Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency

MHRA Central Freedom of Information Team
10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU

foi.request@mhra.gov.uk.

MHRA Website

[redacted]

Our Ref: **FOI2024/00784**

14 January 2025

Dear [redacted],

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FoI) request received on 11 December. You wrote:

> *Please provide the independent expert advice on the safety risk of the supply and use of gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) agonist for puberty suppression in adolescants experiencing Gender incongruence of childhood that was referred to by the Department of Health and Social Care as having been provided to them (see, for example, https://news.stv.tv/scotland/puberty-blockers-for-children-with-gender-dysphoria-to-be-banned-indefinitely-in-uk).*

MHRA Response

We can confirm that the Agency holds the information you are seeking.

On 20 August 2024, a targeted consultation was issued on proposals to make an indefinite statutory order to prevent new patients aged under 18 from being supplied with puberty blockers for the purposes of gender incongruence and/or gender dysphoria, under the care of private or non-UK prescribers.

On behalf of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Minister of Health for Northern Ireland, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) consulted with representative groups likely to be affected by the proposed order, as well as the independent Commission on Human Medicines for their expert view, in line with legislative requirements.

The MHRA holds a copy of the independent expert advice provided by the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM). However, we are engaging an exemption from disclosure under Section 22(1) of FoI Act as the information is intended for publication by DHSC at a future date.

As required by the FoI Act the use of this qualified exemption requires the public interest for and against disclosure to be assessed.

We recognise that there is a public interest in this information and that release of the information would provide greater transparency on the outcome of the consultation. However, when considering arguments against disclosure, there is a strong public interest in permitting

public authorities, to publish information in a manner and form and at a time of their own choosing. It is a part of the effective conduct of public affairs that the general publication of information is a conveniently planned and managed activity within the reasonable control of public authorities. This will enable the information to be published alongside additional information to aid interpretation and minimise the risk of misinterpretation.

On balance MHRA is satisfied that in this instance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure. Therefore, the information you seek will not be released at this time.

As the consultation was led by the DHSC, we suggest you contact them regarding any other information concerning this matter.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

MHRA Central Freedom of Information Team
Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing foi.request@mhra.gov.uk or by writing to: MHRA Central Freedom of Information Team, 10 South, Colonnade, Canary Wharf, London, E14 4PU

Any request for an internal review must be received by us within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please note we are not obliged to provide a review if it is requested after more than 40 working days.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.
Website: ICO FOI and EIR complaints or telephone 0303 123 1113.

Re-use of our information