



By email

request-616060-cca1e73e@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref: 23/01/gs/1045

21 February 2020

Dear Mr Roberts,

Re: Internal review linked to case ref 902 & 750 - Origin of ingredients developed for Anthrax for 1990/91 Gulf War

We refer to your email dated 23 January 2020 in relation to your request to Public Health England (PHE) of the 28 October 2019 seeking access under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act) on the following: -

Did the U.S also supply the anthrax bacteria or any other ingredient within that vaccine?

We can confirm your email of the 23 January 2020 is being treated as a request for an internal review to our response of the 22 November 2019.

Our primary response was that we no longer held the information you requested and provided you a full explanation which we set out below: -

'As set out in the Ministry of Defence's internal review response to you of 7 August this year, which is publicly available on whatdotheyknow.com, the supplier of vaccines purchased at the time specified in your request to them (i.e. MoD) was the Centre for Applied Microbiology Research (CAMR), part of the then Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS). On the dissolution of CAMR and PHLS, the anthrax vaccine manufacturing capability was transferred to the Health Protection Agency (2003-2013), then Public Health England as the HPA's successor body (2013-2015), and lastly and more recently to Porton Biopharma Limited (PBL), an independent company established in April 2015 that it is wholly owned by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. As such, PHE does not hold the information you have requested.

Section 16(1) of the Act places a duty on a public authority to provide advice and assistance, where possible, to those making or intending to make a request for

information. Whilst PHE no longer holds the information you have requested, we are able to advise that the vaccine to which you refer was originally and entirely developed in the UK by Belton and Strange in the 1950s, as set out in the open scientific literature. We also understand that PBL has responded directly to your separate but similar request to them.'

This letter sets out our decision on your internal review application.

Decision and reasons for decision

Having reviewed your initial request and the response we have determined that this request falls under the scope of Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and as such should have been handled under this regime. Nevertheless, PHE reaffirms its position that the information is not held. We are, therefore, not in the position to release the information you have requested.

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,

FOI Team