

NHS Grampian correspondence to the Minister for Drugs Policy

PE1900/N: Access to prescribed medication for detainees in police custody

Thank you for your letter, received on 6th December 2022, in relation to Medication Assisted Treatment in Police Custody.

Currently due to historic constraints NHSG, are not yet able to administer MAT including Methadone within a Police custody setting.

One key factor affecting this is currently there is no Controlled Drug licence in place for Police Custody settings. After receiving the letter dated 6th December 2022, generating the conditions for administering MAT on our custody settings has been given the highest priority and an action plan has been developed to clearly establish the measures we require to undertake, to enable the prescription and administration of MAT within our local Police custody suites. Two short life working groups have been established. One is specifically tasked with the complete implementation of MAT standards within Police custody. This group includes members of the community Substance Misuse team, who are providing support and guidance with the implementation of the standards. The second group is focussed on obtaining a Controlled Drug licence for Police Custody settings.

To ensure rapid preparation of the application for a Controlled Drug licence, an urgent audit has been undertaken by NHS Grampian's controlled drug team within Kittybrewster (the local main Police custody facility) and several key actions have been identified. These issues are currently being addressed. Some of these matters cannot be fully progressed until we have obtained the Controlled Drug Licence so work around its acquisition is regarded as imperative.

A focus meeting has been arranged with the Home Office on Monday 19th December to discuss the requirements/expectations prior to our Controlled Drug licence application being made. We are trying to ensure the application has the greatest chance of a successful outcome.

In the meantime, and considering the need for rapidity, all current policies and procedures are being reviewed and updated in preparation for submitting the Controlled Drug licence application. Once the application is submitted, and is successful, it will allow the prescribing and administration of MAT within Police Custody to commence. We are unclear at this stage the exact length of time it will take to secure the licence; however, we are working as expeditiously as possible and have set ourselves an ambitious target date of end February 2023.