

SPSO decision report

Case: 201605370, Grampian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the prison healthcare centre's decision not to prescribe him a medication used to treat insomnia was unreasonable. Mr C said that he had been prescribed the medication in his previous prison, but when he transferred to a new prison, his prescription was stopped which he said caused him significant problems. Mr C also raised concerns that this decision had been taken before he had had a chance to discuss his condition with a psychiatrist and before the prison healthcare centre had access to his community medical records. Mr C wanted to be prescribed the medication again as he felt this would improve his sleep, keep him safe, and reduce the chance that he would be put in an observation cell.

We reviewed documents provided by Mr C and the board, and we took independent advice from a psychiatric adviser. We found that the decision to stop the medication was reasonable. However, we noted that Mr C had been on this medicine for some time and that it may have been hard for him to understand why it was suddenly stopped. We found that national guidance said it should only be given for short periods and that it was therefore reasonable to stop it when there was no clear need for it. We were critical that Mr C did not get a full explanation from medical staff about why the medication was stopped, but were satisfied that it was a reasonable decision and we did not uphold the complaint.

We noted that the board did not respond well to Mr C's initial complaint as their initial response was inaccurate. We also noted that this response did not signpost Mr C to us if he was still unhappy. The board also only gave a full response to Mr C's concerns when we became involved. We were therefore critical of the board's complaints handling and we highlighted this to them.