



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

ATISN 14779

17 February 2021

Dear

ATISN 14779 – Amount of Vaccines

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 19 January. You requested the following information -

- 1. How many vials/doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine did Wales receive between 01 December 2020 and 17 January 2021?*
- 2. How many vials/doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine did Wales receive between 01 December 2020 and 17 January 2021?*

In relation to your questions, we are withholding information relating to the number of vaccine doses Wales has received under Section 28(1) sets out an exemption from the right to know, if the disclosure of the information in question would, or would be likely to prejudice relations between two or more United Kingdom administrations. Please see **Annex 1** for further information.

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ
or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,

Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,

Annex 1

Engagement of Section 28(1)

Section 28(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) sets out an exemption from the right to know, if the disclosure of the information in question would, or would be likely to prejudice relations between two or more United Kingdom administrations.

Officials have carefully considered all of the information captured by this request and consider that the information in question should be exempt under Section 28 (1) of the freedom of information act.

Section 28 is a qualified exemption. This means that it can only be relied upon where the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interests in disclosing the information.

Public interest arguments in favour of release

The Covid-19 pandemic is the greatest public health threat to the World in a hundred years and has resulted in major changes to everybody's lifestyle as governments around the world try to control the outbreak and keep their citizens safe and healthy. We recognise that there is a very strong public interest in the public understanding the decisions and actions taken by the Welsh Government to protect the people of Wales. Going forward, vaccination is seen as a key tool in the management of the virus. Consequentially there is a very strong public interest in the development of our policies and understanding how many doses of the vaccines is being received by Welsh Government, particularly as this can differ from other administrations.

The Welsh Government therefore, has endeavoured to ensure we are as transparent as possible, in particular through the media, publication of documents, Ministerial Written Statements and public statements in the Senedd along with ministerial press conferences and interviews. We recognise that transparency and openness improves public trust, leading to greater compliance with the measures introduced to bring the outbreak under control and thus reducing the overall impact of the virus on the people of Wales.

Public interest arguments in favour of withholding

There is a public interest in ensuring a close and effective working relationship between the Welsh Government and the UK Government. Good relations and engagement are essential at this time as we seek to work with, and influence the UK Government and its agencies to ensure that the interests of Wales are protected in their discussions.

We believe that this exemption is engaged as, if the information that is captured by this request were to be released, it would, or would be likely, to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom Government and all of the devolved administrations; the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive.

The information being withheld involves subject matter which may still be privy to current and or future considerations by the four administrations. The UK Government has recently asked the other UK nations to refrain from publicly disclosing information on COVID-19 vaccine supply levels, procured by UK Government on behalf of the four nations, due to commercially sensitive and security reasons. This relates to supply data which is both future and retrospective. This is also still the subject of high level discussions.

Therefore we believe that disclosing this information may damage our relationship with them by prejudicing confidence and compromise the mutual trust. This could inhibit future collaborative working between both parties and detrimental at a time where good relations –

and communication - between the Welsh Government, other devolved nations and the UK Government are essential, in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic and vaccination roll-out.

Conclusion

Whilst recognising that there are public interest arguments for disclosure of the requested information related to this request, I consider that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs that in releasing it in this instance.