

[REDACTED]

12 June 2023

Dear [REDACTED],

**Freedom of Information request: FOI2023/00287**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 16 May in which you requested the following:

**Your request:**

1. *Do you hold any potential pandemic pathogens (PPPs) in any of your labs? If yes, what are they and in which labs?*
2. *Are you working with any infectious agents under a Specified Animal Pathogens Order (SAPO)? If yes, what are they, and in which labs?*
3. *If applicable, what biosecurity level is used during work with PPPs and SAPO infectious agents?*
4. *Are you currently carrying out any gain of function work, or experiments to enhance the infectiousness of transmissibility of PPPs or SAPO infectious agents? If so, in which labs?*
5. *Have you had any incidents of biosecurity lapses, leaks or safety breaches in the past five years? If so, can you list these?*

**Our response:**

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) holds some information relevant to your request. Please see the information below. The information provided relates only to research carried out in UKRI owned institutes and does not include research UKRI funds which is held by the organisations where the research is taking place.

Please note, there is no agreed list of potential pandemic pathogens (PPPs) in the UK, therefore in responding to your request we have used the list of [prioritizing diseases for research and development in emergency contexts](https://www.who.int/activities/prioritizing-diseases-for-research-and-development-in-emergency-contexts)<sup>1</sup> issued by the World Health Organisation in 2019 as the point of reference for answering your questions.

1. *Do you hold any potential pandemic pathogens (PPPs) in any of your labs? If yes, what are they and in which labs?*

A UKRI owned establishment holds one pathogen, SARS CoV-2 (the agent that causes COVID-19). This work takes place at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology.

2. *Are you working with any infectious agents under a Specified Animal Pathogens Order (SAPO)? If yes, what are they, and in which labs?*

No.

3. *If applicable, what biosecurity level is used during work with PPPs and SAPO infectious agents?*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/activities/prioritizing-diseases-for-research-and-development-in-emergency-contexts>

SARS CoV-2 is handled at a Containment Level 3 (CL3) Laboratory as a Hazard Group 3 biological agent (as defined in the [HSEs Approved List of Biological Agents<sup>2</sup>](#)).

4. *Are you currently carrying out any gain of function work, or experiments to enhance the infectiousness of transmissibility of PPPs or SAPO infectious agents? If so, in which labs?*

No.

5. *Have you had any incidents of biosecurity lapses, leaks or safety breaches in the past five years? If so, can you list these?*

There have been no biosecurity lapses, leaks or safety breaches in the past five years in relation to pathogen storage.

If you have any queries regarding our response or you are unhappy with the outcome of your request and wish to seek an internal review of the decision, please contact within the next 40 working days:

Head of Information Governance

Email: [foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org)

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see UKRI's complaints policy: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-policy/>

Yours sincerely,

  
Information Governance  
Information Rights Team  
UK Research and Innovation  
[foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org) | [dataprotection@ukri.org](mailto:dataprotection@ukri.org)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/misc208.pdf>