



By email

cj-editor@biggeesblog.cymru

Our ref: 17/02/nk/2819

11 March 2021

Dear Wynne Jones

**Re: Covid 19 Re-calibration of RT-PCR test to detect virus variant
VOC202012/02**

Thank you for your request received on 17 February 2021 addressed to Public Health England (PHE). In accordance with Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), I can confirm that PHE does not hold the information you have specified.

Request

I would be pleased to receive the following information.

- ***a copy of the guidance provided to public health laboratories under the control of P H E on how to recalibrate the RT-PCR test to detect the South African variant of SARS-CoV-2 virus, now referenced VOC202012/02.***

Response

PHE can confirm it does not hold the information requested.

PHE do not recommend that laboratories recalibrate assays to detect SARS-CoV-2 variants, and for commercial CE marked assays, it is the manufacturer's responsibility to ensure their assays continue to meet requirements.

PHE form a key constituent of the Variant of Concern Assurance Working Group (which includes parties from DHSC and MHRA); PHE are aware of new variants as and when they emerge.

It is recommended that laboratories continue to monitor the performance of their assays and report any indications that an assay is failing.

Under section 16 of the Act, public authorities have a duty to provide advice and assistance. Accordingly, you may find the 'technical briefing documents on the SARS-CoV-2 variant' useful. I have provided the link for convenience;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phe-investigation-of-novel-sars-cov-2-variant-of-concern-20201201-technical-briefing-4-13-january-2021>

If you have any queries regarding the information that has been supplied to you, please refer your query to me 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 calling the ICO's helpline on 0303 123 1113, visiting the ICO's website at www.ico.org.uk or writing to the ICO at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely
FOI Team