

## Appendix 21 – Opioid Policy - New Patients

A **controlled** substance is generally a **drug** or chemical whose manufacture, possession, or use is regulated by the government because of the potential for abuse or addiction. Such **drugs** include those classified as narcotics, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, and cannabis.

A list of the most commonly encountered controlled drugs can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlled-drugs-list--2>

Many of our patients require strong, potentially addictive medication to help manage their condition(s). Of concern are 'drugs of dependence' (e.g. opioid medications, gabapentinoids and benzodiazepines), particularly when these are prescribed on an on-going basis.

Due to increasing reports of abuse of prescription drugs and patient behavioural problems, **[insert practice name]** has established a policy to ensure adequate treatment of your condition, while reducing the risk of problems with drug prescriptions.

If you are a new patient to the practice:

- It may take time to get accurate medical information about your condition. Until such information is available, your GP may choose not to prescribe any medication. It is our policy that GPs do not prescribe drugs of dependence until they have a full clinical picture.
- Your GP may decide not to continue prescribing an opioid medication previously prescribed for you. It may be determined that such a medication is not suitable. It is our policy that GPs do not prescribe drugs of dependence if they feel that previous prescriptions were inappropriate.
- Your GP will evaluate your condition and only prescribe an opioid of the strength necessary for you. This may be different to the drug you had prescribed at your previous GP Practice.

General practice standards:

- If the decision to prescribe is taken after a shared discussion of goals, plans, risks and benefits, you may be required to confirm your consent in writing.
- You will be asked to complete the Opioid Management Plan: Treatment Agreement that will detail our practice's expectations when prescribing drugs of dependence. This agreement details your responsibilities as a patient taking a drug of dependence; any prescriptions issues; advice on taking your medications; how we will monitor your care; and the standards of behaviour that are expected.
- Patients may need to acknowledge that their care requirements may be complex, and that referral for on-going care for all or part of your healthcare may be required. It is our practice policy that patient care is matched with the level of complexity.
- Patients are reminded that we have a zero tolerance on issues relating to staff abuse.