relevant for the ongoing review. Identified references are reviewed by key topic.

4. *How was the scope of the review decided and by whom?*

I would like the original written document including the name of the author, names of the persons who approved this scope and names of the person(s) authorising this scope .

The scope of the ongoing review is the same as that used for the 2014 PHE review. As stated in the 2014 report, the review focussed exclusively on the direct health impact of releases to the environment due to emissions from the production of shale gas (and some liquid hydrocarbons) from shale formations with hydraulic fracturing in either vertical or horizontal wells.

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In addition I have not been supplied with any of the documents, reports , missives including e mails and telephone discussions relating to the decision not to review the report. May I politely ask again for this FOI request to be fulfilled.

The evidence review is part of an ongoing process. No decision has been made with respect to future updates of the PHE review. PHE are considering the available evidence and the potential approaches to update the review.

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 writing to Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information team