

Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy submission of 24 April 2023

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

Following my most recent correspondence to the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee, the HMICS has published new information relevant to petition PE1900.

This new report outlines similar issues to those reported in Grampian, which is the subject of petition PE1900, in the NHS Lanarkshire area. This new information contradicts the assurances the former Minister for Drugs Policy received in advance of her evidence to this committee, 7 December 2022.

I would therefore like to bring this new development to the Committees attention and to provide a short update on our next steps.

Today, I will commit to conducting a rapid review of each health board to ascertain the extent of these issues across Scotland.

I will write to the Chief Executive of each territorial health board requesting confirmation that they have:

- A controlled drug license to store and/or supply controlled drugs as required by law, in every custody unit.
- Written policies and effective practices which ensure that every detainee has access to their prescribed medication in custody, whether that be OST or any other prescribed medication.
- Robust processes and adequate training to ensure that every adverse health event, complaint or feedback is recorded on Datix.

I will also write to Police Scotland to request assurances that:

- They have written policies and effective practices which ensure that every detainee has access to their prescribed medication in custody, whether that be OST or any other prescribed medication.
- Every member of custody staff is trained to administer naloxone and that this is available in every custody unit.

- Every member of custody staff has undertaken specialist training on substance dependency, mental health and trauma informed care.

Where these are not in place, I will be requesting a plan for implementing these changes and a timeline. I will monitor this situation closely and provide further updates to the committees as they become available.

I look forward to working with you on this matter.

Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy, Elena Whitham MSP