



# Department of Health & Social Care

Freedom of Information Team  
Department of Health and Social Care  
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[www.gov.uk/dhsc](http://www.gov.uk/dhsc)

Mr Wynne Jones  
[cj-editor@biggeesblog.cymru](mailto:cj-editor@biggeesblog.cymru)

30 April 2021

Dear Mr Jones,

## **Freedom of Information Request Reference FOI-1319768**

Thank you for your request dated 31 March in which you asked the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC):

*"I refer to the BBC Panorama Undercover Investigation at Milton Keynes Covid 19 mega laboratory. The programme is available to view at the link below.*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000tqjj>

*I note that the "Department of Health and Social Care" [D H S C] intend to undertake a full investigation into all the allegations of malpractice made in the programme. I would be grateful if you could arrange to provide me, under F O I Act 2000, with a copy of the terms of reference of the internal D H S C investigation and the contact details [name and email address] of the official tasked with undertaking the investigation.*

*Additional information is set out in the explanatory note below. I look forward to receiving the information at your earliest convenience."*

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

DHSC holds the information you have requested. The following lines were extracted from an updated plan originally emailed to the Chief Operation Officer of Test and Trace within DHSC sent by Director of Laboratories Test and Trace 30/03/21 14.03:

In summary, our interpretation of the key items raised were as follows:

1. Multiple tube types / leak prevalence
2. Poorly labelled samples tubes
3. De-bagging process cycle too short/target throughput too high for process quality
4. Tecan procedure for handling of potential contamination incidents / compatibility of Tecan processes with 'sticky' samples
5. Management of voids and root cause analysis / corrective action implementation
6. Laboratory / leadership culture and alleged focus on throughput rather than quality

Items 1 and 2 are for us to review as a wider programme but 3 - 6 are specifically within the control of the Lab.

The action plan we propose is as follows:

1. UKBC to provide their response to DHSC for actions / implementation dates	Due: 23/4/21	Action: UK Biocentre
2. DHSC to review UKBC response and approve plan	Due: 29/5/21	Action: Labs Team
3. DHSC to develop an audit / oversight plan to monitor UKBC implementation	Due: 29/5/21	Action: Labs Team
4. DHSC to review tube type rationalisation plans for acceptability	Due: 29/5/21	Action: Logistics
5. DHSC to review sample identification issues and identify improvement actions	Due: 29/5/21	Action: Test channels / Logistics

For your information, it is also important to note that there have been a number of actions that Milton Keynes has taken since January and there are many of these that will actually address some of the items identified and I would expect this to be part of the UKBC response.

The names and emails of the officials are being withheld under 40(2) of the FOIA, which provides for the protection of personal information. Section 40 prohibits a public body from disclosing personally identifiable information, as doing so would contravene data protection principles.

If you are not satisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to appeal by asking for an internal review. This should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to the address at the top of this letter, or the email address at the end of this letter.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have already appealed our original response and received our internal review decision. You should raise your concerns with the ICO within three months of your last meaningful contact with us.

The ICO can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow SK9 5AF

<https://ico.org.uk/concerns>

Yours sincerely,

Ed Franklyn  
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