

SPSO decision report

Case: 201204254, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C, who is a prisoner, complained because he felt the prison doctor unreasonably refused to prescribe him the medication he wanted. Mr C felt the medication was not sufficiently controlling the symptoms of his mental health problem. Because of that, Mr C said he was having difficulty sleeping and he asked to be prescribed a sedative to help with this. Mr C also suffers from a bone condition, and as he felt his body had become used to his existing pain relief medication he asked to be prescribed something stronger.

In investigating Mr C's complaint, we reviewed the board's response to it and sought independent advice from our medical adviser. We noted that the prison doctor had tried to meet with Mr C to discuss his pain and consider introducing anti-inflammatory medication but, because Mr C became abusive, the meeting was ended. In addition, the board advised Mr C that the sedative he wanted was normally only prescribed for short term use and because of that, the doctor decided not to prescribe it. The board also confirmed that two different psychiatrists had not recommended that prescription for Mr C.

Our adviser provided an opinion on Mr C's complaint. She said it was likely the prison doctor would have prescribed anti-inflammatory medication in addition to Mr C's pain medication and doing that would have been reasonable. She did not consider that the pain medication Mr C wanted to be prescribed was appropriate for his circumstances. In addition, our adviser noted that some medication that Mr C was taking for his mental health condition had sedative qualities, and said it would not be reasonable to prescribe a regular as well as those medications. In light of this advice, our view was that the prison doctor's decision not to prescribe Mr C the pain medication and sedative that he wanted was reasonable and appropriate.