

**Human Tissue Authority**

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**Date:** 16 November 2023

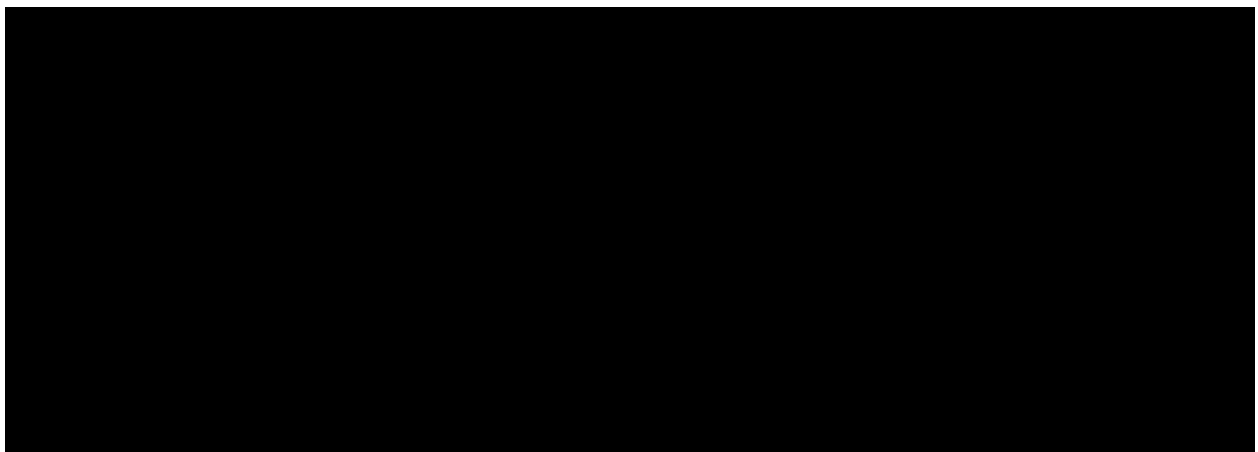
By email to: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

**Freedom of Information request**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request, which was received by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) on Wednesday 04 October 2023. Your email outlined the following request:

“1) Provide any correspondence dated 20th October 2020 – 20th February 2021 between the HTA and University of Cambridge and/or Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust staff regarding the use of human tissue in research. To assist in your search, the correspondents from the University of Cambridge may include:



2) Provide the number of investigations conducted by the HTA into the University of Cambridge and the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust since 2020, and a breakdown of the outcomes of those investigations (if any were performed)”.

## **Clarification**

At our request, you provided us with clarifications on Thursday 19 October 2023.

You clarified that request 1 was in relation to “breast cancer research using human tissue samples in ethically approved studies” and that request 2 was in relation to investigations into human tissue research sector activities.

## **Response**

### **Answer to request 1**

Although the HTA identified information which could be considered to fall within the scope of this request, section 41 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides an exemption for information which was provided to the HTA in confidence and which, if it were disclosed, would constitute an actionable breach of confidence.

The section 41 exemption is absolute and therefore not subject to a public interest test.

The information withheld in this case constitutes information which was provided to the HTA by third parties in circumstances placing a duty of confidentiality on the HTA; in our view, it would constitute a breach of that duty if the HTA were to disclose it and there is no overriding public interest sufficient to displace that duty.

### **Answer to request 2**

No investigations have been conducted by the HTA into the research activities of organisations named in the request since 2020.

## **Further information**

If you are unhappy with the way the HTA has handled your request for information in this case, you may in the first instance ask us for an internal review by writing to us at the above postal or email address.

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to appeal directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision, at the address below. There is no charge for making an appeal.

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 08456 30 60 60 or 01625 54 57 45  
Website: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

