

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201806236, Lanarkshire NHS Board  
**Sector:** Health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C reported experiencing unpleasant side effects when taking methadone (a drug used medically as a heroin substitute) and felt the prison health centre unreasonably dismissed his symptoms. Mr C also complained that the board would not ask for a second opinion from someone outwith the health centre.

The board explained that clinical and nursing staff felt the symptoms reported by Mr C were likely caused by opiates, rather than methadone. It was noted that Mr C did not accept that position, but the board explained medications were prescribed based on evidence that indicated their effectiveness whilst remaining mindful of guidelines in place. The board told Mr C that methadone was considered the best option available for those with opiate misuse.

We took advice from an independent clinical adviser. We found that the board had appropriately considered Mr C's concerns about the side effects of methadone. We considered that the board had explained their position reasonably to Mr C and their actions were in line with good practice guidance. We also found that the steps taken by the board in having another doctor from the health centre review the matter was in line with good medical practice.

We concluded that the board responded reasonably to Mr C's reports of unpleasant side effects from methadone and dealt with Mr C's request for a second opinion reasonably. Therefore, we did not uphold the complaints.