FOI 23/914

Dear

Thank you for your request of 24 November, where you asked for:

> *“Dear MHRA / CHM*
>
> *I am writing to make a Freedom of Information Request, relating to the Commission on Human Medicines which lists this MHRA email as the best contact.*
>
> *This document states that:*
> *'To inform its decision-making, the MHRA seeks independent expert advice from the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM). In May 2020, the CHM established an Expert Working Group (EWG), consisting of experts in medicine, infectious disease, pharmacoepidemiology and data analytics to provide the MHRA with independent oversight and advice on its COVID-19 vaccine vigilance activities.’*
>
> *Please will you send me the minutes, attendance record and dates of all meetings of the CHM's expert working group held between (and including) November 2020 and the end of 2021.”*

In May 2020, we set up an independent COVID-19 Safety and Surveillance Expert Working Group of the Commission on Human Medicines to take some of the important safety work forward. For this group, we do not hold any information for the time period you have asked about, and we can explain that all minutes of the vaccine safety surveillance EWG were provided to you in response to your previous request FOI 23/733.

As the link you’ve provided COVID-19 vaccine safety surveillance EWG confirms, 4 meetings were held for this EWG; these were held between May and October 2020.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-of-the-commission-on-human-medicines-expert-working-group-on-covid-19-vaccine-safety-surveillance/report-of-the-commission-on-human-medicines-expert-working-group-on-covid-19-vaccine-safety-surveillance

The dates of future meetings which appear in these minutes were the proposed dates at the time each meeting was held; the dates of several proposed meetings were revised and not all proposed meetings took place. To confirm, there was no meeting on 11 November 2020. The final meeting of the VSS EWG was held on 27 October 2020 and there were no further meetings in 2021.

In August 2020, a second Working Group was formed with a different remit and comprised of a wider range of expertise – this time to advise the MHRA on the benefits and risks of the COVID-19 vaccines in development. The minutes of all Benefit Risk EWG are intended for future publication, and we are working to commence a schedule of proactive publication in 2024.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date you receive this response and addressed to: info@mhra.gov.uk
Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you were to remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal review, you would have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please bear in mind that the Information Commissioner will not normally review our handling of your request unless you have first contacted us to conduct an internal review. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
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SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely
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