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Press release

# CMA investigates Vifor Pharma to safeguard essential anaemia treatment

The investigation will consider whether Vifor Pharma has been engaging in anti-competitive conduct.

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The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has launched an investigation into Vifor Pharma (Vifor), a global pharmaceutical company, over its suspected anti-competitive conduct in the supply of intravenous (IV) iron deficiency treatments for National Health Service (NHS) patients in the UK.

The CMA's investigation will assess whether Vifor, which makes Ferinject – a leading IV iron deficiency treatment in the UK – has restricted competition by making misleading claims to healthcare professionals about the safety and effectiveness of Monofer, a rival high-dose IV iron deficiency treatment supplied by Pharmacosmos.

Iron deficiency anaemia is a condition where a lack of iron in the body reduces the number of red blood cells, causing symptoms such as heart palpitations, extreme fatigue, and dizziness. In the UK, [four million people](https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/anaemia-iron-deficiency/background-information/prevalence/) (<https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/anaemia-iron-deficiency/background-information/prevalence/>) have iron deficiency anaemia with the condition affecting 3% of men and 8% of women.

In most cases, the first line of treatment for the condition is oral iron supplements but for some patients this is not appropriate. The NHS relies on intravenous iron treatments to treat people often in critical conditions, including after major surgery.

Ann Pope, Senior Director Antitrust at the CMA, said:

- “ Patients and doctors depend on accurate and honest information from drug makers to make life changing decisions about treatment.
- “ Iron deficiency anaemia can seriously impact people's quality of life, especially those that are vulnerable. It affects four million people in the UK, so access to a full range of treatments is essential for the NHS to continue helping those living with the condition.
- “ We will investigate Vifor's conduct to see if it is making misleading claims about a competitor, which could harm patients by stifling competition in the supply of vital iron treatments to the NHS.”

The CMA has not reached any conclusions at this stage as to whether or not competition law has been infringed.

More information can be found on the CMA's [investigation into suspected anti-competitive conduct by Vifor Pharma in relation to intravenous iron treatments \(https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/investigation-into-suspected-anti-competitive-conduct-by-vifor-pharma-in-relation-to-intravenous-iron-treatments\)](https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/investigation-into-suspected-anti-competitive-conduct-by-vifor-pharma-in-relation-to-intravenous-iron-treatments) case page.

### Notes to editors:

1. Many factors can contribute to a lack of iron in the body, causing iron deficiency anaemia, such as heavy bleeding and pregnancy.
2. Vifor Pharma is a global pharmaceutical company headquartered in Australia and produces Ferinject (ferric caboxymaltose). Pharmacosmos is a family-owned specialist pharmaceutical company focused notably on the treatment of iron deficiency conditions and makes Monofer (ferric derisomaltose).
3. The European Commission also has an ongoing investigation into whether uptake of competing IV iron treatments may have been hindered by Vifor's conduct in the European Economic Area (EEA). The CMA will liaise with the European Commission as its own investigation progresses in the UK.
4. The CMA's investigation has been opened under the Competition Act 1998. The Chapter II prohibition in the Act prohibits any conduct on the part of one or more undertakings which amounts to the abuse of a dominant position in a market, and which may affect trade within the United Kingdom.
5. The CMA can launch an investigation under the Competition Act 1998 if it has reasonable grounds to suspect that there has been an infringement of competition law.
6. For more information on the CMA's process, visit: [guidance on the CMA's investigation procedures in Competition Act 1998 cases \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-the-cmas-investigation-procedures-in-competition-act-1998-cases/guidance-on-the-cmas-investigation-procedures-in-competition-act-1998-cases#complaints-about-possible-breaches-of-competition-law\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-the-cmas-investigation-procedures-in-competition-act-1998-cases/guidance-on-the-cmas-investigation-procedures-in-competition-act-1998-cases#complaints-about-possible-breaches-of-competition-law).

7. All media enquiries should be directed to the CMA press office by email on [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk) or by phone on 020 3738 6460.

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