



By email

[REDACTED]

Our ref: 04/09/kl/1184

21 September 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: Freedom of Information Request: Studies re Isolation of SARS-COV-2

Thank you for your email dated 4 September 2020. In accordance with Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), I can confirm that Public Health England (PHE) does not hold the information you have specified.

Your Request

All records in the possession, custody or control of Public Health England describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased patient, where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka vero cells; lung cells from a lung cancer patient).

Please note that I am using "isolation" in the every-day sense of the word: the act of separating a thing(s) from everything else. I am not requesting records where "isolation of SARS-COV-2" refers instead to:

- ***the culturing of something, or***
- ***the performance of an amplification test (i.e. a PCR test), or the sequencing of something.***

Please also note that my request is not limited to records that were authored by Public Health England or that pertain to work done by Public Health England. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that Public Health England has downloaded or printed.

If any records match the above description of requested records and are currently available to the public elsewhere, please provide enough information about each record so that I may identify and access each record with certainty (i.e. title, author(s), date, journal, where the public may access it).

Response

PHE can confirm it does not hold information in the way suggested by your request.

Under Section 16 of the Act, public authorities have a duty to provide advice and assistance. I have signposted you to the below links which contain information on taking COVID-19 swabs:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-taking-swab-samples>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/types-and-uses-of-coronavirus-covid-19-tests/types-and-uses-of-coronavirus-covid-19-tests>

Additionally, the below publication contains some information on virus isolation:

<https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2020.25.32.2001483>

If you have any queries regarding the information that has been supplied to you, please refer your query to in writing in the first instance. If you remain dissatisfied and would like to request an internal review, then please contact us at the address above or by emailing foi@phe.gov.uk.

Please note that you have the right to an independent review by the Information Commissioner's Office if a complaint cannot be resolved through the PHE complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner's Office can be contacted by writing to Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,
FOI Team