

Care of people who misuse drugs and alcohol

Prescription medication dependence

Red flags questions:

- Check the records for any suggestion of alcohol misuse, substance use, self harm or personality disorder.
- Knowledge of family misuse of alcohol, drugs or medication is useful.
- Beware “lost” prescriptions or urgent requests for medication.
- Do you drive an HGV, taxi or operate heavy machinery? Do you have sleep apnoea?
- These are potentially habit forming (addictive) medications. Are they a sensible choice for you? (Record warning given.)
- Have you ever self harmed or thought about suicide?

Don't prescribe more than 50mg of morphine per day without discussing it with a colleague. Pregabalin and gabapentin are also substances of abuse potential.

Provide:

These medications may reduce the chances that you will get back to work and normal activities. Are they really the best choice for you?

These medications are not proven to help for most causes of long term pain (excepting cancer). I will only give you enough to use for a week or two.

Safety net:

You should be aware that these medications can affect your road safety. It is illegal to drive if medication impairs your ability to drive.

The most common side effects of this medication are drowsiness (and/ or constipation).

They may interfere with your sex life. Please let me know if any of these is a problem.

If this medication doesn't help you with your pain, or causes significant side effects, please make a phone appointment.

If we suspect that you are becoming dependent on prescribed medication we will record it in your records, and we may potentially share that information with the DVLA and social services (and even the police or your employer).