Title Full Name NHS number: NHS Number

Home Full Address (stacked)

Dear Title Last Name

We are writing to you with respect to your opioid prescription for Free Text Prompt

Over the past 10-15 years it has become clear that opioids are not the safe and effective treatment for chronic (lasting more than a few months) non-cancer pain that was first thought. We now know that, although opioids are good at reducing short term pain and pain in terminally ill patients, there is little evidence that opioids taken long-term help to reduce pain in patients with persistent non-cancer pain nor improve the quality of their life and how daily activities are carried out. There is now a better understanding of the risks, including:

* reduced fertility
* low sex drive
* irregular periods
* erectile dysfunction in men (the inability to keep an erection)
* reduced ability to fight infection
* increased levels of pain
* dependence (if you use stop taking or lower the dose too quickly you can get symptoms of withdrawal
* breathing issues (respiratory depressin)
* opioid-related deaths.

We enclose some information which you might find useful.

We are starting to reduce our patients who are on long-term painkillers and we would like to offer help for you to reduce the amount you take. This is particularly for people who are taking more than what is now thought to be a safe amount of opioid for chronic pain.

We ask that you attend an appointment with your usual GP in the practice on:

Date: Time: Location:

It is important these medicines are not stopped suddenly which can cause withdrawal side effects so this medicine will need to be reduced slowly over a period of time.

We know that you may have concerns about this reducing this medicine, however we ask that you think about the information we have provided very carefully and be prepared to try and reduce your opioid use.

We look forward to seeing you to discuss your reduction and if necessary other ways of managing your pain.

If you can’t attend this appointment please arrange an alternative. If you can’t attend then the doctor managing your medicines may find it necessary to consider an active reduction of your dose, particularly for patients prescribed higher than what is now considered to be a safe amount of opioid for chronic pain.

Yours sincerely

Usual GP Full Name

On behalf of the partners

British Pain Society Understanding and Managing Long-term Pain:

<https://www.britishpainsociety.org/static/uploads/resources/files/book_understanding_pain.pdf> (you can request a free hard copy by contacting the secretariat, leaving a postal address on 0207 269 7840 or emailing it to info@britishpainsociety.org).