

Ref: FOI/00432/CMICB  
29 June 2023

Dear,

**Re: Freedom of Information Act 2000  
Care for Adults Prescribed Medicines Associated with Dependence /  
Withdrawal Symptoms**

Thank you for your information request indicated in bold below, which has now been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 by NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB). I am able to provide you with the following information and responses.

Please note from 01 July 2022, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) were disestablished, and their statutory functions and responsibilities inherited by NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB.

**Your Request:**

**Is your Integrated Care Board aware of the recently published NHS England publication titled "Optimising personalised care for adults prescribed medicines associated with dependence or withdrawal symptoms: Framework for action for integrated care boards (ICBs) and primary care"? [NHS England » Optimising personalised care for adults prescribed medicines associated with dependence or withdrawal symptoms: Framework for action for integrated care boards \(ICBs\) and primary care](#)**

**If so, what action will your Board take to:**

- a) Provide appropriate withdrawal services (not inappropriate substance misuse services) for patients who have become dependent, through no fault of their own, to prescribed drugs identified in the recent PHE review, such as benzodiazepines, z drugs, opioid containing drugs, antidepressants and pregabalin and gabapentin?**
- b) Develop local policies for the above?**
- c) Implement in prescribing practice when prescribing the drugs mentioned above?**

## Our Response:

a - c) NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB is aware of the recently published NHS England publication titled "Optimising personalised care for adults prescribed medicines associated with dependence or withdrawal symptoms: Framework for action for integrated care boards (ICBs) and primary care".

Work is currently underway to ensure that prescribers across Cheshire and Merseyside are supported with guidance such as that previously produced by Pan Mersey Area Prescribing Committee (APC)  
<https://www.panmerseyapc.nhs.uk/media/2463/opioids.pdf>.

NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB's Chief Pharmacist is having discussions with the Innovation Agency/Northwest Coast Patient Safety Collaborative, regarding their support in relation to a 'Whole Systems Approach to High Risk Opioid Prescribing' Framework and liaising with the National Patient Safety Specialist & Clinical Improvement Lead.

There will be consideration of ICB priorities, which may include liaising with stakeholders including local authority colleagues in relation to accessing appropriate withdrawal support for patients who have become dependent on prescribed medication.

Should you require any further information or clarification regarding this response or do not feel that your request has been answered as you would expect, please contact us to discuss.

We also wish to take this opportunity to inform you that, where you are not satisfied with the response to your request for information, a formal complaints and internal review process is available.

This can be formally requested by emailing [foi@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](mailto:foi@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk) and must be done within a reasonable time period (3 calendar months) from the date this response was issued.

Where you remain dissatisfied with our review under the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) for a review of your appeal decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our complaints procedure. The ICO can be contacted at;

*The Information Commissioner's Office*  
*Wycliffe House*  
*Water Lane*  
*Wilmslow*  
*Cheshire*  
*SK9 5AF*  
[www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

Should you need any further clarification or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us quoting the above FOI reference.