

Guide for Service Users

Newcastle Temporary Accommodation Drugs Management Protocol



October 2006

NEWCASTLE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

DRUGS MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

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1. Introduction - what is the purpose of the Protocol?

We know that some of our service users will use drugs. Organisations providing accommodation for homeless people do need to work with people who use drugs.

But the law (Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 – known as the MDA) says that if we allow people to use or sell or supply drugs on our premises, we may be breaking the law if we do not try to stop this happening.

This Protocol explains for staff and for service users what the law says and how it should be applied.

A key purpose of the Protocol is to make it clear when it is right to ask a resident or service user to leave because of their drug use or supply. **We do not want to make people homeless from temporary accommodation if it can be avoided. Sometimes this is necessary, so that we can keep other residents safe from harm.**

We will not ask people to leave just because they are drug users. But we may ask people to leave if they are putting others at risk.

2. What is the Protocol?

A Protocol is an agreement between agencies about how they will work. This Protocol is an agreement between Newcastle City Council, Northumbria Police, drug treatment agencies, and all providers of temporary accommodation in the city.

This Protocol updates the Drugs Management Policy published in October 2002 by Newcastle City Council and Northumbria Police. The Policy needed to be revised because the law has changed, and because some parts of it needed to be clearer for staff and for residents and other service users.

3. What does the Protocol aim to do?

The main aim of the Protocol is to reduce the number of drug users who are evicted from temporary accommodation or who cannot get into temporary accommodation. The Protocol explains what staff must do, and how they should work with people using drugs to help them to keep their accommodation. It also explains how organisations can work in ways that are safe for staff. Staff should not be at risk of breaking the law, but at the same time should help drug users to get help for their drug problem.

None of this Protocol should be taken to mean that this organisation approves of people using or selling drugs.

The Protocol aims to help staff and service users to understand what should happen if illegal drugs are found in someone's room, or if staff think someone is using drugs in the building or grounds, and if staff think that someone is supplying drugs in the building or grounds.

We will not call the Police just because we think you are a drug user. We will tell the Police if we find illegal drugs in our buildings, or think that someone has been selling or sharing drugs in or near our buildings.

The Protocol also explains for staff and service users how prescribed medicines should be stored safely and legally. It also describes the work that staff in supported housing organisations are expected to do to help drug users to tackle their problem and to reduce the harm that drugs can do.

4. Which premises are covered by the Protocol?

This Protocol covers:

- all temporary supported housing such as hostels, shared houses, and blocks of flats
- self-contained flats - if they are supported housing, where you have to live to get the support of a housing support worker
- grounds, outbuildings, gardens, and yards of supported housing

It does not cover other accommodation where you can stay permanently, and get help from someone who visits you (floating support).

5. Which drugs are covered by the Protocol?

The drugs policy covers many drugs, including:

- **Illegal (controlled) drugs** such as cannabis, heroin, cocaine, crack cocaine, ecstasy, LSD, and amphetamines, and non-prescribed methadone
- **Prescribed Controlled drugs** such as methadone and diazepam

If you have any involvement with any of these drugs, the Drug Management Protocol affects you.

It also tells you about what to do with

- **Other medicines** such as Aspirin, Prozac, or antibiotics

6. What happens if we find someone in possession of drugs, or using drugs, on our premises?

◆ **Illegal or controlled drugs**

We do not allow people to bring illegal drugs into the building. Where we know or suspect that you are bringing drugs into the building, we will discuss this with you. We may have to ask you to leave if you ignore several warnings – you are likely to be putting other staff or service users at risk, or may be causing them distress.

We will always discuss with you how to get treatment for a drug problem if we find that you are using drugs on our premises.

If illegal drugs are found in communal areas or in the grounds, we will contact the Police, give them information about what we think is happening here, and get their advice. The Police may just warn you about this illegal activity, or may take you to court.

If we think that you have been using drugs in the building, we will warn you that this is not allowed here. If you ignore our warnings, you are likely to be asked to leave.

◆ **Prescribed Controlled drugs**

If you are bringing Prescribed Controlled drugs (such as methadone) into the building, please let workers know. This is for the safety of staff and other service users. Always keep drugs with you, or store them somewhere securely. Please keep them in their original packaging and with labels on, so we know that they are yours. Do not give them to other people to take or to look after.

◆ **Drugs paraphernalia**

If we think that needles and pipes have been used for using illegal drugs, we will throw them away (after telling you we have found them).

7. Searches for drugs in bedrooms or other private areas

From time to time, there are room inspections to check for any risks to health and safety.

If we find illegal drugs or drugs paraphernalia left openly in bedrooms or other private areas, we will remove them. Otherwise, we will tell you when you return, and ask you not to leave any drugs lying around in future, and discuss with you why you have brought drugs into the building.

If we suspect that you are using illegal drugs in your room, we may search your room. We will not search your private belongings, but if we think that there are illegal drugs or drugs paraphernalia there, we will ask the Police for advice about searching the room, and will warn you not to bring drugs into the building again.

8. How should drugs be stored safely?

◆ *Illegal drugs*

These should not be brought into the building

If a member of staff finds an illegal drug in the building, they must by law pass it to the Police. They are not allowed to return it to you. It will be put in a bag with a label, and given to the Police.

◆ *Prescribed Controlled drugs* (for example, methadone)

We cannot store methadone, or any other prescribed drugs, for you. You should put any such drugs safely and securely in your locker, or locked in your room. Make sure you do not leave it lying around or leave your room, or the locker door unlocked.

If we find prescribed controlled drugs in communal areas, we will store them until we can:

- Return them to the person who is legally entitled to them, or
- Hand them over to the Police or to the pharmacist

◆ *Other medicines e.g. Prozac, aspirin, antibiotics*

You are responsible for storing your own medication. You should use your locker to store your medication. Please keep medicines in their original packaging and with your name on the package. If this is a problem for you, please discuss it with a member of staff.

Any drugs that are left lying about can put other people at risk.

9. What happens if someone is found supplying illegal drugs?

We will not tolerate the supply of illegal drugs on the premises.

If we know that anyone is supplying drugs on the premises, we will inform the Police. They will be asked to leave, and they are likely to be banned from this organisation's accommodation for anything from 3 or 12 months.

If the person supplying drugs is a visitor, they are likely to be banned from coming to the building in future.

10. What to do with needles etc

Sharps Bins are provided for people who needs to throw away razor-blades, toothbrushes, injecting equipment, bandages etc safely. All service users should throw away these items safely. Sharps Bins are emptied regularly.

If we find that you have left needles in other places, we may ask you to leave as this is putting other people at risk.

11. Bad behaviour on the premises

People whose behaviour is disruptive, whether it is to due to drugs or not, will be challenged and asked to change their behaviour. If they refuse to improve their behaviour, they may be asked not to use parts of the building shared with others, or may be asked to leave the accommodation, either for a short time, or altogether.

12. Confidentiality

We offer a service that aims to protect your right to privacy. We will not discuss anything about you outside without your consent.

However, if your behaviour is causing a serious risk to the safety of other service users, staff, or neighbours, we may have to disclose information without getting your consent. For example, we may need to ask for advice from the Police, and in this case will not be able to ask for your consent first.

13. Visitors

You are responsible for the behaviour of your visitors. Any abusive, threatening or offensive language or behaviour will not be tolerated. If a visitor brings drugs into the building or causes a nuisance, we will ask them to leave, and this could also lead to you being asked to leave.

If you have a visitor or a guest who is causing you or others a problem, then please tell a member of staff.

14. Equal opportunities

All service users have a right to be treated with respect, fairness and dignity, by both workers and other service users. This organisation works with people who use drugs and those who do not.

Any abusive, threatening or offensive language or behaviour which discriminates against people who use drugs or alcohol will not be tolerated.

Newcastle Temporary Accommodation Drugs Management Protocol Guide for Service Users

Appendix A: Controlled Drugs; their class, schedule and regulation

Schedule	Drugs/Class		Who may possess	Who may supply	Restrictions	
1	Cannabis Mescaline, DMT, Ecstasy Raw Opium	C A	<p>Anyone knowing or believing a substance to be a controlled drug and preventing another from committing or continuing to commit an offence and as soon as practicable was going to destroy it or give it to someone who could lawfully possess it</p> <p>Section 5 Misuse of Drugs Act 1971</p>	Police, Customs Person licensed by Home Office.	Holders of a home Office Licence granted for research only. Possession and supply are prohibited other than by other Home Office Licence which is granted for educational and research purposes only	
2	Cocaine Dextromoramide Diamorphine (Heroin) Dihydrocodeine, Dipipanone Fentanyl, Methadone, Morphine Pethidine, Phencyclidine	A		Practitioner Pharmacist A person in charge of a hospital or nursing home. A person may possess a Controlled drug for his or her own use or for administration to another, in accordance with the directions of a doctor i.e. when drug has been prescribed by a doctor.	Person engaged in conveying the drug to a person who may lawfully possess it. 1 Doctor. 1 Pharmacist. 1 Police, 1 Customs and Excise 1 Person in charge of hospital or nursing home. 1 The Sister or Acting Sister of a ward, theatre or other department of a hospital or nursing home.	A home office licence is required for import, export, production, supply and possession. Regulations apply relating to the storage, record-keeping and prescribing of these drugs. Possession or supply without authority is a criminal offence
	Amphetamine, Methaqualone Quinalbarbitone Methylamphetamine	B		As above. In addition, possession without authority in a medicinal form is not an offence.	1 Person authorised under group authority from the Home Office or with written authority from the Home Office.	These drugs are exempt from the restrictions on import and export. There are no safe custody or record keeping requirements under the Misuse of Drugs Act regulations. While authority is required for production and supply, it is not required for possession. While it is illegal to supply these drugs without authority, it is not an offence to possess them.
3	Barbiturates (except Quinalbarbitone)	B				
	Buprenorphine, Temazepam Diethylpropion, Mazindol Phentermine	C				
4	Anabolic steroids, Benzodiazepines (e.g. Diazepam) but not Rohypnol or Temazepam	C				
5	Weak preparations containing small amounts of a controlled drug in a non-recoverable form.				These drugs are exempt from the restrictions on import and export. There are no safe custody or record keeping requirements under the Misuse of Drugs regulations. Authority is required to supply the substances but not to possess them.	