

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.
- Where appropriate, we will work with patients to **reduce and discontinue** these medicines 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.

Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Involvement

We believe safe prescribing and reduction of these medicines requires a **team approach**. Depending on the patient's needs, the following professionals may be involved:

- **GPs** – overall clinical responsibility, medication reviews, prescribing decisions.
- **Advanced clinical practitioners** and **Clinical pharmacists** – medicines optimisation, dose reduction plans, patient education.
- **Practice nurses** – monitoring, patient support, health promotion.

The MDT will work together with the patient to create a personalised care plan.

What Patients Can Expect

- A **review of all dependence-forming medications** on registering with the practice.
- A **gradual, supported reduction plan** where ongoing use is not clinically indicated.
- Involvement in decision-making at all stages.
- Access to a **range of professionals** to support health and wellbeing beyond medication.

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**.