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UK Border Force Seizes 18,000 Weight-Loss Products

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– Categories: Crime



Between January 2024 and June 2025, the UK Border Force intercepted 18,316 unregulated or illegal weight-loss products at the nation's borders. Confiscated items included popular injectable brands such as Wegovy, Mounjaro, and Saxenda. Many were concealed on individuals or transported in bulk, and authorities believe they were destined for the black market.

Border Force data shows a peak in seizures in April 2024, when 9,100 items were confiscated in a single month. Seizures fell below 1,000 monthly for several months before

rising sharply to 4,375 in August. Early 2025 also saw a notable increase, with items seized rising from 116 in April to 1,774 in May, a 1,429% increase.

Experts warn that these trends reflect growing organised smuggling operations and the health risks posed by counterfeit or improperly stored weight-loss injections. Criminal networks increasingly use online platforms, beauty outlets, and social media to distribute these products. Counterfeit injections may be contaminated, expired, or unsafe, presenting serious dangers to consumers.

The surge in illegal products has coincided with significant price increases for licensed weight-loss drugs. Pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly raised the wholesale price of its Mounjaro injection from £122 to £330 for a high-dose KwikPen. Analysts caution that higher costs may drive more consumers toward unregulated alternatives, further expanding black market activity.

Healthcare professionals have expressed concern over patient safety. Unlicensed medicines lack the rigorous safety checks required in the UK, leaving buyers exposed to potentially ineffective or harmful substances. One senior pharmacist described the trend as “playing Russian roulette with your health.”

The Independent Pharmacies Association warned that rising prices could make patients vulnerable to wider market pressures, while political figures have called for government intervention to prevent further distortions in medicine pricing.

A Home Office spokesperson praised the Border Force’s work: “The excellent efforts of Border Force and our partners in the Organised Crime Task Force have led to the seizure of a substantial amount of unlicensed medicines. These illicit products will not reach our streets, and our communities will remain protected.”

The Border Force emphasises that public vigilance, combined with law enforcement, is critical to limiting the risks posed by unregulated health products. Officials continue to urge the public to purchase medicines only through licensed pharmacies and report any suspicious activity