

SPSO decision report

Case: 201500055, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained because he felt the care and treatment he received from the prison health centre was unreasonable. In particular, Mr C said that since taking his prescribed methadone he had been feeling ill. Mr C said a doctor concluded that he should not be prescribed methadone and made arrangements for an alternative medication to be prescribed. However, before that happened, Mr C was reviewed by another doctor who decided that the prescription for methadone should continue. Mr C was unhappy with that decision because he felt he was allergic to the medication.

The board explained to Mr C that, following review, the doctor considered the symptoms he had were not because of the methadone and there were other potential causes that needed to be excluded. The doctor suggested Mr C undergo further assessment with the mental health team, and offered treatment to reduce the symptoms he was suffering, which Mr C declined. In addition, the doctor concluded that Mr C's symptoms were not severe enough to justify changing treatment.

We took independent advice from one of our GP advisers and asked for their view on whether the care and treatment provided to Mr C had been reasonable. Our adviser considered that Mr C had been thoroughly assessed by the doctor. She also reviewed Mr C's medical records and noted he had a long history of multiple drug misuse. Our adviser commented that, in her view, with Mr C's history of multiple drug misuse and then stopping all drugs in favour of methadone, his symptoms could reasonably be interpreted by the doctor as having been related to drug withdrawal. As such, she said that the options offered to him – mental health assessment and a trial of allergy medication – and the reasons for not prescribing the alternative medication were reasonable. Our adviser commented that she could see no evidence that Mr C was not adequately assessed by an appropriate professional or that the treatment offered was inappropriate.

In light of the evidence available in Mr C's case and our adviser's view, which we accepted, we did not uphold the complaint.