



ASSURING THE SAFETY, QUALITY & EFFICACY
OF VETERINARY MEDICINES

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ATI 294

Request

From: [Redacted under section 40 of the FOIA]

Sent: 17 March 2014

Subject: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

I would like to make an FOI request. Please could you tell me:

- 1) The break down, in terms of percentages and whole numbers, of the number of registered veterinary practice premises (VPPs) in the UK which received unacceptable, poor, acceptable or good gradings for each year from 2009-2013.

e.g.

As at 01/04/2013:

10% Unacceptable, 20% Poor, 45% Acceptable, 25% Good

As at 01/04/2012:

15% Unacceptable, 15% Poor, 50% Acceptable, 20% Good

If you would like any further clarity on this request, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

VMD Reply

Sent: 10 April 2014

To: [Redacted under section 40 of the FOIA]

Subject: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

Your Request

Thank you for your email dated 17 March 2014.

We have dealt with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked the break down, in terms of percentages and whole numbers, of the number of

VPPs registered in the UK which received unacceptable, poor, acceptable or good grading for each year from 2009-2013.

Our Reply

Background

The classifications you cite are indicative 'risk-ratings' that we identify in paragraph 58 of Veterinary Medicines Guidance Notes (VMGNs) #3, on risk based inspections: available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterinary-medicines-directorate>

The risk-ratings are based on the number and types of deficiencies noted during an inspection, where for example, a 'good' premises is one with 6 or less minor deficiencies. In the case of veterinary practice premises (VPPs), as we're still carrying out the first round of inspections, we are being a little more 'tolerant' than we would otherwise be, and we haven't applied the risk-ratings exactly. The main 'tolerance' is that we've marked premises as 'good' even if they've had more than 6 minor deficiencies (adding a note to the report that such a score would normally result in a reduced inspection interval). However, the risk-ratings have been followed in the case of any major or critical deficiencies.

Information we hold

We want to be as open as possible in answering requests. Whilst we did log the actual number of deficiencies noted at inspections on our database from 2009, I'm afraid until the latter part of 2012 we didn't capture the deficiency categories (minor, major, critical). Because of this gathering the information together could involve a significant cost and diversion of resources from the Agency's other work. Section 12(1) of the FOIA allows us to refuse a request for information if we estimate that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit, which currently stands at £600. On the basis of our estimates, we consider that the cost would exceed this limit and, as such, we are refusing your request as you currently frame it.

Future publication

Following your request we have decided to add-the risk ratings to our database. We will then publish the type of information you request starting with 2013. As such this information is covered by section 22 of the FOIA, which covers "information intended for future publication". Section 22 applies where there is an intention to publish the requested information at some future date. This ensures that the FOIA does not force public authorities into premature publication of information.

Section 22 is subject to a public interest balance. After careful consideration we conclude that the public interest in withholding the information at this time strongly outweighs that for disclosure. We believe that the public interest is best served if the VMD is permitted to publish information in a manner and form and at a time of our own choosing. It is a part of the effective conduct of public affairs that the general publication of information is a

conveniently planned and managed activity within the reasonable control of public authorities. Where we have taken the decision in principle to publish, here as part of outputs of our developing Inspections database, we have a reasonable entitlement to make own arrangements to do so.

Our Service

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint, you may request an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this e-mail. If you would like to request an internal review please write to [Redacted under section 40 of the FOIA] at the VMD via ati@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office

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