

Ref: FOI-476

Sent via email only: [REDACTED]

09 May 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

1. Thank you for your email of 10 March 2025 in which you requested information from UK Anti-Doping ('UKAD') under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'). Specifically, your request was as follows:

How many footballers in England and Wales have failed drugs tests between 2020-2025?

It would be great if you could split the findings by year, i.e. 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25.

It would also be fantastic to understand which drugs showed up in the Adverse Analytical Findings.

Also, can I ask how many cases are currently live - and also what sanctions have been handed down to footballers who failed tests.

2. On 8 April 2025, in response to a request from UKAD, you clarified that the scope of your request was limited to testing in men's and women's football conducted under the jurisdiction of The Football Association ('The FA').

Summary of Response

3. UKAD confirms that, subject to the clarifications explained below, it holds the information requested.

Response to your request

4. UKAD confirms that it holds the information requested, which is disclosed in the table below.

Season	Prohibited Substance	Outcome / Conclusion
2020/21	benzoylecgonine	No ADRV
2021/22	canrenone	9-month period of Ineligibility
2021/22	amfetamine	No ADRV
2022/23	tamoxifen	No ADRV
2022/23	tamoxifen	No ADRV
2022/23	triamcinolone acetonide	No ADRV
2022/23	dorzolamide	No ADRV
2023/24	triamcinolone acetonide	No ADRV
2023/24	methylprednisolone	No ADRV
2024/25	salbutamol	Reprimand
2024/25	Not disclosed	Not disclosed

5. Whilst UKAD holds the requested information relating to the last Adverse Analytical Finding ('AAF') listed in the table above, we are withholding this under section 31 of the Act as releasing it would be likely to prejudice the exercise by UKAD of its regulatory functions.

Section 31 – Law enforcement

6. Section 31 of the Act provides as follows:

Section 31 Law enforcement

(1) Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely, to prejudice –

...

(g) the exercise by any public authority of its functions for any of the purposes specified in subsection (2),

(2) The purposes referred to in subsection 1(g) to (i) are –

...

(b) the purpose of ascertaining whether any person is responsible for any conduct which is improper,

7. One of UKAD's core functions is the investigation and prosecution of Anti-Doping Rule Violations ('ADRVs'). This function falls within section 31(1)(g) of the Act, as it is exercised for the purpose set out in section 31(2)(b) of the Act.

8. It is UKAD's view that disclosing the requested information relating to the last AAF listed in the table above would be likely to prejudice this function. This is because it is still subject to an investigation and/or ongoing ADRV proceedings to determine whether any further action is required in accordance with The FA Anti-Doping Regulations ('The FA ADR'). Releasing any information in respect of it at this stage may therefore prejudice that specific investigation/those proceedings.
9. Releasing the requested information relating to the last AAF listed in the table above would also be likely to prejudice UKAD's investigation and prosecution function more generally. The FA ADR require that any investigation into a potential ADRV be conducted in accordance with strict requirements of confidentiality, so that all facts and information pertaining to a case remains confidential, save to the extent that they are ultimately included in any decision published at the end of the process.
10. If UKAD were to disclose information which remains relevant to any current investigation or proceedings, this would undermine the confidentiality of that anti-doping process. To do so would jeopardise UKAD's relationship with the sporting community to such an extent that it would be likely to lead to a lack of co-operation by sports, teams, or Athletes in the Testing programme and any subsequent investigations or prosecutions, if not a refusal to participate at all.
11. Having determined that disclosure of the information relating to the last AAF listed in the table above would be likely to prejudice the effective investigation and prosecution of ADRVs, UKAD has considered the public interest arguments in favour of disclosure. UKAD recognises the importance of transparency and accountability in general, and specifically in providing the public with more understanding of how it investigates potential ADRVs.
12. However, UKAD considers that the more important public interest lies in the maintenance of an effective investigation and prosecution process, so that UKAD can work towards its public policy objective of eliminating doping in sport. Disclosing the information requested in relation to the last AAF listed in the table above would be likely to harm that process.

AAFs and ADRVs

13. Please note in the context of your request that there may be various reasons why the detection of an AAF in a Sample does not automatically lead to an ADRV. For example, an Athlete who returns an AAF may have a Therapeutic Use Exemption ('TUE') which permits them to use a Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method

contained in the Prohibited List when such use or administration is necessary to address a legitimate medical requirement.¹

14. Alternatively, an Athlete may be able to show that a Prohibited Substance was ingested via a permitted route (as outlined in the Prohibited List), or that it was derived from the ingestion of a substance that is itself permitted (for example, morphine derived from the ingestion of codeine). The application of relevant Technical Documents and Technical Letters issued by the World Anti-Doping Agency ('WADA') may also mean that an AAF in a Sample does not necessarily lead to an ADRV.

Conclusion

15. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of this response and should be addressed via email to foi@ukad.org.uk. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any further communications.
16. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely



UK Anti-Doping

¹ Further information about the TUE system is available on the UKAD website [here](#).