

## Chronic pain

### RFQs

- How is this affecting your activities at work and at home?
- How is your mood? Has your mood been so low that you have contemplated doing anything drastic?
- How much of your pain is emotional do you think?
- Alcohol can make you prone to chronic pain, how much do you drink in a normal day, or in a week? What about other non prescriptions remedies for pain or recreational substances?
- How has your sex drive been?
- Are you safe to drive, or to work, when you are using these medications?

### Provide

There are real risks to using opiates for long term pain. Dependence and potentially even death is a risk. And there is not much evidence that they actually help much with the pain!

The list of problems linked with opiates, such as codeine and tramadol, includes drowsiness, constipation and problems with your sex life.

We really should only ever be using codeine (or tramadol) for a few days, or a couple of weeks, to get you through this flair up of your symptoms. I won't be putting it on your regular medication, and I will only give you a week or two's worth of medication at a time.

Your pain sounds very difficult for you. It's important that I don't make you more disabled with anything that I prescribe. Activity is generally the best treatment for your back.

I know that your previous back X-ray showed some wear and tear. That is normal for people of our age and you won't be causing any damage by being active.

No, I would suggest that it would not be helpful to do an X-ray, or any imaging of your back. It is almost never helpful and it can be harmful to image the back.

### Safety net:

Your doctors should be told if you have ever had a history of cancer.

If you ever have progressively worsening pain, particularly as you rest in bed, or if you have any worrying symptoms, like loss of control of your bladder, numbness around your anus, please let us know straight away.

Please don't drive if you are drowsy. It's illegal and dangerous, and you may lose your license.

If you are feeling suicidal, or your thoughts are particularly dark, please get in touch urgently. If your condition is stopping you from being active, we really ought to be seeing you again.