

FOI 24/112 - Freedom of Information request - Information on frameshifting

MHRA Customer Services <MHRACustomerServices@mhra.gov.uk>

Fri 01/03/2024 23:36

To [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

The MHRA provide secretariat services to the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM), including for the handling of FOI requests, and I've been asked to provide this response on behalf of the CHM.

Under the FOIA, the CHM and MHRA are two separate public authorities, and in terms of the FOIA, this will affect the information held by each. In this regard, during the handling of this request, it's been brought to my attention that there is – we believe – an unintentional error in the wording of this request. When something is not clear in the wording of a request, we are required to ask for clarification from the requester; the ICO's guidance steers us to do this as there may be more than one objective interpretation of the request.

You have made your request to the Commission on Human Medicines:

"I wish to understand when, and the extent to which, the risk of mRNA frameshifting in relation to Covid mRNA products, as identified in the study published by Cambridge University MRC Toxicology Unit, was considered by the Commission on Human Medicines.

To that end, please disclose complete relevant extracts (i.e. complete relevant sections or paragraphs to allow for contextualisation) of any emails sent to or copied to, or received by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, during the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023, the title or any sub-title of which responds to a word search for "frameshift", "frame shift", including by identifying variations of those same words (for example in a plural or present participle form)."

The point we need to clarify is that, although you've directed the request to the CHM, you've asked for "any emails sent to or copied to, or received by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency". As noted above, the CHM and the MHRA are separate public authorities under the FOIA; the CHM will not hold any emails received by the MHRA unless they were sent by the CHM to the MHRA. Other emails sent to the MHRA by other parties will not be included.

Could I ask if you meant to say "any emails sent by or copied to, or received by the Commission on Human Medicines", or if you are looking for emails exchanged between the CHM and the MHRA? Please specify which, to allow us to identify the relevant information.

My apologies for needing to clarify this request. To assist, I would note that you have asked about emails but not meetings, which would include the CHM and its Expert Working Groups (EWGs). I would therefore advise that the Cambridge University MRC Toxicology Unit made a presentation to the Vaccine Benefit Risk (VBR) EWG; while this is not in scope of your present request as you have not asked for information about meetings, we can also advise that a decision was taken last year to publish all minutes of the VBR EWG meetings, beginning with the initial meetings from August 2020.

If you could confirm how you would like to proceed, we will take this forward as a new request. I have mentioned in the response to your request FOI 24/110 that I'd be happy to discuss these requests – if it would help to discuss how the CHM and MHRA position as separate public authorities affects the information each will hold for the purposes of the FOIA, I would be happy to do this.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Freedom of Information Manager
MHRA Customer Experience Centre
Communications and engagement team
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency
10 South Colonnade, Canary Wharf, London E14 4PU

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, February 2, 2024 3:06 PM
To: MHRA Customer Services <MHRACustomerServices@mhra.gov.uk>
Subject: FOI 24/112 - Freedom of Information request - Information on frameshifting

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Dear Commission on Human Medicines,

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To that end, please disclose complete relevant extracts (i.e. complete relevant sections or paragraphs to allow for contextualisation) of any emails sent to or copied to, or received by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, during the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023, the title or any sub-title of which responds to a word search for "frameshift", "frame shift", including by identifying variations of those same words (for example in a plural or present participle form).

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

Please use this email address for all replies to this request:
request-1080205-ef14b3f7@whatdotheyknow.com