

Private and Confidential

Wood Street Health Centre
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Walthamstow
London, E17 3LA

Mr Graeme Irvine
His Majesty's Senior Coroner for
East London
East London Coroner's Court
Queens Road
London
E17 8QP

6 November 2023

Dear Sir

response to the Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths

Inquest touching upon the death of Mrs Amanda Kramer

I write with reference to your Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths, dated 11 September 2023, issued further to the Inquest touching upon the death of Mrs Amanda Kramer ('the Regulation 28 Report').

On behalf of the Practice ('the Practice'), I would like to extend my deepest condolences to Mrs Kramer's family. I would like to reassure them that the Practice has taken the Coroner's findings seriously and has taken steps to address any deficiencies, which are set out in this response.

The Coroner's concerns

'1. Zopiclone is a drug licenced for the treatment of short-term insomnia. The risks associated with the drug are first, that it is a central nervous system depressant and second, that patients prescribed the drug can form a dependency upon it.

2. Mrs Kramer was prescribed Zopiclone for 18 years.

3. Despite the deceased being under the care of both a GP and a secondary care mental health trust prior to her death. No clear evidence emerged in this inquest that

anyone had reviewed Mrs Kramer's use of this drug even when Mrs Kramer has demonstrated a pattern of high-risk behaviour by deliberately overdoing on prescribed medication.'

The Practice's response

To address the Coroner's concerns, the Practice has taken the following steps:

1. All patients being prescribed with Zopiclone or Zolpidem have been identified via an audit, enclosed with this response as **Exhibit 1**; the Practice is in the process of reviewing their medication – the progress of this can be demonstrated in the re-audit, undertaken in October 2023 (**Exhibit 2**). The goal is for each patient to have a plan in place to reduce and eventually stop the medication or change it to a safer alternative. Notification letters of these actions and patient leaflets will be sent to all patients on Zopiclone and Zolpidem. The completed plans have been coded onto the patients' notes on the EMIS computer system for both healthcare professionals and administrators to be aware of the care plan and not deviate from it. Patient alert system notification has also been put in place for all these patients as an identification for other healthcare providers both in the out of hours service and hospital trusts.
2. Where possible, all patients on Zopiclone or Zolpidem will have a medication review every 4 weeks; such review will focus on reducing the regimen of their medication, depending on withdrawal symptoms, level of risk and support structure.
3. All prescriptions of Zopiclone and Zolpidem have been reviewed to ensure they are acute, rather than repeat prescriptions; this will be a policy for new requests as well. This will also provide opportunities for more frequent reviews and discussion on how the withdrawal plan is being achieved with the patient. All quantities on prescription are reduced to a maximum 2-week supply.
4. The dosage instructions now state on the prescription that the medication is to be used on a 'as required' basis, not regularly; and to reduce the dosage down and stop when appropriate, so to remind the patient and the community pharmacist of the withdrawal plan. All local community pharmacists have been informed of the Practice's plan and the shared goal of reducing these prescriptions and to work with the Practice to achieve it.
5. For the patients who are under a shared care arrangement, the Practice will implement a joint care policy with their secondary care provider.

6. The Practice has prepared a new policy for prescribing Zopiclone and Zolpidem under shared care arrangements – this is enclosed with this response as **Exhibit 3**.

The audit (Exhibit 1) and re-audit (Exhibit 2) demonstrate that these changes have been already implemented at the Practice; a total of 69 patients on either Zopiclone or Zolpidem have had their medications stopped as of 19 October 2023, the date the re-audit was completed, compared to 18 patients who were stopped following the first audit in March 2023.

I trust that that this response provides reassurance that the Practice has taken action to address the matters raised by the Coroner.

Should any further information be required, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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