



Medicines & Healthcare products  
Regulatory Agency

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

Our Ref: **FOI2026/00278**

18 March 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FoI) request received on 25 July. You wrote:

*Were HSCNI notified that prescription only medicines were being supplied to their harm reduction contracts from unlicensed premises?*

### **MHRA Response**

We can confirm we hold information requested, but it is exempt from disclosure under section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act.

This is because we estimate the cost of searching for and identifying the requested information would exceed the cost limit of £600 specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. This represents the estimated cost of at least one person spending 3½ working days (equivalent to 24 staff-hours) in determining whether the Agency holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

Under Section 12(1) of the FoI Act the Agency is not therefore obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing it further. In order to provide an answer to your request we asked our IT support team to run a search of any emails sent from any mhra.gov.uk email address (i.e. from any MHRA member of staff or shared email account) to any email domain ending in @hscni.net. We understand that HSCNI have multiple email domains for example @southerntrust.hscni.net and @setrust.hscni.net which is why the request has been this broad. The search has returned over 60,000 results. It would take approx. 30 seconds on average to review each result for relevance, which multiplied over the number of items located would exceed the permitted 24 hours allowed under the Act.

Under Section 16 of the FoI Act we should help you narrow your request so that it may fall beneath the cost limit. Our suggestion would be to allow us to restrict the search to individuals based in either our Criminal Enforcement team or our Good Distribution Practice team within our Compliance unit. Please note that we cannot guarantee that any new request will not attract one or more exemptions under the Act, but it is our suggestion for you at this stage.

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

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### **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](mailto: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 Contact Information](#) 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/>