

Drug and Alcohol Liaison Team

Drugs and driving

Information for patients



This leaflet tells you what you must do about driving if you use illicit drugs or are prescribed drugs like methadone, as per 2 March 2015 Drug Driving Law.

What are your responsibilities?

It is your responsibility to inform the DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority) about any form of illicit drug use. The DVLA will then make a decision on your fitness to drive. **You must stop driving** until the DVLA tells you otherwise. If you don't you are breaking the law.

What if I don't feel that my drug use is a problem?

If you disagree and don't believe you have a problem with drugs, you can get a second opinion. However, you must still avoid driving until such an opinion has been provided.

What will happen if I still drive?

If you continue to drive against advice and evidence is found of this the DVLA will be told.

Will my GP be informed about my admission to hospital?

Your GP will receive a letter from the Drug and Alcohol Liaison Team and medical team caring from you. This will include any advice given to you in reference to driving.

Penalties for drug driving

If you are convicted of drug driving the penalty could be:

- Your licence will be stopped for up to one year.
- An unlimited fine.
- Up to 6 months in prison.
- A criminal record.
- Your driving licence will also show you've been convicted for drug driving. This will last for 11 years.

HGVs and public service vehicles

If you drive a HGV (heavy goods vehicle) or public service vehicle, the rules are stricter and the DVLA will require you to be stable for longer before allowing you to drive.

Methadone/Buprenorphine

The DVLA must be told if you take either of these medications. You will have an independent medical examination, which includes a urine screen for illicit drugs.

If you take prescribed, oral methadone or buprenorphine and no other illicit drugs (including cannabis) are found through urine screen, you are stable in drug treatment and other investigations, you will normally be issued with a one-year licence.

If you are taking injectable methadone, which is more sedating, your licence will be withdrawn. You will be called back for another medical examination when your licence is due for renewal and then every year until three years after your script has stopped.

Benzodiazepines (e.g. Diazepam, Temazepam, Nitrazepam)

If you are prescribed these drugs, take them according to your prescription or as printed in the accompanying leaflet and your **driving is not impaired** (i.e. drowsiness, dizziness, blurred vision) then you are not breaking the law and you can drive.

It is an offence to drive if you have over the specified limits of certain drugs in your blood; and **you haven't been prescribed them**.

Drivers who are taking prescribed medication at **high doses** should carry evidence with them, such as prescriptions slips.

What if I need more support?

Some people find it easy to stop taking drugs. Others find it more difficult and need support.

Talking things through can often be the most helpful thing to do as it can help you to work out what to do for the best.

You can get support from your GP who will give you advice and support and refer you to community drug services.

If you feel that seeing a drug worker will be useful, you can also refer yourself for support to:

- **Change, Grow, Live** (CGL) on 0115 896 0798 (if you live in Nottinghamshire).
- **Derbyshire Recovery Partnership** on 0845 308 4010 (if you live in Derbyshire).

Other support is available from:

- **Frank:** 03001236600, 24 hour helpline for advice/support or live chat on line.
- **NHS 111** for medical help.
- The internet can also be a good place to look for advice and information.
- Many people also find the support of family and friends very useful.
- This leaflet has been given to you by the **Drug and Alcohol Liaison Team**. After you leave hospital you can contact us on **01623 622515, extension 3935**.



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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