

Sample Standard Operating Procedure for Management of Illicit or Suspected Illicit Substances in Care Homes

Prepared by: NHS Sheffield Medicines Management Team (December 2011)

Reviewer: Emma Kelly, Medicines Governance Technician
Contact: emma.kelly14@nhs.net
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Sample Standard Operating Procedure for Management of Illicit or Suspected Illicit Substances* in Care Homes

*Illicit Substances: includes illegal drugs** and substances not used for their intended purpose.

**Illegal drugs: those whose sale, purchase or possession constitutes an offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971)

1. Removal of Illicit or Suspected Illicit Substances from Resident

- a) If it is suspected that a resident is in possession of an illicit or suspected illicit substance, the Care Home Manager must be informed immediately.
- b) Two staff members (one who should be a senior staff member) should approach the resident in a non-judgemental manner and give a clear explanation to the resident of the reasons for their suspicions.
- c) If the staff are uncomfortable about approaching the resident (e.g. the resident is aggressive or abusive), assistance should be sought from other staff members or in extreme circumstances the police.
- d) The staff members should inform the resident that:
 1. The care home's zero tolerance policy forbids the possession and use of illicit substances on its premises.
 2. The use of illicit substances could be harmful both to the resident and others, and may affect any medical treatment given (e.g. interacting with prescribed medicines).
 3. No outside agencies will be informed and that care and treatment will not be compromised.
- e) The staff members should ask the resident to hand over the illicit or suspected illicit substance(s) and any associated paraphernalia.
- f) Any staff handling illicit or suspected illicit substances must wear examination gloves. Under no circumstances should staff attempt to taste or smell the illicit or suspected illicit substance.
- g) A signed and dated entry must be made and witnessed on a separate page in the CD register by the staff confiscating the illicit or suspected illicit substance. The substance name must be recorded as a description and unknown (e.g. white powder unknown). Resident identifiers must not be used in this case in the CD register.
- h) The staff members should secure the illicit or suspected illicit substance(s) in a clear plastic bag and attach a signed and dated label across the seal providing details of CD register entry. Resident details must not be included on the label.
- i) The sealed package must be stored temporarily in the CD cupboard under safe storage after appropriate documentation, until an authorised witness can destroy it.
- j) The staff members must document the incident in the resident's notes.
- k) An incident form must be completed for any incident involving an illicit or suspected illicit substance which may be a controlled drug. The link below provides access to the portal at NHS England for online reporting.
www.cdreporting.co.uk

Further resources regarding CD safe storage, reporting incidents and contacting an authorised witness can be found on Sheffield CCG intranet.
<http://www.intranet.sheffieldccg.nhs.uk/controlled-drugs.htm>

1.1 Refusal to Hand over Illicit or Suspected Illicit Substance

- a. Staff must make no attempt to take an illicit or suspected illicit substance(s) from the resident without consent.
- b. The staff member must document the incident in the resident's notes.
- c. The resident must be informed that confidentiality can no longer be guaranteed and that it may be necessary to involve the police.

2. Illicit or Suspected Illicit Substances and Non-Residents

- a. The home's policy forbids the possession or use of illicit or suspected illicit substances by anyone on the homes property, including car parks and grounds.
- b. Where the use of illicit or suspected illicit substances involves individuals who are not residents, 'Resident Confidentiality' does NOT apply.
- c. If it is suspected that an individual (other than a resident) is in possession of an illicit or suspected illicit substance, the manager must be informed immediately.
- d. Two senior staff members should approach the individual, making every effort not to aggravate the situation and inform them of the home's policy.
- e. The staff members should ask the individual to leave the property taking the illicit or suspected illicit substance(s) and paraphernalia with them.
- f. The individual should be warned that the police will be informed if there is a failure to comply or if another episode occurs.

3. Destruction of Illicit or Suspected Illicit Substances

- a. **Under no circumstances must illicit or suspected illicit substances be returned to a resident or a third party.**
- b. The registered nurse/ senior carer must contact NHS Sheffield CCG's Medicines Governance Technician emma.kelly14@nhs.net at the first available opportunity during normal working hours to arrange for disposal of the substance with an authorised witness.
- c. Any subsequent actions taken or further information gained must be updated on the NHSE incident form.

References

Pathways to Problems: Hazardous use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs by young people in the UK and its implications for policy: Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs September 2006
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/119053/Pathwaystoproblems.pdf