

FOI 24/110 - Freedom of Information request - Information on frameshifting

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

Fri 01/03/2024 23:39

To [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

We have been processing your request, alongside your request to the CHM, FOI 24/112 (the MHRA provide secretariat support services to the CHM including for the handling of their requests); we have written to you about FOI 24/112 separately.

I apologise sincerely for contacting you late in the handling of this request. When I was asked to consider a proposed response to this request, it was apparent that there is a point in your request that is not completely clear, and this affects the information that might be relevant for your request.

I will explain this below, but if you would like to discuss further, you are welcome to contact me through the MHRA Customer Services email address - I am aware that WDTK formatting removes email addresses, but it will be mhracustomerservices 'at' the usual 'gov dot uk'.

The ICO's guidance is that if we are unclear what the requester is asking for, then we must ask them for further clarification. The guidance also says:

"When you receive an unclear or ambiguous FOIA request, your Section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance will be triggered. You must go back to the requester to ask for clarification. You should contact the requester as soon as possible, but within the 20 working day time limit for an initial response."

<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcy.ico.org.uk%2Ffor-organisations%2Ffoi%2Ffreedom-of-information-and-environmental-information-regulations%2Finterpreting-and-clarifying-requests%2F%23clarify&data=05%7C02%7CMHRACustomerServices%40mhra.gov.uk%7Cd8574ea9954c4ee95b3408dc3a44da7c%7Ce527ea5c62584cd2a27f8bd237ec4c26%7C0%7C0%7C638449314583319169%7CUnknown%7CTWFPbGZsb3d8eyJWljoimc4wLjAwMDAiLCJQljoiv2luMzliLCJBTiI6lk1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=CuGKoU4zfAabls4G%2BNIUon9GhWiPk5NTomyDm7%2FUs4%3D&reserved=0>

Your request asked:

"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 MHRA product safety division. To that end, please disclose the following:

Complete relevant extracts (i.e. complete relevant sections or paragraphs to allow for contextualisation) from the minutes of any minuted MHRA meetings which involved Dr Alison Cave during the period 1 January 2022 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).

Complete relevant extracts of any emails sent or copied to, or received by, Dr Alison Cave during the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023 which includes those same words or variations in the

subject heading or main body (redacted so as to omit any personal data contained in those emails).”

We have identified some information we believe may be relevant, but we do not know if this is all the information you are seeking without asking you. Particularly, you have said that you wish to receive emails "sent or copied to, or received by, Dr Alison Cave". This reads as meaning all emails sent to Alison Cave only.

Could you clarify if you intended to ask for emails "sent by", as well as "sent or copied to" and "received by" Alison Cave which include the words you have indicated? In its present wording, emails sent by Alison Cave are not in scope of the request, and in the context of what you have asked, it isn't clear if this was simply an omission.

We believe we have addressed a second point but would again like to ensure that we are clear about exactly what variations of wording you intended us to search for. We have searched on the words "frameshift" "frame shift" "frameshifting" "frame shifting" "frameshifts" "frame shifts" (which you specified in your previous requests) and also included the past participle, 'frameshifted' and 'frame shifted'. This has located some relevant emails that we think meet the description in your request; however, for complete clarity it would be best if you could confirm that this is the range of variations of the words that you were thinking of.

If you could clarify the first point and confirm the second, we will be able to progress your request. As we have already retrieved some information, and we only need your clarification to determine precisely what information is relevant, while any clarification is a new request, we will seek to complete the new request as soon as possible after this.

As mentioned above, I'm happy to discuss how best to frame request wording if this would be helpful.

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 3:02 PM
To: MHRA Customer Services <MHRACustomerServices@mhra.gov.uk>
Subject: FOI 24/110 - Freedom of Information request - Information on frameshifting

Dear Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency,

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 MHRA product safety division. To that end, please disclose the following:

— complete relevant extracts (i.e. complete relevant sections or paragraphs to allow for contextualisation) from the minutes of any minuted MHRA meetings which involved Dr Alison Cave

during the period 1 January 2022 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).

— complete relevant extracts of any emails sent or copied to, or received by, Dr Alison Cave during the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023 which includes those same words or variations in the subject heading or main body (redacted so as to omit any personal data contained in those emails).

Yours faithfully,



Please use this email address for all replies to this request:
request-1080203-09fdb97f@whatdotheyknow.com