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By email

Emmanuel Freudenthal
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Our ref: 24/08/lh/376

22 September 2017

Dear Mr Freudenthal

Re: PHE involvement in the Ebola crisis

Thank you for your email dated 24 August 2017. Your emails have been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act.

In accordance with Section 1(1)(a) of the FOI Act, I can confirm that Public Health England (PHE) holds some of the information you have requested.

I have addressed your questions in the order you raised them below.

1 - The number of Ebola samples analysed by each of the PHE labs in each of the countries affected by Ebola between 2014 and now (with dates, PHE lab and result)

These data are owned by the Ministry of Health of Sierra Leone on whose behalf we provided these diagnostic services. We cannot release these data to you without their permission. We understand that the World Health Organization are currently working with the Ministry of Health in Sierra Leone to analyse these data with an intent to publish a detailed analysis in due course.

2 - The current location of all the samples analysed by PHE during that period (in the affected countries as well as UK and abroad)

Ebola virus is a dangerous pathogen and any samples or cultures are managed under appropriate security arrangements to prevent misuse.

Under the Section 24, *National Security*, exemption of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 we must decline to provide any information to you on this issue.

3 - The Standard Operating Procedure (or similar document) that sets out how PHE decides where to send samples for analysis

PHE did not decide where to send samples - we received them into our laboratories from a network of clinical services.

Specimens were transferred to PHE laboratories under the control of the joint command centre in Freetown, operated by Ministry of Health and the Sierra Leone military with advice from WHO. PHE was not involved in these decisions and hold no policies, procedures or similar documents that detail how these decisions were made.

4 - All of the funding sources of PHE for each of its activities in the affected countries (broken down for each activity/project)

The PHE response to the outbreak in Sierra Leone was funded by the British Government's Department for International Development (DfID). No other sources were involved for the main lab deployment. PHE also contributed to the European Mobile Lab which is funded by the European Union.

The in-country work, in Sierra Leone, was supported by DfID - £4.7 million.

The funding for UK-based work, including Port of Entry, management, and support of the response, was funded by Department of Health via PHE grant in aid - £3.3 million

5 - All the audits and evaluations of the activities/projects of PHE during ebola

We would be grateful if you could clarify this enquiry please. As currently stated it is so broad that it would be unreasonable to attempt to answer it. However, any information / audit of scientific interest or of evaluations of clinical interventions are routinely published in open access peer reviewed journals. The principal publications that involved PHE staff are the following:

- The UK's multidisciplinary response to an Ebola epidemic. Reece S, Brown CS, Dunning J, Chand MA, Zambon MC, Jacobs M. Clin Med (Lond). 2017 Jul;17(4):332-337
- Rapid outbreak sequencing of Ebola virus in Sierra Leone identifies transmission chains linked to sporadic cases. Arias A, Watson SJ et al. Virus Evol. 2016 Jun 22;2(1)
- Ebola exposure, illness experience, and Ebola antibody prevalence in international responders to the West African Ebola epidemic 2014-2016: A cross-sectional study. Houlihan CF, McGowan CR, Dicks S, Baguelin M, Moore DAJ, Mabey D, Roberts CH, Kumar A, Samuel D, Tedder R, Glynn JR. PLoS Med. 2017 May 16
- Ebola Virus Disease: An Update on Epidemiology, Symptoms, Laboratory Findings, Diagnostic Issues, and Infection Prevention and Control Issues for Laboratory Professionals. Brown CS, Mephram S, Shorten RJ. Clin Lab Med. 2017 Jun;37(2):269-284
- Personal protective equipment solution for UK military medical personnel working in an Ebola virus disease treatment unit in Sierra Leone. Reidy P, Fletcher T, Shieber C, Shallcross J, Towler H, Ping M, Kenworthy L, Silman N, Aarons E. J Hosp Infect. 2017 May;96(1):42-48

- Evaluating the frequency of asymptomatic Ebola virus infection. Mbala P, Baguelin M, Ngay I, Rosello A, Mulembakani P, Demiris N, Edmunds WJ, Muyembe JJ. *Philos Trans R Soc Lond B Biol Sci.* 2017 May 26;372(1721)
- Contact tracing performance during the Ebola virus disease outbreak in Kenema district, Sierra Leone. Senga M, Koi A, Moses L, Wauquier N, Barboza P, Fernandez-Garcia MD, Engedashet E, Kuti-George F, Mitiku AD, Vandi M, Kargbo D, Formenty P, Hugonnet S, Bertherat E, Lane C. *Philos Trans R Soc Lond B Biol Sci.* 2017 May 26;372(1721)
- Case study: design and implementation of training for scientists deploying to Ebola diagnostic field laboratories in Sierra Leone: October 2014 to February 2016. Logue CH, Lewis SM, Lansley A, Fraser S, Shieber C, Shah S, Semper A, Bailey D, Busuttill J, Evans L, Carroll MW, Silman NJ, Brooks T, Shallcross JA. *Philos Trans R Soc Lond B Biol Sci.* 2017 May 26;372(1721)
- Ebola 2014: Setting up a port health screening programme at an international train station. Cleary V, Wynne-Evans E, Freed J, Fleet K, Thorn S, Turbitt D. *J Bus Contin Emer Plan.* 2017 Dec 1;10(2):177-187.
- Asymptomatic infection and unrecognised Ebola virus disease in Ebola-affected households in Sierra Leone: a cross-sectional study using a new non-invasive assay for antibodies to Ebola virus. Glynn JR, Bower H, Johnson S, Houlihan CF, Montesano C, Scott JT, Semple MG, Bangura MS, Kamara AJ, Kamara O, Mansaray SH, Sesay D, Turay C, Dicks S, Wadoum REG, Colizzi V, Checchi F, Samuel D, Tedder RS. *Lancet Infect Dis.* 2017 Jun;17(6):645-653

6 - List of security incidents relating to ebola in PEH labs in the affected countries and in the UK

There were no laboratory security incidents recorded during the outbreak.

7 - The agreements that PHE might have signed with each of the government in the affected countries

PHE did not sign any agreements with any government of an affected country as we were working under the auspices of WHO and DfID.

8 - Consent forms, if any, of the patients whose blood was sampled by PEH or its partners

Personal information is protected from disclosure under the Section 40 –*personal information*, exemption of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Therefore, PHE is not obliged to disclose any information without the necessary consent.

However, as samples were taken by partner agencies (who would therefore have obtained the consent), not PHE, this is not an enquiry that we could answer.

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

writing to Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

Leigh Hopkins

Freedom of Information Officer