Ten Opioid Safety Messages

1. Ensure you know:
   - Why the opioid medicine has been prescribed for you.
   - How long you are expected to use the opioid medicine for.
   - How long the opioid medicine will take to work.
   - How to use the opioid medicine if sustained-release and immediate-release formulations have been prescribed together.
   - Requirements for the review and monitoring of treatment.

2. Be knowledgeable about opioids and their short and long term risks by reading the patient information leaflet 'Taking Opioids for Pain' which can be accessed on: https://www.fpm.ac.uk/faculty-of-pain-medicine/opioids-aware or alternatively request a paper copy from the West Suffolk Community Pain Service.

3. Always read the manufacturer's patient information leaflet.

4. Be aware that opioids, pain and tiredness may affect your ability to drive. Seek advice from your prescriber about driving safely and ensure you are familiar with the UK law.

5. Always take prescribed opioids as instructed from your prescriber - never take more doses than what has been prescribed.

6. Always avoid taking opioids to help you fall asleep or manage anxiety or distress.

7. Understand the risks of taking opioids with sedatives, anti-anxiety medications, pregabalin (Lyrica), gabapentin and alcohol.

8. Your prescribed opioid medicine must only be used by you - never share or sell your prescription opioids with others regardless of the situation.

9. Be vigilant with the safekeeping of both opioid prescriptions and medicines to minimise the risk of other people having access to them. Consider a lockable storage box.

10. Always ensure manufacturer's recommendations on storage and safe disposal are followed to reduce the risk of access to children, pets or anyone who might misuse them.