

Drug and Alcohol Liaison Team

Welcome to hospital

Information for patients

We understand that being in hospital can be a difficult time. However, hospitals can also be a place of safety, away from your normal hassles. We hope you can use your time here to make plans about what you want to do in the future.

You are here because of a health problem, and we will do what we can to help you get better and to help you to avoid being ill again in the future.

Help us to help you – we will do our best to:

- Be understanding of your lifestyle choices.
- When needed, provide you with medication to deal with withdrawal symptoms.
- Treat you as an individual with specific needs and equal rights to all other hospital patients.
- Provide counselling and support to help you with issues related to your substance use.
- Provide you with advice and support on other issues such as finances and housing etc.

In return we ask you to:

- Not use or deal illicit drugs within the hospital or whilst you are a hospital inpatient.
- Not leave the ward without first agreeing this with your nurse, and/or your doctor.
- Act in a reasonable way towards the hospital and its staff, patients and visitors.

If you need help or advice with any issue, please ask your nurse who will help put you in touch with whoever can help you best.

Hospital rules you need to know about

All patients in the hospital are required to follow its rules; they are there to protect you, other patients, visitors, and members of staff. Rules can be broken but as is always the case, there are consequences when this happens.

Zero tolerance

As in all parts of the NHS, this hospital operates a zero tolerance policy; this is for all patients not just drug users. This policy comes into play when behaviour is unacceptable and can include such things as violence or abusive behaviour as well as illegal drug use or dealing. **We would rather never have to use this policy but we will to protect the health, safety and the well being of our staff, patients and visitors.**

If someone's behaviour is unacceptable, the ultimate action we can take is to discharge him or her from hospital, even if they still need healthcare.

We may not be able to give withdrawal medication

If we have good reason to think you have taken illicit drugs while you are an inpatient, we may not give you medication that has been prescribed. This is not to teach you a lesson but to reduce the risk of accidental overdose. We would rather not do this but sometimes have to as we can never be sure of the strengths of illicit drugs.

If you have used drugs that we haven't prescribed it can make it harder for us to work out when something is wrong with your health and make the correct diagnosis. Using drugs when you are in hospital could put your health, and even your life, at risk.

Drug use on hospital premises

This is a public place and we have a duty to do our best to stop illegal activity on hospital premises. If we have reason to believe that illegal activity is taking place, such as drug use or dealing, we may need to ask the police to come into hospital and your personal belongings may be searched.

Leaving the ward without agreement

If you leave your ward for longer than arranged it may be assumed that you have taken your own discharge, and your bed may be given to someone else. You will then need to go through your GP or your nearest Accident and Emergency department to get back into hospital. The police may also be asked to visit your home to check you are OK. This is standard hospital practice for all patients.

Withdrawal symptom chart - Record your symptoms below

KEY 1 = none, 2 = mild, 3 = moderate, 4 = severe

Symptom	Date and Time				
Feeling sick					
Muscle spasms / twitching					
Feeling of coldness					
Heart pounding					
Muscular tension					
Aches and pains					
Yawning					
Runny eyes					
Sleep problems					
Stomach cramps					

Overdose – risks to your life

There is always a risk of accidental overdose when you use heroin or other sedating drugs. Some drugs, such as heroin (or other opiates), alcohol and benzodiazepines (benzos) can add to the effects of the medication you are prescribed and cause an overdose.

This is particularly important if you already take drugs like methadone, buprenorphine or benzodiazepines.

High risk times for overdose are:

- When you have just been released from an institution.
- When you haven't used for a few days.
- When you have started taking a new medication.
- When you mix drugs – including alcohol.
- When you inject – if you are going to use, try smoking instead

The Drug and Alcohol Liaison Team may offer you a Naloxone kit to take home if you do not have one already.

Further sources of information

Diabetes UK: www.diabetes.org.uk

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

King's Mill Hospital:

01623 672222

Newark Hospital:

01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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