

Accessing Drug and Alcohol services during COVID-19

In terms of accessibility and referrals, nothing has changed. **We are accepting new referrals and all contact details remain the same:**

- Bournemouth (We Are With You – formerly Addaction): 01202 558855
- Poole (EDAS/SMART): 01202 735777
- Dorset including Christchurch (REACH): 0800 043 4656
- BCP Prescribing (AWP): 01202 977010 [not for referrals; only specific queries]
- Online referrals: <https://pds.drugreferrals.com/>

We are currently offering almost all support online or via the phone. Exceptions would be:

- Handing over needle exchange equipment
- New prescribed clients who are not known to our services, where a drug test or face-to-face meeting is required
- Clients where a specific safeguarding risk has been identified

There are online mutual aid meetings as well as the support direct from our services:

- Alcoholics Anonymous <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-Meetings/Find-a-Meeting/Online>
- Narcotics Anonymous <https://online.ukna.org/>
- Cocaine Anonymous <https://www.ca-online.org/>
- All fellowships <https://www.intherooms.com/home/>
- SMART Recovery <https://smartrecovery.org.uk/online-meetings/>
- Breaking Free Online (Code required from BEAT, SMART or REACH for free access)

Most clients who were previously receiving their medication by attending the pharmacy every day and being supervised while taking it are **now on twice weekly or weekly collections of medication**. This is to reduce the risk of catching or transmitting the virus, and to reduce footfall to pharmacies that are already struggling to meet demand. Anyone who requires their medication to be collected on their behalf, should complete a 'Proxy form' available from all drug services and pharmacies. We have several delivery drivers and members of the treatment system who will collect and deliver medication to those who are self-isolating but would like to hear from any housing providers who would like to collect medication on behalf of their residents. We are also looking for housing providers who would like to distribute pre prepared needle exchange packs, distribute Naloxone and have central bins for needle disposal for their residents. If you are interested in discussing these opportunities please contact either Karen Wood – karen.wood@bcpcouncil.gov.uk or Will Haydock – william.haydock@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Exceptions (where people remain on daily supervised consumption of medication) would be where significant risks related to safeguarding have been identified (e.g. child protection plan, domestic abuse, risk of criminal exploitation).

The Police are aware of our delivery arrangements and we are working with them to reduce the opportunities for criminal exploitation. We are developing and re-issuing harm reduction guidance, responding to the risk of people seeking alternatives to street drugs e.g. online.

Due to the expected shortage / reduced purity of drug supplies, we are anticipating an increase in the number of people who use opioids seeking treatment. Unfortunately, our

services are under pressure altering 1,500 prescriptions, and many pharmacies (primarily in the BCP area) are refusing to take new clients due to their capacity. We are therefore working on new ways of getting people medication, in consultation with individual pharmacies, LPC and primary care.

If any member of the public notices suspected drug dealing or antisocial behaviour, we would expect them to contact Dorset Police as normal. We expect visible dealing to reduce due to its increased visibility, the reduction in trains, and the presence of Police checking car travel generally.

If you have any service users who are having difficulty in accessing services due to having no access to a telephone, can you please contact your local drug and alcohol service provider mentioned above.