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Public Health
Wales

Freedom of Information request to Public Health Wales

FOI Reference:	FOI 079
Date request received	10/January/2018
Date information is due to be sent	07/February/2018

Information requested:

1. How are cases of adverse reactions to vaccines recorded in Wales, including vaccine injury?
2. How many adverse reactions to vaccines, including vaccine injury, have occurred in Wales in the years 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18?
3. How many cases of compensation for vaccine injury have occurred and/or been settled each year since 2000?
4. How much money has been paid out per year in compensation payments to vaccine injured persons since 2000? Is the compensation funded by The Welsh Government or UK Government?
5. Since the flu vaccine was ineffective in the over 65's in 2016-17, how have the peak influenza and influenza-like-illness (ILI) rates been affected by the lack of effectiveness of the vaccine?
6. In the UK, do the same standards that apply to the licensing of drugs also apply to the licensing of vaccines?
7. How does the Welsh Government and/or Public Health Wales determine the safety and effectiveness of vaccines?
8. How is vaccine policy decided in Wales?
9. Do representatives of the Welsh Government and/or Public Health Wales meet with representatives of the vaccine industry? How often? What input do the pharmaceutical companies have with regard to vaccination policy in Wales?
10. Does Public Health Wales compare outcome data from vaccinated and unvaccinated cohorts? What results have been found?
11. The British Medical Journal reported that cases of epilepsy had occurred due to the MMR vaccine. <http://www.bmj.com/content/359/bmj.j5104/rr-13>. What is the annual incidence of epilepsy in Wales? Has the rate of epilepsy changed since the introduction of the MMR vaccine? How is the data collected?

12. What is the prevalence of autism in Wales? How has the incidence of autism changed since the introduction of the MMR vaccine? How is the data collected?

Information provided for the answer:

1. How are cases of adverse reactions to vaccines recorded in Wales, including vaccine injury?
 - a. This information is not held by Public Health Wales (PHW). Data on reported adverse reactions are collected by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) www.mhra.gov.uk.
2. How many adverse reactions to vaccines, including vaccine injury, have occurred in Wales in the years 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18?
 - a. Please see response to Q1.
3. How many cases of compensation for vaccine injury have occurred and/or been settled each year since 2000?
 - a. This information is not held by PHW. The Vaccine Damage Payment scheme is administered by the Department of Health.
4. How much money has been paid out per year in compensation payments to vaccine injured persons since 2000? Is the compensation funded by The Welsh Government or UK Government?
 - a. Please see response to Q3
5. Since the flu vaccine was ineffective in the over 65's in 2016-17, how have the peak influenza and influenza-like-illness (ILI) rates been affected by the lack of effectiveness of the vaccine?
 - a. Data on influenza rates for the relevant period are published on the PHW website at <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=457&pid=34338>
6. In the UK, do the same standards that apply to the licensing of drugs also apply to the licensing of vaccines?
 - a. PHW is not responsible for licensing pharmaceutical products. The responsible bodies are the MHRA www.mhra.gov.uk and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) <http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/>
7. How does the Welsh Government and/or Public Health Wales determine the safety and effectiveness of vaccines?
 - a. The MHRA www.mhra.gov.uk is the responsible body for vaccine safety. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation> advises on effectiveness of vaccines recommended for routine use in the UK.
8. How is vaccine policy decided in Wales?

- a. Vaccine policy in Wales is made by the WG based on expert advice from the JCVI <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation>
9. Do representatives of the Welsh Government and/or Public Health Wales meet with representatives of the vaccine industry? How often? What input do the pharmaceutical companies have with regard to vaccination policy in Wales?
- a. In relation to vaccine manufacturers, PHW has a scientific programme of meetings held 3-4 times a year in which different vaccine manufacturers are invited to present on specific vaccines. We are unable to answer on behalf of Welsh Government (WG) or in relation to vaccine policy which is determined by WG.
10. Does Public Health Wales compare outcome data from vaccinated and unvaccinated cohorts? What results have been found?
- a. Yes. For example PHW contribute data to UK and European assessments of influenza vaccine effectiveness each year. These are published, a recent example can be found at <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2017.22.44.17-00306>
11. The British Medical Journal reported that cases of epilepsy had occurred due to the MMR vaccine. <http://www.bmj.com/content/359/bmj.j5104/rr-13>. What is the annual incidence of epilepsy in Wales? Has the rate of epilepsy changed since the introduction of the MMR vaccine? How is the data collected?
- a. The Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme (VPDP) does not hold this data. The letter to the BMJ referred to in the link describes data on febrile convulsions but not epilepsy. Febrile convulsions are a known adverse effect of MMR vaccines. Epilepsy is not known to be associated with MMR vaccines.
12. What is the prevalence of autism in Wales? How has the incidence of autism changed since the introduction of the MMR vaccine? How is the data collected?
- a. The VPDP does not hold this data. Autism is not known to be associated with MMR vaccines. A great deal has been published on this topic and is available online. The National Autistic Society in the UK has published a statement on this which includes some links which you may find helpful <http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/media-centre/position-statements/mmr-vaccine.aspx>

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of the decision, you should write to the Corporate Complaints Manager, Public Health Wales NHS Trust, 3, Number 2, Capital Quarter, Tyndall Street, Cardiff, CF10 4BZ.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint or review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO

cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Trust. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner for Wales

2nd Floor
Churchill House
Churchill Way
Cardiff
CF10 2HH

Telephone: 029 2067 8400

Email: wales@ico.org.uk