



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Animal and Plant Health Agency
Access to Information Team
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Our ref: FOI2023/15724
22 August 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Import of dogs for research purposes

Thank you for your request for information of 10th August about Import of dogs for research purposes. APHA have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Your information request and our response are set out below.

This was a follow up request to FOI2023/14602.

1. "Can you clarify if the dogs come in from New York to Copenhagen to the UK, where are the checks done and by whom. My understanding from your last response was the Danish should be doing checks in Copenhagen but there does not need to be any further checks once the dogs arrive in the UK because Denmark is an EU country, however you did state that the dogs should have a health certificate, evidence of various treatments like microchip, rabies, vaccination and tapeworm/echinococcus 12 to 120 hours prior to arrival in UK. So who checks those details and where?"

To import research animals from EU into GB, importers must contact the APHA for import licence conditions (CITIES, Rabies Importation Order). They also need to apply for an annual licence from APHA, to notify the imports team via email and to create an Import of products, animals, food and feed system (IPAFFS) notification.

The consignments will not be checked at a Border control Post (BCP) as part of the phased approach. However, documents checks are performed remotely and Veterinary checks are done at destination, as per the phased approach and they need to be accompanied by an health certificate for their species:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/health-certificates-for-animal-and-animal-product-imports-to-great-britain#live-animals>

Consignments imported from non-EU countries into GB via EU are checked (according to Member States' own policy) by an Official Veterinarian at the Member States Border Control Post (BCP) before being moved to GB and a Common Health Entry Document (CHED) accompanies the consignments. The consignments will move with a Health Certificate and importers are obliged to comply with the condition of the import licence (CITIES, Rabies Importation Order, etc).

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

In these cases, they will not be required to enter through a GB BCP and Veterinary checks will be done at destination, as per the phased approach. Ched and Health certificates are scrutinised remotely by the APHA.

Similarly to what happens with consignments imported directly from EU, APHA imports team will need to be notified via email and importers will need to apply for an import licence as well as create an IPAFFS notification.

Destination checks involve checks of the animals as well as of the documents accompanying the animals. If, at any point of the journey, Welfare in Transport issues or animal health issues are noted, enforcement authority will be alerted.

2. "Which UK airports do the research dogs come into?"

This information has been withheld under Section 38 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

Section 38 – Health and Safety

Section 38 (1) (b) refers to the exemption from the duty to provide information if it would, or would be likely to affect anyone's health or safety. The exemption in Section 38 is subject to a Public Interest Test to ensure it is being appropriately applied.

Public Interest Test

We recognise that there is a general presumption in favour of transparency and openness concerning the import of research dogs and providing the general public with the right to request access to information held by public authorities.

However, APHA feel that there is a stronger public interest in withholding the information as the confirmation of import/export via a specific airport would identify further information and would, or would be likely to, endanger the health and safety of staff at these airports. This poses a substantial risk to the health and safety of individuals associated with this type of work that would be of significant severity and likely to occur in some cases. We consider this to be a significant factor in favour of maintaining the exemption.

APHA has balanced the real threat to the health and safety of individuals which disclosure of the requested information would be likely to cause, against the public interest arguments in favour of disclosure. In this instance the APHA does not consider that disclosing the information (Airport entry) requested, helps inform public debate or promote accountability and transparency and does not justify the risk to individuals' health and safety.

"3. Do you collect any details about what happens to the dogs once they arrive in the UK i.e onward transport details and where they are going to, in order to gauge if the transportation is suitable, as an animal welfare issue (length of onward journey, suitable break and feeding and watering of the animals, air-conditioned vans, suitable carrier cases etc)"

The animals are issued with a landing and boarding licence prior to arrival in the UK which contain information of the destination address of the animals and the APHA approved carrying agent. If, at any point of the journey, Welfare in Transport issues or animal health issues are noted, enforcement authorities will be alerted.

Section 16 – Advice and Assistance

In response to your statement “I recently applied for some information to Defra,(but apparently your department acts on their behalf for Freedom of Information purposes”

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is an executive agency of the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). If DEFRA receive a request that would be best responded to by one of its thirty five agencies and public bodies they pass that on to that relevant agency. This was the case for this request.

Information disclosed in response to this FOI request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA and the government’s Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

An Annex is attached which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you and contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Access to Information Team at the email address below or postal address at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Access to Information Team

enquiries@apha.gov.uk

Annex

Copyright

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Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request, you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to the Access to Information Team at the address at the top of this letter or email enquiries@apha.gov.uk and the team will arrange for an internal review of your case.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted APHA's own complaints procedure.

The ICO can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Please click [here](#) for further contact details.