

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201606304, A Medical Practice in the Lothian NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained to us that the medical practice had failed to provide appropriate care and treatment to his son (Mr A). He said that a GP had prescribed oxycodone (opiate medication) over the phone to Mr A on the morning that he died from a medication overdose. Mr C was also concerned that there had been an entry in Mr A's clinical records from his previous GP surgery noting that Mr A was not to be prescribed opiates.

The practice said that practitioners are aware of the need to balance the potential benefits of a drug against any possible harm. The practice were aware of the previous GP surgery concerns that Mr A used illicit drugs and that care should be taken about the strength of any opiates prescribed. Mr A had recently undergone significant surgery and he reported that his pain control was ineffective. It was also noted that Mr A was attending orthopaedics and the pain clinic.

We took independent medical advice from a GP who noted that Mr A had been referred to orthopaedics and the pain clinic and that he was regularly reviewed in either face-to-face consultations or phone contact. When required, his pain relief was increased and this was considered reasonable care. The adviser had no concerns about the actions of the GP who prescribed the oxycodone, as they had taken note of the previous GP practice's concerns about drug misuse and made a reasonable clinical judgement based on the recorded evidence available. We did not uphold the complaint.

While we did not uphold the complaint, we noted that the practice and the previous GP practice operated different electronic record recording systems and that there was a failure of the first practice to transfer all relevant information over when Mr A joined the new practice. We made a suggestion to both practices which may have allowed more clarity, although it may not have altered the GP's decision to prescribe the oxycodone.