

Freedom of Information request 71-22

Request

1. Between January 2010 and December 2021, both dates inclusive, please detail any changes, instructions or recommendations of changes discussed at board or IJB level in prescribing policy for benzodiazepines. Please note – this could be in relation to reducing or removing prescriptions due to suspected misuse.
2. Between January 2010 and December 2021, both date inclusive, please detail any changes, instructions or recommendations of changes discussed at board or IJB level in prescribing practice for benzodiazepines. Please note – this could be in relation to reducing or removing prescriptions due to suspected misuse.
3. Between January 2010 and December 2021, both date inclusive, please detail any changes, instructions or recommendations of changes discussed at board or IJB level in prescribing policy for gabapentinoids. Please note – this could be in relation to reducing or removing prescriptions due to suspected misuse.
4. Between January 2010 and December 2021, both date inclusive, please detail any changes, instructions or recommendations of changes discussed at board or IJB level in prescribing practice for gabapentinoids. Please note – this could be in relation to reducing or removing prescriptions due to suspected misuse.
5. Between January 2010 and January 2021, for the month of January in each year, please detail the number of people prescribed benzodiazepines for longer than four weeks.

For questions 1 to 4 above, please provide any minutes from meetings in which prescribing policy for benzodiazepines or gabapentinoids was discussed, as well as any actions to be taken.

Response

1. There have been no changes, instructions or recommendations of changes discussed at board or IJB level in prescribing policy for benzodiazepines between January 2010 and December 2021 at NHS Borders.
2. There have been no changes, instructions or recommendations of changes discussed at board or IJB level in prescribing practice for benzodiazepines between January 2010 and December 2021 at NHS Borders.
3. There have been no changes, instructions or recommendations of changes discussed at board or IJB level in prescribing policy for gabapentinoids between January 2010 and December 2021 at NHS Borders.

4. Please see the discussions at Board level in prescribing practice for gabapentinoids below:

- Area Drug & Therapeutic Committee (ADTC) reports to NHS Borders Board 14 July 2010 – Request to add to formulary:
Pregabalin (Lyrica) - indicated for the treatment of Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) in adults, and also in the treatment of peripheral and central neuropathic pain in adults. In neurology, it has a role in adjunctive therapy in adults with partial seizures with or without secondary generalization. Pregabalin was approved at the 14 July 2010 meeting of the Borders Area Drugs & Therapeutics Committee. - Category 'B' – Specialist Use Only – with a feedback to the ADTC in 6 months on the level of use and effectiveness.
- ADTC reports to NHS Borders Board 09 May 2012 – Request to add an indication to the formulary approval:
Pregabalin is restricted for use in patients who have not achieved adequate pain relief from, or have not tolerated, conventional first and second line treatments for peripheral neuropathic pain. Treatment should be stopped if the patient has not shown sufficient benefit within 8 weeks of reaching the maximally tolerated therapeutic dose. Pregabalin was approved at the 9 May 2012 meeting of the Borders ADTC for the 120 patients per year on the application. The decision was that Pregabalin should be placed in Category 'A' - Recommended for general use - hospital and general practice
- Email to Prescribing Support Pharmacists 18 January 2018:
The Prescribing Support Team is undertaking a switch program of Pregabalin to the branded generic Alzain, approved by the GP Sub-Committee and by the Board Chairman & Chief Executive and there has been consultation with Community Pharmacy Borders.

5. Please see the table below for the number of patients prescribed benzodiazepines for longer than four weeks:

Paid Financial Year	Distinct Patient Count
2009	1336
2010	1278
2011	1208
2012	1103
2013	1137
2014	960
2015	944
2016	972
2017	946
2018	991
2019	943
2020	940

Please note the data shown is for that dispensed within the community only and includes the following benzodiazepines listed in BNF Subsections 4.1.1 (Hypnotics) and 4.1.2 (Anxiolytics) only: Chlordiazepoxide, diazepam, loprazolam, lorazepam, lormetazepam, nitrazepam, oxazepam, temazepam, alprazolam, flurazepam. It excludes benzodiazepines listed in BNF 4.8.1 (Control of the epilepsies) – clobazam, clonazepam) and midazolam which is listed in BNF 4.8.2 (Drugs used in status epilepticus) or 15.1.4 (Sedative and analgesic perioperative drugs). Patient numbers are provided for patients with a prescription for a benzodiazepine in January who also received a prescription in at least one of the adjacent months (December or February) (for any quantity of benzodiazepine) as a proxy measure. It is only possible to state that a patient had a prescription dispensed in a given month. This does not necessarily mean that the patient is on long-term prescriptions or that greater than 4 weeks supply has been prescribed / dispensed to the patient – the variation in patterns of usage (e.g. short-term/when required usage) and the clinical reason (indication) for the benzodiazepine mean that this cannot be stated. The dose and quantity on prescription will affect the frequency of dispensing.

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **71-22** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.