

Question:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I request the following information held by the Department of Health relating to concerns raised from July 2023 regarding potential clusters or spikes in childhood and young-person cancers in the Mid-Ulster / Sperrin area:

1. Awareness - Records confirming when the Chief Medical Officer or CMO's Office was first informed of these concerns.
2. Communications - All correspondence between the CMO's Office and – PHA, NICR / Queen's University Belfast, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust relating to these concerns.
3. Direction or advice - Any records showing advice given, requests made, or actions recommended by the CMO or CMO's Office regarding further investigation, analysis, or consideration of environmental factors.
4. Decision-making - Records identifying whether the CMO accepted, queried, or challenged decisions taken by PHA or NICR in relation to the scope of investigation"

Response:

"We have conducted a search of the information held and the information that falls within the scope of your request is provided within the attached annexes.

To note, the first communication in relation to potential clusters or spikes in childhood and young-person cancers in the Mid-Ulster / Sperrin area that we hold was received by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer on 23 July 2025. We do not hold any information between July 2023 and July 2025.

The information held has been organised as follows:

Annex A: Awareness**Annex B: Communications****Annex C: Directions or Advice**

In relation to point 4 of your above requests, we can confirm that we do not hold any information.

Some information contained within the attached Annexes has been redacted on the basis that it relates to junior staff members and includes details that may lead to the identification of specific individuals. These redactions have been applied in accordance with relevant data protection legislation and established FOI guidance to ensure that personal and potentially identifiable information is appropriately safeguarded.

If you wish to request a copy of the annexes for this response, please contact the Information Management Branch team at FOI@health-ni.gov.uk.

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