



COVID-19 & Substance Use

Harm Reduction Information

Practice Good Hygiene

- Wash hands with soap & warm water, or at least use hand sanitiser before handling, preparing or using drugs
- Wipe down drug packaging and surfaces where you prepare drugs with sanitiser or soap and warm water
- Avoid putting drugs bags/wraps in mouth, vagina or anus. If you must, cleanse well with an alcohol-based cleanser before and after inserting. If stored in mouth, wash mouth with an alcohol based mouth wash.
- Prepare your drugs yourself. If you can't, do encourage the person preparing it to maintain good hygiene

Safer Drug Use

Be ready to manage an overdose - emergency services may be slow to respond to 999 calls during the outbreak

- If using opiates, have Naloxone available and ensure those around you know how to administer it.
- Try using smaller amounts to lower your risk of overdose - start low and go slow.
- If using with others, make an overdose plan with them and stagger use if possible.

Avoid sharing your drugs and equipment

- Don't share e-cigs/cigarettes, pipes, bongs, joints, vapes, straws, needles, syringes, glasses/cups, bottles etc
- **Stocking up on your Supplies** – accessing your drug of choice may be difficult.
- Consider seeking advice from your addiction service regarding substitute prescribing options
- Make a supply plan with your dealer(s) and don't be tempted to excessively stock up on drugs. This can increase your risk of using too much (overdose) and getting into trouble with the law.
- Risk of life threatening withdrawals is increased for dependent Benzo, GBL or alcohol users, if access is stopped.
- If you take Methadone or Buprenorphine, ask your prescriber for a plan to avoid any disruptions to your dose.
- Agree emergency plans for repeat prescriptions, supervised consumption & possibility for take home doses.
- Obtain a sufficient amount of clean drug use equipment if possible

Safer Snorting

- Clean surfaces before preparing lines. Avoid sharing snorting equipment (spoon, shovel, blade, key, mirror)
- Use your own straws (if using with others, use different colours to avoid mix ups)
- Avoid using banknotes as these are more likely to get re-used. Use rolled paper and throw away after use
- Avoid sharing/passing around your stash bag or box, and avoid dabbing powder with fingers
- Chop powders finely and have a nasal douche after snorting to reduce risk of soft tissue abrasion/infection

Safer Opioid Use & Injecting Drug Use

People who use opioids are at greater risk of dying from drug overdose

- Covid-19 can compromise the respiratory system and respiratory failure is more likely in opioid overdose.
- Smoking heroin when experiencing COVID-19 related issues could increase the risks. Avoid sharing/re-using foil
- Stock up on medication and hygiene supplies, clean injection equipment
- Make plans with dealer(s) for likely supply disruption and drug shortages.
- You may suffer acute opiate withdrawal symptoms if you suddenly stop using. These may be distressing but usually not life threatening. Seek advice from addiction team and pharmacists. Reducing amount used can help

Reducing Transmission and Safer Sex

- Stay away from others if you have symptoms of COVID-19, (high temperature, sore throat/cough, difficulty breathing) call 111 for advice. Keep up to date with safety advice at www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus
- Make arrangements with your care team about how your medication will be delivered.
- Practice safe sex and minimise close contact (kissing, contact with bodily fluids) where possible.
- Make suitable arrangements for condoms, contraception pills and access to emergency contraception.

Please send your feedback/suggestions for improvement to:

Irene.Muh@slam.nhs.uk