

## FOI 23/920

Dear

Thank you for your request of 24 November 2023 where you requested the following:

*Can you please let me know how many doses of illegally traded medicines the MHRA has seized in the UK in each of the previous five years.*

*What is the market value of these seizures in each of the previous five years?*

*In addition to these top-line figures, please provide a breakdown by medicine type and brand, along with a description of the circumstances around each seizure, if available.*

*I forgot to ask that the breakdown indicates what was illegal about the seizures - i.e. counterfeit, stolen goods, sold by a non-pharmacist etc. I don't know what categories you use to classify seizures by, so will leave it for you to use whatever is standard*

We require some clarification of the requested information and once you have provided that information we will log this under a new FOI request and progress your request further.

We are grateful if you could provide clarification on the term 'illegally traded medicines'? To help assist we hold information on medicines we seize in partnership with Border Force (both as BAU and because of specific operations such as PANGEA, and our intensification days). We also seize medicine because of our investigations. Is this what the enquiry seeks to identify?

As regards the question about 'what was illegal about the seizure' we are grateful if you could clarify if you are seeking information about the volumes of unauthorised and falsified medicines seized by the MHRA over the last 5 years? The CEU will seize medicines that fall within our remit and that are unauthorised for use in the UK or are falsified (fake medicines that are designed to mimic real medicines). These categories are broad and will capture recovered medicines that have been diverted from the legal supply chain, either because they have been stolen or lost. The CEU enforces the Human Medicines Regulations 2012. We may work with the police, or other agencies, where there is a mutual interest, but we don't investigate theft or fraud. We also don't have a role in enforcing the intellectual property rights of pharmaceutical businesses, so our role with counterfeits (medicines that do not comply with intellectual-property rights or that infringe trademark law) is limited.

If the enquiry seeks information about the volumes of unauthorised and falsified medicines seized by the MHRA over the last 5 years, we do hold that information. We will also be able to estimate the value, and indicate the therapeutic nature of the medicine, e.g. pain relief, antibiotics, erectile dysfunction, etc.

Please let us know as we wish to establish the information you seek.

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 you receive this response and addressed to: [info@mhra.gov.uk](mailto:info@mhra.gov.uk)

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you were to remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal review, you would have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please bear in mind that the Information Commissioner will not normally review our handling of your request unless you have first contacted us to conduct an internal review. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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

Kind regards,

**MHRA Customer Experience Centre**  
Communications and engagement team  
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency  
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