



## Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency

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

Our Ref: **FOI2025/00393**

19 May 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request received on 21 April 2025. You wrote:

*Please find a request under the Freedom of Information act to provide data from the MHRA imports database.*

*List of NOI applications to import unlicensed medicines to include*

- 1. Date of NOI*
- 2. Name of the medicinal product*
- 3. Name of importer*
- 4. NOI status (ie was the notification of import objected)*
- 5. If the justification for import was a UK shortage (Y/N)*

*1. Please provide the data on a monthly basis for the time period 2020 - 2024 inclusive, in excel format.*

*2. Note, no commercially sensitive information is requested - for example the importers supply chain or the volume of medicine requested within the NOI - only equivalent information to that published by the MHRA for Parallel Import licences.*

*I have checked the MHRA FOI disclosure log and have not found any equivalent requests. Information on product and importer has been provided previously for the product Co-proxamol - FOI 21/376 & FOI 21/465 and the MHRA previously published detailed information of importations including listing products and importers as Quarterly reports*

*<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/quarterly-reports-on-the-import-of-unlicensed-medicines> (ceased and has not been resumed since 2018).*

### **MHRA Response**

We confirm that we hold the information you have asked for; however, we consider that the information is exempt from disclosure because Section 12 of the FOIA applies.

Section 12 allows public authorities to refuse requests where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the "appropriate limit" in the FOIA; for central government departments this is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 24 working hours to determine if the requested information is held, and then to locate, retrieve and extract it.

We will explain how compliance with your request would exceed the appropriate limit and why Section 12 applies in this case.

The quarterly summary reports for the importation of unlicensed medicines you refer to in your request would take a single member of MHRA staff one week to compile. Therefore, we estimate that to do this work for the previous 5 years (start of 2020 to end of 2024, so effectively 20 quarters), would take one staff member 20 weeks to compile.

It should also be noted that there is also a check required of each notification to ensure that there is no commercially sensitive information or information that would contravene the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and so be exempt under other sections of the FOIA. To do this check for all notifications from 2020 to 2024 would also trigger Section 14 of the FOIA, which concerns vexatious requests.

When Section 12 of the FOIA applies, we also provide advice to assist you in making a new, narrowed request for a smaller amount of information. In this case, we advise that you should narrow your request by picking a smaller data set of notifications, such as notifications for a specific medicinal product. However, as we have advised above, other sections of the FOIA may also apply to any new, narrowed request.

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**

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/>