

**PE1651/A**

Sonia Macphee submission of 15 May 2017

I am writing in support of the petition calling on Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to take action and effectively support individuals affected and harmed by prescribed drug dependence and withdrawal.

In May 2016 I was prescribed Diazepam for panic attacks. To continue it's efficacy the dose was increased to a total of 15 milligrams.

At 3 months I tried to come off with disastrous results. My symptoms were discounted by 3 of 4 physicians as they viewed my use as short term. (Dependency can develop in under 2 weeks.)

10 milligrams of Diazepam were reinstated so I could do a structured taper. I've been tapering slowly for 10 months and I'm suffering from countless symptoms which make my day to day life painful to get through. Worse than imaginable. I have been completely debilitated by the sensations of burning skin, internal vibrations and feelings of extreme electrical shock throughout my body. I frequently feel terror. My memory has sharply declined and I'm easily confused now and doctors will not recognise my symptoms as withdrawal. Addiction services I've been referred to are of no help as they specialise in drug misuse and not prescription drug dependence. I've had little support from my gp and I'm basically doing this alone although he allows me to taper at my own rate. There is no support to be found in the Fife region of Scotland where I reside that I'm aware of.

I didn't know dependency could be an issue as I was never informed of this. I trusted that benzodiazepines were safe. I only took Diazepam as prescribed and never took more than my prescribed dose.

Thank you for reading my reasons for fully supporting the petition.

Yours Sincerely,