

# **PE1900/X: Access to prescribed medication for detainees in police custody**

## **Minister for Public Health and Women's Health written submission, 10 January 2025**

Thank you for your letter dated 16 December 2024, to the Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy, requesting an update on our commitment to ensuring that detainees in police custody have access to prescribed medication. I will be responding to you<sup>1</sup> on behalf of Ms McKelvie.

I can confirm that we remain satisfied that the majority of health boards have taken the appropriate action to meet the standards that should be in place, as highlighted in the rapid review. However we continue to work with NHS Lanarkshire, who advised us on 18 September 2024 that their application for a controlled drug licence had been submitted on 8 August 2024, but had not then been approved. On 18 December 2024, the health board informed us that the Home Office had acknowledged their application and has requested a compliance visit, which is provisionally scheduled for February 2025.

Once we are satisfied with the position of NHS Lanarkshire, we will provide an updated table, for completeness, in response to the initial Rapid Review.

Come spring 2025, the aim is that all health boards will have the appropriate care and practices in place for detainees in police custody, as stated in the rapid review, which will create a baseline.

When we are content with the position of all health boards, we will begin the next step of sharing how we will monitor this situation going forward - which will be in the form of annual updates beginning this year. Officials will provide NHS boards with the required template for completion, as well as a deadline, which will set a precedence going forward.

By making health boards aware of this mandatory annual reporting process, we would expect that all areas will be proactive in ensuring compliance with the Rapid Review throughout each year.

Finally, following the Rapid Review, NHS Grampian recognised that they needed to do more to ensure compliance with the appropriate policies and procedures when dealing with detainees in police custody. We were satisfied with their progress on this. However I note that there are still some concerns relating to detainees in Elgin and across NHS Grampian's area not receiving their prescribed methadone while in police custody.

My officials have therefore been following this up with NHS Grampian to address this issue. I have attached a copy of the latest correspondence that we received from

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<sup>1</sup> This response was also shared with the Convener of the Criminal Justice Committee

NHS Grampian, dated 31 December 2024, providing us with an update on their work in this area.

I thank you for your support on this matter.

**Jenni Minto MSP**