

Birmingham pair given suspended prison sentences for selling medicines online illegally

Egle Bunkute, 31, originally from Lithuania was sentenced to 14 months' custody suspended for two years and ordered to complete 100 hours of unpaid work in the community.

Edvinas Ivanauskas, 26, also from Lithuania was sentenced to 44 weeks' imprisonment suspended for two years and ordered to complete 100 hours of unpaid work.

The sentencing on Friday 3 April followed a three-year investigation by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) into the illegal sale of medicines through their website.

MHRA investigators along with officers from West Midlands Police, executed a number of search warrants in March 2017, seizing initially nearly 27,000 tablets and vials with a street value of more than £21,000.

Bunkute and Ivanauskas eventually admitted to supplying or intending to supply containing prescription only and unauthorised medicines after further investigations by the MHRA uncovered thousands of photographic records of the transactions.

The medicines were sent illegally to addresses in the UK, EU, the USA, Canada and Australia. The postage costs for posting these medicines was in excess of £105,000.

Officers also found social media messages between the pair discussing the medicines and ways to avoid detection which clearly showed they knew they were involved in the illegal supply of the medicines.

The business at the centre of the illegal supply of medicines was operated through the website www.uk-rxcart.com which was shut down in 2017 by the MHRA.

The pair were selling Tadalafil used for the treatment erectile dysfunction, Proloxa and Dapoxetine (premature ejaculation treatments) and Nolvadex/Tamoxifen which are used to treat breast cancer.

Egle Bunkute was also sentenced for offering to supply Human Chorionic Gonadotrophin, a growth hormone and class C controlled drug.

They both pleaded guilty to the offences at earlier hearings.

Tariq Sarwar, Acting Head of MHRA Enforcement Group said:

It is a serious criminal offence to sell prescription only medicines without a prescription and to sell unlicensed medicines, we will continue to work relentlessly with regulatory and law enforcement colleagues to identify and prosecute those involved.

Those who sell medicines illegally are exploiting vulnerable people and have no regard for their health. Prescription-only medicines can be extremely strong and should only be taken under medical supervision as they may have potentially dangerous side effects

Criminals selling medicines illegally show a blatant disregard for your health, and only care about making money.

Notes to editor

Egle Bunkute (female), aged 31 (DOB 15/01/90) of, Galton Tower, Civic Close, Birmingham, West Midlands, B1 pleaded guilty to:

- Offering to supply an unauthorised medicinal product contrary to regulation 46(1) and 47 of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012, between 10/10/2014 and 29/03/2017 (this relates her involvement with www.uk-rxcart.com and the fact it was advertising and supplying unauthorised medicines)
- Supplying prescription only medicine not in accordance with a prescription given by an appropriate practitioner contrary to regulations 214(1), 255(1)(a) and (5) of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012, between 10/10/2014 and 29/03/2017 (this relates to her involvement with www.uk-rxcart.com and the fact it was selling prescription-only medicines)
- Offering to supply a quantity of Human Chorionic Gonadotropin (HCG) a controlled drug of class C to another in contravention of section 4(1) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 contrary to section 4(3)(a) of and Schedule 4 to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, between 10/10/2014 and 29/03/2017 (this relates to the fact that one of the prescription-only drugs supplied was HCG, a controlled drug of class C)

Edvinas Ivanauskas (male), aged 26 (DOB 31/07/93) of Lighthorne Avenue, Ladywood, Birmingham, West Midlands, B16 pleaded guilty to:

- Selling or supplying or offering to supply an unauthorised medicinal product contrary to regulation 46(1) and 47 of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012, between 1 October 2015 and 29 March 2017. (This

relates to the fact EI was involved in the supply of unauthorised medicines, principally through delivering and collecting such drugs from Mailboxes Etc)

- Possessing an unauthorised medicinal product contrary to regulation 46(3) and Regulation 47(1) of The Human Medicines Regulations 2012 which covers the unauthorised medicinal products found in his possession on 28 March 2017, the day of his arrest
- Supplying prescription only medicine not in accordance with a prescription given by an appropriate practitioner contrary to regulations 214(1), 255(1)(a) and (5) of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012, between 1 October 2015 and 29 March 2017