

Justice by Design - Follow up request to Home Office on FOI2025/14526

Dear FOI Team,

I am writing regarding my FOI request **FOI2025/14526**, submitted on **27 October 2025**.

Your automated acknowledgement (attached), confirmed that a full response would be provided **by 24 November 2025**, in line with the statutory 20-working-day deadline. No response, update, or extension notification has been issued.

On **13 November 2025**, I received a letter from the Home Office stating that the department regarded the ministerial correspondence on this matter as closed. As all of my previous correspondence on this subject was addressed to the **Home Secretary**, and as the 13 November reply made no reference to the FOI request, I would be grateful if you could confirm **whether the correspondence-closure notification was intended to apply solely to ministerial correspondence, or whether the department intended it to extend to the FOI process**. This distinction is important because ministerial correspondence and FOI requests are subject to **separate statutory frameworks and obligations**.

On **14 October**, the Home Office wrote to me **inviting me to contribute evidence to the ACMD call for evidence**. In light of this earlier invitation, and in light of the lack of any response to the outstanding FOI request, I would appreciate clarification of **how and why the subsequent decision was taken to cease responding to further correspondence**, including:

- **whether this decision was taken at ministerial level,**
- **at directorate or senior official level, or**
- **at caseworker or correspondence-handling level.**

Understanding the basis and level of this decision will help me maintain an accurate audit trail for the ongoing **ACMD review of cannabis-based medicinal products**.

For completeness, I would also be grateful if you could confirm:

1. **Whether the FOI remains under active consideration,**
2. **Whether a revised response date has now been set, and**
3. **Whether any exemption or extension is being applied, and on what basis.**

This enquiry relates solely to the handling of **FOI2025/14526**.

Yours sincerely

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Justice by Design – Clarification note to DHSC re FOI response received 13 Nov 2025

Dear FOI Team,

Thank you for your response to my FOI request of **27 October 2025** (attached), which I received on 13 November. Your response indicated that the department holds approximately **110,000 documents** potentially relevant to the subject matter, and that extracting the information requested would exceed the statutory cost limit.

As this request forms part of the material I am assembling for the ongoing **ACMD review of cannabis-based medicinal products**, I am maintaining a complete audit trail of departmental handling. I would therefore be grateful for clarification of a number of points arising from your response:

1. **How the 110,000-document figure was reached**, including the search parameters used.
2. **Whether any proportionality or sampling exercise was undertaken**, or whether the cost-limit conclusion was reached without any targeted extraction.
3. **Whether DHSC is able to provide a high-level summary** of the number or types of documents falling within scope of the FOI request referenced above.
4. **Whether any part of FOI request 1652371** can be answered within the statutory cost limit.
5. **Whether the search methodology distinguished between documents held for the purposes of ministerial correspondence and those held for FOI processing.**

As these channels are subject to different statutory frameworks and obligations, it would be helpful to understand how the department ensured that they were treated separately for the purposes of this search.

6. **Whether the department's handling took into account the referral made by the Department for Transport on 19 June 2025**, notifying DHSC that the initial Open Letter, shared with Departments in June, had been formally passed to your department within two days of DfT receiving it. To date, none of DHSC's responses appear to reference this referral, and clarification on whether it formed part of your consideration would assist in maintaining an accurate audit trail.

For clarity, I am not seeking to re-scope the request at this stage. I am simply seeking to understand the department's approach and reasoning as reflected in the response already issued.

Yours sincerely

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