

14 September 2026

Dear

ATISN 27274 – Medication Shortages in Wales

I am responding to your email which was received on 26 August and acknowledged on 01 September 2026. In your e-mail you asked us to review the response issued to your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and Regulation 12(4)(b) of the Environmental Information Regulations. This letter is to inform you of the outcome.

In your Freedom of Information request dated 29 July, you requested comprehensive information relating to medicine shortages affecting Wales, regarding co-codamol 30/500mg, other co-codamol preparations, blood-pressure medication and wider concurrent UK-wide shortages. The timeframe given was for the period 01 January 2025 to the date we received your request.

We responded on the 05 August seeking clarification and advised that as your request currently stood, it was likely engaging Section 12 of the FOI Act and potentially regulation 12(4)(b) of the EIR Act, reasons were provided as to why this would be the case. We provided a link to publicly available information on medicine shortages and invited you to refine your request so we could provide relevant information, for example by focusing specifically on shortages of co-codamol 30/500mg.

You provided clarification on 11 August, however, your response indicated that you were requesting more medication than originally requested and therefore widened your request further to include Co-codamol preparations (including 30/500mg tablets); Blood-pressure medicines (including ACE inhibitors, ARBs, beta-blockers, calcium-channel blockers, and thiazide diuretics) and any medicines included in Welsh Government's own published shortage lists or monitoring dashboards during the timeframe.

Although we indicated that Welsh Government did hold information relating to this request, it would exceed the cost limit to comply with your request. I can confirm the calculation undertaken would have included locating, retrieving and extracting information held that references to the medicines requested. There are currently 93 shortages and following a simple search of our records, there is likely to be over 3,658 possible documents that would need to be reviewed to identify whether they contained any of the information you asked for and, if so, to extract that information.

This would take significant staff time to locate the files required, retrieve, examine for relevance, collate documents and extract the information that falls within the scope of your request. Therefore, I am satisfied that my colleagues correctly applied section 12 on this occasion for both the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

However, I do recognise that the response should have provided greater detail as to how the figure of at least 61 hours was arrived at. This estimate was based upon an initial preliminary search, a sample of medications. The search yielded: 55 documents for Co-Codamol; 34 documents for Ramipril, and 29 documents for Estradiol. It was estimated that on average of 39

documents and a total based of 93 shortages, approximately 3,658 possible documents would likely to be caught, each of which would have to be examined for relevance. It was determined that it would likely take about a minute to search, locate and retrieve each document and take more than 24 hours to complete, additionally, we would then have to take additional time to consider reading the documents located to determine if they fall into scope of the request. Total of more than 61 hours to complete. The search did not extend further to other correspondence or ministerial files held elsewhere.

Regarding your complaint about section 16 — failure to provide advice and assistance — I note that our clarification letter suggested ways you could revise your request. The response letter also advised that you may wish to refine the request by specifying the particular information sought and any relevant dates or timeframe. This would help focus our searches and clarify the information you are seeking.

I have reviewed our response to your FOI request in accordance with the procedure outlined in the [Welsh Government's Practical Guide for Making Requests for Information](#) which is available by post on request or via the internet. In my view this was a reasonable response, and whilst I uphold your complaint that we failed to provide details of how the estimated time for compliance with the request was reached, I do not uphold the remainder of your complaint.

Next Steps

If you remain dissatisfied with this response you also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745
Fax: 01625 524 510
[FOI and EIR complaints | ICO](#)

Also, if you think that there has been maladministration in dealing with your request, you have the option to make a complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales who can be contacted at:

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae
Pencoed
Bridgend
CF35 5LJ

Telephone: 0845 6010987 (local rate)

Email: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

**Group Director of Strategy & Director of Primary Care and Mental Health
Health, Care and Prevention Group**