

SPSO decision report

Case: 201701673, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the prison healthcare centre's decision to stop his suboxone medication (medication used to treat opium addictions) was unreasonable. A prison nurse reported that Mr C appeared to act suspiciously when they were administering his suboxone medication. They did not consider that Mr C gave them an adequate opportunity to confirm that the medication had been taken correctly. His medication was subsequently stopped and he was later given methadone as an alternative opiate replacement therapy. Mr C disputed the nurse's allegation that he did not comply and brought his complaint to us.

We took independent advice from a GP. We found that Mr C's suboxone was stopped as prison healthcare staff felt that he had not complied with the instructions set out in the contracts. Mr C had signed two contracts in relation to medication and one of these declared that he understood he would be taken off suboxone if caught or suspected of concealing medication. Healthcare staff suspected that he was concealing medication and they were, therefore, entitled to act on that suspicion if they felt that there was a risk of clinical harm to Mr C and/or the good order within the prison. The adviser raised no concerns about the decision taken to stop Mr C's suboxone and we considered that this decision was reasonable in light of Mr C's suspected non-compliance. Therefore, we did not uphold this complaint.