

Appendix 2 – What to discuss with the Patient when considering Opioid Treatment

- Explain that the evidence for the use of opioids as analgesics is best when used in the management of acute pain, over a period of hours from onset but tapering dose over days to a few weeks.
- Explain that opioids are poorly effective for long-term pain. For a small proportion of patients, opioids may be successfully used as part of a broader plan including non- medication treatments and self-management.
- Discuss the degree of pain relief that might be expected and understand that the aim is not complete pain relief but rather reducing pain sufficiently to engage in self- management.
- Agree specific functional goals that might be achieved.
- Discuss the potential harms of opioid treatment including:
 - Sedation
 - Nausea
 - Constipation
 - Effects on hormones
 - Effects on the immune system
 - Potential for the drugs to worsen pain
 - Potential for problematic drug use and addiction
- Discuss opioids and impairment of driving skills
- Discuss the opioid trial
- Discuss the circumstances in which opioid therapy will be stopped
- Discuss arrangements for review