

It's your right to ask.

1. If you are addicted to opioids like Heroin or Tramadol, you have a right to request a prescription for a medication that substitutes for the substance you are addicted to.

You also have the right to ask for this prescription to start on the same day as you present yourself to an addiction service.

The prescriber should talk you through the different substitute medications that are available to find which is best for you. The main types available in Scotland are;

- Methadone liquid
- Buprenorphine Pills (i.e Subutex/Suboxone)
- and
- Injected Buprenorphine (i.e Buvidal)

If you know already what you think is best for you, you also have the right to ask for specific medications.

No one is obliged to prescribe you your specific choice unless they think that it is medically appropriate. However, they do have to tell you why they think that your chosen medication is not right for you. You also have the right to ask for a second opinion if you do not agree with your prescriber.

If you have a preference, it might make sense to think a little about why you want the medication you want, and how you feel it can help you, before you go into the appointment.

2. You have the right to request to speak with a doctor about any medication that you feel would help you in your situation.

Even if you are not addicted to opioids, you have the right to ask for medication to substitute the substance you are addicted to.

In many of these cases a prescriber or a doctor might refuse to prescribe these – but they should give you a full explanation of why they are refusing to prescribe you.

It can help to think through exactly why you are asking for this medication. Even if

you are not prescribed what you were asking for, if the doctor knows why you are asking they may be able to suggest a different medication or treatment.

New medical guidelines suggest that doctors should consider prescribing benzodiazepines to those already addicted to them as a harm reduction measure. It is still unusual for doctors to provide a substitute prescription for benzodiazepines – but it is your right to ask for it.

You also have the right to ask for a second opinion if you disagree with your doctor.

3. You have the right to access your medication, which means that if the way you pick up your medication isn't working for you, you have the right to ask for alterations.

If you can only pick up your medication on a Monday then you have the right to ask for your medication to be dispensed on a Monday.

You have the right to be treated with dignity, which means that the times and places that you pick up your medication should not be a punishment. Services should work with you to provide alternatives and better solutions that work for you.

4. You have the right to request Residential Rehabilitation.

You have the right to request residential rehabilitation if you feel that it would help you.

Services should explain to you what residential facilities there are in your area, what your choices are and what criteria (if any) those rehab facilities have for getting into them.

5. You have the right to request "abstinence only" treatment.

If you don't want to take medication for your addiction, you don't have to and cannot be forced to against your will.

You have the right to ask for medical and practical support going "cold turkey" if you want.

If this is something you want then you also have the right to be fully informed of the possible effects by a doctor.

6. You have the right to request harm reduction equipment (like distilled water, clean needles and fresh pipes) from your prescriber.

You also have the right to ask to be trained in how to take substances more safely and services are obliged to tell you how to use any harm reduction equipment they give you.

Services should give you as much equipment as you need and should do so without prejudice or conditions.

You also have the right to ask to be trained in the administration of Naloxone if you think it would benefit you or your friends. If you are trained to administer Naloxone then you have the right to ask to be dispensed Naloxone.