

Seven sentenced after MHRA investigation uncovers £1.8m illegal medicines and steroids network

29.4.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

An MHRA-led investigation has exposed a £1.8 million illegal medicines and steroids network, leading to seven men being sentenced.

Seven men have been sentenced after an investigation by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) Criminal Enforcement Unit into a large-scale criminal network supplying illegal steroids and prescription-only medicines. The group received combined sentences totalling more than 21 years' imprisonment.

The investigation began after UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) identified website linked to the Bolton area that were suspected of selling performance-enhancing steroids and other illegal medicines.

MHRA investigators traced the activity to a flat above commercial premises on St Helens Road, which was being used to store, package, and distribute the drugs.

During enforcement action, officers seized more than 130,000 doses of steroids and unauthorised medicines that were being sold by mail order. These included products such as tamoxifen, finasteride and modafinil, highlighting the scale and complexity of the illegal supply network. Further searches across Bolton led to a number of arrests.

Following a detailed investigation, several individuals were charged with offences including conspiracy to supply controlled drugs, supplying unauthorised medicines, and money laundering to the value of over £1.8 million.

Tim Duffield, MHRA Head of Intelligence said:

"This was a well-organised operation that put people at real risk. Medicines bought outside regulated channels can be unsafe, ineffective or fake.

"Our investigators worked hard to break up this criminal network and bring those responsible to justice. These convictions are just part of the MHRA's ongoing work to tackle the illegal trade in medicines and protect public health."

Mario Theophanous, UKAD's Head of Intelligence and Investigations, said:

"Disrupting the supply of illegal performance-enhancing drugs is central to protecting sport. Our intelligence officers work in partnership with regulators and law enforcement, to identify and dismantle the criminal networks that make these substances available. That collaboration is a vital part of how we keep prohibited substances out of sport, and away from elite athletes and young people."

Zaheer Oomer, who is unemployed, pleaded guilty at an early stage to all charges, including money laundering offences to a value of £99,893.

Rizwan Atcha, a health and safety advisor, Imtiaz Atcha, a former bank manager, and Matthew

Williams, a care worker, also pleaded guilty at the start of the trial in June 2025. Each admitted money laundering offences to the value of £772,112, £117,733 and £221,349 respectively.

Abdul Khan, a scrap metal dealer, Saddym Shahid, a mechanic, and Rajendra Patel, a scrap metal worker, pleaded not guilty and stood trial at Bolton Crown Court. They faced charges of money laundering involving £139,967, \$248,750 and £229,061 respectively. Following consideration of extensive evidence, the jury found all three men guilty on 7 July 2025.

A Proceeds of Crime Act confiscation investigation is ongoing.

The MHRA reminds the public to only obtain medicines from trusted and regulated sources, such as registered pharmacies. Anyone who suspects they have been sold illegal or unsafe medicines, or is experiencing side effects, should seek medical advice and report any concerns to the MHRA's Yellow Card scheme.

Convictions

- Abdul Khan and Saddaym Shahid – Conspiracy to supply class C drugs 4 years imprisonment. Conspiracy to supply unauthorised medicinal products 18 months imprisonment concurrent. Money laundering 3 years imprisonment consecutive. Total 7 years imprisonment.
- Mohammed Oomer - Conspiracy to supply class C drugs 35 months imprisonment. Conspiracy to supply unauthorised medicinal products 18 months imprisonment concurrent. Money laundering 20 months imprisonment consecutive. Total 4 years 7 months.
- Rizwan Atcha – 4 counts of money laundering. 37 months imprisonment concurrent on each count. Total 3 years and 1 month imprisonment.
- Imtiaz Atcha – 4 counts of money laundering. 18 months imprisonment suspended for 2 years. Electronically monitored curfew from 9pm to 7pm for four months. To do 250 hours of unpaid work.
- Rajendra Patel – 2 counts of money laundering. 24 months imprisonment suspended for 2 years. Electronically monitored curfew from 9pm to 7pm for four months. To do 250 hours of unpaid work.
- Matthew Williams – 4 counts of money laundering. 24 months imprisonment suspended for 2 years. Electronically monitored curfew from 9pm to 7pm for four months. To do 250 hours of unpaid work.

Notes to Editors

- The Criminal Enforcement Unit is a dedicated law enforcement capability within the MHRA. The unit collects and analyses criminal intelligence to identify illegal activity involving medical products and investigates cases to prevent and disrupt offending and bring offenders to

justice.

- The MHRA's #FakeMeds campaign provides advice to people in the UK who are considering buying medication online, outlining how products can be accessed from safe and legitimate sources.
- The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the UK by ensuring they work and are acceptably safe. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgements to ensure that the benefits justify any risks.
- The MHRA is an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).
- For media enquiries, please contact newscentre@mhra.gov.uk, or call 020 3080 7651.
- For more information about UK Anti-Doping, see the UKAD website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/seven-sentenced-after-mhra-investigation-uncovers-18m-illegal-medicines-and-steroids-network>