

Substance misuse support in prison

What happens if I have drug or alcohol problems when I get to prison?

When you first come into prison you should see someone from the healthcare team, you can tell them if you have a problem with drugs or alcohol.

If you seem to be affected by alcohol and/or drugs you must be referred to healthcare immediately. You will be looked after in reception until you can be moved to the healthcare or detox unit.

When you arrive, you should also be given information about drug and alcohol services in the prison and the name of an officer you can talk to about this.

What help is available during my sentence?

There will be drug and alcohol services in prison. They should work with the mental health and primary care teams to provide the most effective and safe treatment and care.

The screening, assessment and treatment for drug and alcohol misuse should look at the wide range of substance use, and any other related physical and mental health needs.

The care and treatment that you get in prison should be the same that you would receive if you were in the community.

A care plan should be put in place with you to address your needs and any recovery goals. Your treatment should be regularly reviewed and there should be access to suitable interventions to support treatment and recovery. If you are given medication, it must be suitable for your needs.

What is Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT)?

All prisoners, whether on remand or convicted, can be tested for drugs or alcohol. This is called Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT)

There are three main procedures for selecting people for testing:

- computer-generated random tests carried out each month;
- targeted testing if there is a reasonable suspicion that drugs have been used; and
- risk assessment testing when you are being considered for temporary release or transfer to an open prison.

PSO 3601 *Mandatory Drug Testing* contains the more information on this, including the procedures, guidelines and information about appeals.

What happens when I am released from prison?

If you need community support on release this should be arranged by staff at the prison, usually someone from drug and alcohol services or from healthcare.

Before you are released they will make a referral to support services in the community. They should let them know when you will be released from prison. This is so that your treatment continues when you are released.

You will often be given an appointment to see the service in the community on the day of your release, or soon after if this is not possible. It is important that you go to this appointment, especially if you need medication to help you manage in the community.

Further information

The following may be of interest to you. If you are unable to access these resources elsewhere feel free to contact our Advice and Information Service and we will be happy to send you a copy.

Useful PSIs and PSOs (these should be available in the library):

PSI 07/2015 *Early Days in Custody*

PSO 3601 *Mandatory Drug Testing*

Other

Prison Reform Trust information sheet '*Your health in prison*'

Prisoners' Advice Service information sheet '*Mandatory Drug Testing*'

Drug misuse and dependence UK Guidelines on clinical management 2017, Chapter 5.4 pages 133-162 Prisons and other secure environments

Thematic Report by HMIP *Changing patterns of substance misuse in adult prisons and service responses* December 2015

Contact our Advice and Information Service

We are a small service and we are independent of the prison service.

We can give you information on prison rules, life in prison and how to get help in prison.

Our freephone information line is **0808 802 0060**. This number is for **prisoners** only. This number is **free** and you do not need to put it on your PIN.

This number is open:

- Monday and Thursday afternoon from 3.30pm to 5.30pm.
- Wednesday morning from 10.30am to 12.30pm.

At other times, you can call on **0207 251 5070**. This number is open from Monday to Friday 10.00am - 5.30pm. This number is **not free** but you do not need to put it on your PIN.

You can also write to us at:

Prison Reform Trust
FREEPOST ND 6125
London
EC1B 1PN

You do not need to use a stamp.