

News story: Dangerous diversion of Diazepam down by potentially more than 60%

Our efforts to crack down on the diversion of Prescription-Only Medicines (POM) onto the black market are working, as recent figures highlight a drop in large scale orders of prescription medicine.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) analysed bulk orders of diverted medicines* between January – May 2017 compared to January – May 2016. The figures show:

- trading of Diazepam is down by 64%
 - trading of Nitrazepam is down by 24%
 - trading of top strength Temazepam is down by 20%
 - trading of Zolpidem is down by 14%.

[We recently updated the public about the diversion of medicines onto the criminal market, said to be worth up to £200m.](#) Our enforcement team is running 17 active investigations, and we are disrupting organised criminal networks diverting medicines from the legitimate supply chain onto the illegal market.

44 arrests have been made thus far, for offences such as possession with intent to supply a controlled drug, and offences under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Last year, Mohammed Urfan pleaded guilty to charges of unlawful supply of class C controlled drugs contrary to section 4(3) a Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and a suspended sentence of 18 months imprisonment was imposed on him, with a requirement that he carry out 260 hours of unpaid work.

Alastair Jeffrey, MHRA Head of Enforcement, said:

It is a serious criminal offence to sell medicines outside of the regulated supply chain and the latest figures show our unabated efforts to identify and prosecute criminals are having an effect.

The criminals involved are exploiting people to make money and have no concern about the health and wellbeing of people who buy the medicines.

We will work tirelessly to investigate and prosecute those breaking the law.

Prescription only medicines are potent and should only be taken under medical supervision.