

Appendix 3: Sample template patient letter (invitation for opioid review)

This letter can be tailored to patient / practice requirements. It can be sent to individual patients or a group of patients identified by searches.

Dear [Patient name]

We are currently undertaking a review of prescriptions for medications collectively known as opioids, which are prescribed to patients within our practice.

An opioid (sometimes called an opiate) is a strong pain medicine, such as morphine, oxycodone, fentanyl, buprenorphine, tramadol, codeine and dihydrocodeine.

This review is needed because although opioids are very good for short term pain and end of life pain, there is little evidence that they are helpful for long-term pain. Some people may obtain good long-term pain relief with opioids if the dose can be kept low and they are only used occasionally. It is difficult to identify these people at the start of treatment.

We are now writing to patients who from our records have received several opioid prescriptions during the past year and asking them to make an appointment with their GP surgery to review their medication.

At this appointment, the GP or pharmacist will carry out a full assessment and medication review. They will be able to discuss with you the benefits and risks associated with the medication prescribed for your long-term pain and explore your treatment options.

The enclosed opioid patient information leaflet discusses common side effects and health risks that can occur when opioids are taken for a long time and at high doses.

Please can you make an appointment with us so that we can review how things are going and talk about the medication you are taking.

* Example patient leaflets:

- [Taking Opioids for Pain](#) (Opioids Aware website)
- [Reducing and stopping opioids](#) (Oxford University Hospitals website)

Sample patient text message (invitation for opioid review)

We are reviewing opioid pain medicines prescribed to patients in our practice. Please make an appointment so we can review your pain, and the medicines you are taking, to ensure you are on the best possible treatment. At this appointment, the GP will carry out a full medication review. They will discuss with you the benefits and risks associated with the medicines prescribed for your long-term pain and explore your treatment options.