

SPSO decision report



Case: 201707766, A Medical Practice in the Lanarkshire NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the practice had over-prescribed Diazepam and Nitrazepam (both belonging to a class of sedative medication called benzodiazepines) for a period of ten years. He believed that this had caused long-term damage to his mental health including aggression and anger. He said that the practice had failed in their care by not managing a controlled withdrawal.

We took independent advice from a GP. We found that Diazepam was being prescribed along with antipsychotic medication, as instructed and monitored by psychiatry. We noted that the practice closely monitored Mr C, made efforts to refer him to addiction services for Diazepam detoxification and, when he defaulted from the services, they monitored and gradually reduced his Diazepam within the practice. We found that the practice's management of his prescription was reasonable, and we did not uphold this complaint.

Mr C also complained that the practice unreasonably removed him from their practice list. The practice said he had been removed from their list due to aggressive behaviour, and that this was not the first instance of such. Mr C felt that this was unreasonable as he considered he had been displaying the symptoms of over-prescription of Diazepam and Nitrazepam.

We noted that the records showed Mr C was 'repeatedly harassing the reception staff' and had received previous warnings for inappropriate and aggressive behaviour. We confirmed that benzodiazepines are noted to have a rare side effect of aggression, but having reviewed Mr C's records going back 16 years, we found that suggesting his medication was the cause of his aggression was the least likely explanation. We noted from the records that there had been an irrevocable breakdown in the relationship between Mr C and the practice and we considered it reasonable to remove him from the list. We did not uphold this complaint.