Public Health England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

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By email
request-713347-c3eb0290@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref: 25/01/kl/2566

22 March 2021

Dear J Grove,

Re: Internal review of Case ref: No. 2165 - Species of animals were used for safety studies of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine

I refer to your email of 25 January 2021 requesting an internal review of the handling of case references 2165 in relation to your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI), "the Act".

Your Request case ref: 2165

Public Health England (PHE) received your information request on the 16 December 2020.

Under the Act, PHE had until the 18 January 2021 to respond to your request and did so within the statutory timeframe.

Response Case ref: 2165

PHE sent you its response on the 18 January 2021 and, correctly, confirmed it did not hold the information you requested.

PHE also provided you with advice and assistance under section 16 of the Act by including the following links to the regulatory approval decisions for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the published data.

MHRA regulatory approval decision:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/regulatory-approval-of-pfizer-biontech-vaccine-for-covid-19/information-for-healthcare-professionals-on-pfizerbiontech-covid-19-vaccine

Journal articles on the published data:
https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2034577
https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)32661-1/fulltext

Internal review decision

PHE has now conducted the internal review and conclude that PHE sent you its response to your request for information within the statutory deadline. PHE can confirm it has provided all the information available that falls within the scope of the request. PHE correctly confirmed it did not hold the information you specified and referred you under the section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance to the MHRA and clinical safety studies.

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 Manager