Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency

MHRA Central Freedom of Information Team
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MHRA Website

[redacted]

Our Ref: **FOI2026/00639**

22 June 2026

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FoI) request received on 15 June. You wrote:

[redacted] *is quoted in an article in The Guardian (https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/apr/04/medicines-watchdog-to-investigate-uk-peptide-clinics-over-health-claims) saying "Peptide products may be sold as cosmetics, supplements and medicines, and depending on their intended purpose, they fall under different regulatory frameworks" and "We disregard claims that products are for 'research purposes' if it is clear that such claims are being used as an attempt to avoid medicines regulations. If there is evidence within the promotional material that the products are in fact unauthorised medicines intended for human use, we will take appropriate regulatory action".*
I am requesting the following information under the freedom of information act:

* *How many times have officers from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency Criminal Enforcement Unit arrested people regarding the unlawful sale and distribution of peptides that are classified for research purposes only and not for human or animal consumption?*

* *I am requesting a full list of investigations into the claims that peptide products being sold, distributed and marketed are for research purposes only are being used to avoid medicines regulations, since June 2024.*

* *I am requesting all documents pertaining to investigations into the claims that peptides products are being sold, distributed and marketed are for research purposes only are being used to avoid medicines regulations, since June 2024.*

* *I am requesting a full list of what has been seized by the Criminal Enforcement Unit for violations of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012, from January 2025 to June 2026.*

* *I am requesting a full list of all peptide products seized by the Criminal Enforcement Unit for violations of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012, from June 2024 to June 2026.*

MHRA Response

The MHRA confirms that it holds information within the scope of your request. Our response is set out below.

The MHRA can confirm the following arrests, made by police, in relation to relevant suspected offences:
One person was arrested in December 2023.
One person was arrested in November 2025.
Two people were arrested in May 2026.
One person was arrested in May 2026 (not related to above investigation).

We are unable to provide any further information that you have requested and have applied exemptions under sections 30 (Investigations and Proceedings) and 31 (Law Enforcement) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 30 – Investigations and Proceedings Conducted by Public Authorities
The MHRA is applying the following subsections of section 30(1):
Information held for the purposes of:
Section 30(1)(a) - Any investigation which the public authority has a duty to conduct
Section 30(1)(b) - Any investigation which may lead to a decision to institute criminal proceedings
Section 30(1)(c) - Any investigation which may lead to a decision to bring civil proceedings

Section 30(2)(a) - Criminal proceedings the authority has power to conduct
Section 30(2)(b) - Information obtained or recorded for the purposes of those proceedings

Section 30(3) - Information relating to the obtaining of information from confidential sources

Section 31 – Law Enforcement
The MHRA is applying the following subsections of section 31(1):
Section 31(1)(a) – the prevention or detection of crime
Section 31(1)(b) – the apprehension or prosecution of offenders
Section 31(1)(c) – the administration of justice

Both Section 30 and Section 31 are qualified exemptions, and we have therefore considered the balance of the public interest.

<u>Factors in favour of disclosure</u>
Promoting transparency and accountability in how the MHRA conducts investigations.
Increasing public confidence in enforcement activity.
Assisting public understanding of how decisions are made in regulatory and criminal matters.

<u>Factors in favour of maintaining the exemptions</u>
Disclosure would be likely to undermine ongoing and/or future investigations, by revealing investigative lines of enquiry, evidential material, and / or decision-making processes.
It would risk prejudicing the ability to detect and prevent crime, including by allowing individuals to anticipate or circumvent enforcement activity.
Disclosure could compromise the integrity of proceedings, including fair trial considerations.
It would be likely to reduce the willingness of individuals to provide information.
Revealing investigative approaches and material would weaken the MHRA's overall law enforcement capability, not just in this case but in future cases

Balance of the Public Interest
While we recognise the importance of openness and transparency, there is a strong public interest in protecting the ability of public authorities to carry out effective investigations and enforce the law.
In this case, we consider that disclosure would be likely to cause real and significant prejudice to both specific investigations and broader law enforcement functions.
Accordingly, the public interest in maintaining the exemptions outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

The MHRA is committed to taking appropriate regulatory and enforcement action where there is evidence that products are being supplied or promoted as unauthorised medicines in breach of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012.

The MHRA routinely publishes information about its enforcement activity where appropriate. Arrests and enforcement activity may be referenced in MHRA press releases or reported in national media coverage.

Such information is intended to provide transparency without compromising investigations.

Yours sincerely,

MHRA Central Freedom of Information Team
Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing foi.request@mhra.gov.uk or by writing to: MHRA Central Freedom of Information Team, 10 South, Colonnade, Canary Wharf, London, E14 4PU

Any request for an internal review must be received by us within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please note we are not obliged to provide a review if it is requested after more than 40 working days.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.
Website: ICO FOI and EIR complaints or telephone 0303 123 1113.

Re-use of our information
The MHRA information supplied in response to your request is subject to Crown copyright. Information created by the MHRA which is disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act is made available for re-use under the Open Government Licence (OGL) v3.0, except where this is otherwise stated. There are some restrictions on re-use under the OGL and these can be viewed here:
https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/