

FOI 23/770

Dear

Thank you for your request. I am sorry for our delay in responding to you. Your request of 12 October 2023 was:

I refer to the following response provided in 2010 - see email exchanges below.

"We now hold ARGOS Minutes for all meetings from January 1991 to December 1992 inclusive. These were obtained from the Department of Health."

"ARGOS existed from 1987 to 1992 inclusive."

"SEAR existed from 1982 to 1992 inclusive and we hold all minutes."

Do you still hold these documents and if so may I have copies please.

If you do not still hold them, please advise who currently holds them.

Does the MHRA have any information indicating where the ARGOS minutes for other years might be held now? [And may I have copies please?](#)

We have conducted reasonable searches of our records and can confirm that we do still hold:

- ARGOS minutes for 1991 and 1992
- SEAR minutes from 1982 to 1992.

However, we are not able to provide these in response to your request, as we estimate that you have asked for over 100 sets of minutes in your one request. Each of the individual minutes will need to be reviewed to identify and remove all personal information, and to determine whether any other exemptions may apply, for example, where they contain information which was provided to us in confidence, or where information would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any third-party.

The time needed to perform these activities for so many individual sets of minutes means that the section 14(1) exemption applies under the FOI, purely on the basis of the burden that compliance with the request would create. I apologise that we have not come back to you sooner to explain this. I am applying this exemption now to refuse this request.

To provide assistance, we recommend that seeking a much smaller number of minutes would refine the request to a much more manageable amount of information. We suggest that you ask for the ARGOS papers for **either** 1991 or 1992 in the first instance (11 or 9 papers respectively).

The SEARS minutes cover a far greater time period, and each contains a greater number of pages. If you would prefer to proceed for a request for these rather than the ARGOS minutes, we would suggest that you limit a request for any of the SEARS minutes to no more than three sets of minutes in the first request.

Focusing on a small number of minutes will enable us to complete a request and then provide further advice on how many sets of minutes can be worked on within the limits of the FOI Act for each request. Once one request is completed, you will be able to request further minutes in a new request.

I hope this explanation is useful for you.

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
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Or online via: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

Yours sincerely

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