

SPSO decision report

Case: 201804988, Forth Valley NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the care and treatment he received for back pain while in prison. He had previously been prescribed dihydrocodeine and found this effective. The board's treatment plan included physiotherapy, a transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) machine (method of pain relief involving the use of a mild electrical current), heat packs and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, but he complained that these were not effective. He had also been referred to a pain management clinic.

We took advice from an independent GP adviser. We considered the board's prescribing for Mr C's pain to be reasonable, along with the other supportive measures referred to above. We noted Mr C's wish to take dihydrocodeine for his pain, but highlighted that this is an opiate and that the prescribing of opiates in the prison setting leads to risk of misuse. The fact that the board's GPs chose not to prescribe dihydrocodeine, does not suggest that the care they have provided was below a reasonable standard. We considered that Mr C's treatment was in line with guidance on good medical practice, and therefore did not uphold this complaint.