



Medicines & Healthcare products
Regulatory Agency

MHRA Central Freedom of
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[MHRA Website](https://www.mhra.gov.uk)

Our Ref: **FOI2026/01075**

15 October 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 17 September. You wrote:

I am requesting any recorded information held by the MHRA relating to the use of lemon and menthol leaf imagery on the packaging of the following products:

PL 00129/0349 Vicks Cold, Flu & Cough All In One 500 mg/200 mg/10 mg Powder for Oral Solution

PL 00129/0347 Vicks Cold & Flu Max Strength 1000 mg/12.2 mg Powder for Oral Solution

Specifically, I request:

Any assessment reports, review documents, approval records, or correspondence relating to the acceptability of lemon and menthol leaf imagery on the approved packaging.

Any MHRA guidance, policies, assessment criteria, or regulatory requirements concerning the use of fruit, plant, herb, or leaf imagery on medicinal product packaging.

Any recorded information relating to whether natural lemon-derived and/or natural menthol-derived flavouring components were considered when approving the packaging.

Any documented criteria regarding the level or proportion of natural flavouring required to justify the use of lemon, menthol leaf, or other botanical imagery on medicinal products.

If any of the requested information is publicly available, please provide links to the relevant sources. Electronic copies of documents are preferred.

MHRA Response

Under Section 14(1) of the Fol Act, public authorities are not obliged to comply with a request which is deemed vexatious. By way of clarification it is the request which is treated as vexatious not the person making the request.

A request may be treated as vexatious, if it seeks information of a frivolous nature; if it is likely to cause distress or irritation without justification.

A vexatious request is assessed with reference to all the circumstances of an individual case. There are four broad themes to consider when looking at whether an Fol request(s) is vexatious. These four themes are:

1. the burden (on the public authority and its staff);
2. the motive (of the requester);
3. the value or serious purpose (of the request); and
4. any harassment or distress (of and to staff).

These four broad themes are not a checklist, and they are not exhaustive they simply emphasise that a range of factors need to be considered when apply Section 14(1).

In this case, the Agency is treating your request as vexatious for the following reasons:

- Many of the questions asked use of the term 'any', using such a term makes it difficult to establish reasonable avenues to search.
- Many of the questions asked in the request do not ask for a specific document but many types of documents: 'assessment reports, review documents, approval records, or correspondence' and 'guidance, policies, assessment criteria, or regulatory requirements', etc.
- We have not been able to identify a clear public interest aspect to the request, the current feeling is that the request would do very little to further public debate or to serve the public interest in such a manner as to outweigh the benefits of staff time being focused on more significant requests and duties.

The ICO guidance states:

"The purpose of Section 14...must be to protect the resources (in the broadest sense of that word) of the public authority from being squandered on disproportionate use of FOIA..."

We also considered Section 12 (cost limit) when handling your request, however, overall, it was felt that the perceived value of the request versus the public interest benefit struck disproportionate balance that could not be justified, and therefore, made Section 14 more suitable.

Based on our considerations, the Agency has decided that Section 14(1) of the Fol Act applies on this occasion.

Advice and assistance

Under section 16 of FOIA, should you consider that a further request is required, then we would suggest refining your request to a specific document, or limited date range for correspondence. Before making such a request please refer to the below.

For guidance on imagery on medicinal product labelling please visit the below weblink, and refer to the excerpt below:

"Pictures of leaves and fruit: Images of leaves or fruit are only acceptable where natural extracts are used in the formulation. The use of artificial flavours will preclude the use of these devices on labelling."

Para. 5, Page 22

Source:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a4770118effd97622f53be5/Best_practice_guidance_labelling_MHRA_Final_July_2026.pdf.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us quoting the reference number above.

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

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<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>