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Dear Professor Healy,

Thank you for your letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022, regarding Mr Hughes and your wider comments on mental health practices and medication.

I hope you can appreciate the Scottish Government cannot comment on the specifics of individual cases. We take individual privacy rights very seriously and therefore cannot divulge personal or sensitive information relating to patients.

Diagnosis of a behavioural disorder itself is certainly not cause for detention. Admission to The State Hospital is based on diagnosis of a mental disorder requiring treatment under conditions of special security which cannot be suitably cared for in a hospital other than the State Hospital.

The current arrangements for the care and treatment of all patients at the State Hospital is set out clearly in legislation with regular statutory and non-statutory reviews undertaken to protect the rights of patients. Rights of appeal are available and specific safeguards are in place to ensure that the setting is appropriate for the patient's needs.

I appreciate you have highlighted comments on medication and the impact this has on patients however Scottish Government Ministers and officials are unable to comment on individual cases of prescribing practice. This is a matter for NHS Boards and healthcare professionals locally who have responsibility for service delivery and patient treatment. The decision about which treatment to prescribe is made on the basis of a clinical decision by the prescriber, taking into account the individual patient's condition, medical history and best practice from guidance.

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)



We recommend that prescriptions are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain optimum for the patient. We promote evidence based prescribing for conditions and selecting a medication preparation that will be effective in treating that condition.

We advocate a holistic approach to prescribing, using the holistic 7-step polypharmacy approach to medicine reviews and incorporating the principles of realistic medicine. This approach encourages shared decision making and a personalised approach to care.

Guidance for prescribing of psychotropic medication is provided by the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and is available at:

- SIGN (<https://www.sign.ac.uk/assets/sign131.pdf>); and
- NICE ([Antipsychotic medication | Information for the public | Psychosis and schizophrenia in adults: prevention and management | Guidance | NICE](#)).

I hope this is helpful.

Kind regards,



**KEVIN STEWART**

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