

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201303925, Lanarkshire NHS Board

**Sector:** health

**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis

**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Ms C, who is a solicitor, complained on behalf of her client (Mr A), who is a prisoner, that the board had refused to prescribe him suboxone (a prescription medication used to treat opiate addiction). Mr A had been prescribed methadone, but said that it was causing him constipation and sickness. He had told the board that he wanted to switch to suboxone instead. However, he was told that suboxone was not available for maintenance treatment (the prescribing of a substitute drug to prevent the use of illicit substances) at that time.

In their response to our enquiries, the board said that all patients within the addictions service are regularly assessed using both national and local guidance. They said that some patients may not be offered the drug of their choice and that Mr A was receiving the most appropriate treatment for his clinical needs.

Mr A required maintenance treatment for his opiate addiction and the board's view was that suboxone was not to be used for this. After taking independent advice from one of our medical advisers, we found that the board's decision had been reasonable and we did not uphold the complaint. The board had produced new guidance for prescribing suboxone in the prison after Ms C complained, and we found that the decision was also in line with this.