



Many of our patients take strong, potentially addictive medication to help manage their condition(s). Of concern are 'drugs of dependence' (e.g., opioid medications and benzodiazepines), particularly when these are prescribed on an on-going basis.

Due to increasing reports of abuse of prescription drugs and patient behavioral problems, Lingholme Health Centre has established a policy to ensure adequate treatment of your condition, while reducing the risk of problems with prescription drugs.

If you are a new patient to the practice:

- It may take time to get accurate medical information about your condition. Until such information is available, your GP may choose not to prescribe any medication. It is our policy that GPs do not prescribe drugs of dependence until they have a full clinical picture.
- Your GP may decide not to continue prescribing an opioid medication previously prescribed for you. It may be determined that such medication is not suitable. It is our policy that GPs do not prescribe drugs of dependence if they feel that previous prescriptions were inappropriate.
- Your GP will evaluate your condition and only prescribe an opioid of the strength necessary for you. This may be different to the strength you had prescribed at your previous GP Practice.

General practice standards:

- If the decision to prescribe is taken after a shared discussion of goals, plans, risks, and benefits, you may be required to confirm your consent in writing.
- You will be asked to complete an opioid management plan treatment agreement that gives details of our practice's expectations when prescribing drugs of dependence. This agreement also describes your responsibilities as a patient when taking a drug of dependence; any prescriptions issues; advice on taking your medications; how we will monitor your care; and the standards of behaviour that are expected.
- Patients may need to acknowledge that their care requirements are complex, and that referral for on-going support for all or part of your healthcare may be required. It is our practice policy that patient care is matched with the level of complexity.
- Patients are reminded that we have zero tolerance on issues relating to staff abuse.