



Practice Policy on Dependence-Forming Medications

Purpose

This policy outlines our approach to the safe prescribing, review, and reduction of dependence-forming medications (e.g. opioids, benzodiazepines, Z-drugs, and certain other high-risk medicines). It applies to all patients registering with the practice.

Our Approach

- Dependence-forming medications will be **reviewed regularly** by a clinician.
- New Patients on such medications will meet with a member of the clinical team and agree, if appropriate, a plan to wean the medication to safe/appropriate levels in a gradual and supported manner.
- New prescriptions will be **short-term only**, in line with national guidance.
- Safer alternatives, including non-drug therapies, will always be considered.

What Patients Can Expect

- A **review of all dependence-forming medications** on registering with the practice. Our expectation is that the majority of patients will embark upon a programme of reduction. The clinical reasons behind this will be discussed and, in general, are set out in a patient friendly way at <https://www.fpm.ac.uk/opioids-aware>
- Involvement in decision-making and an explanation of rationale.
- Access to a **range of professionals** to support health and wellbeing beyond medication.
- Please note we require minimum of 72 hours to process medication requests.

Our Commitment

We are committed to safe, evidence-based prescribing. Our aim is not to stop medicines suddenly, but to support patients in achieving the best possible health outcomes with a **holistic, multidisciplinary approach**.