



# In The Know...

## Drug & Alcohol Service News

Spring/  
Summer 2013

### Welcome to the Newsletter's Spring/Summer Edition...

We have some interesting topics covered in this issue including: inpatient detox, preparation for rehab, importance of checking blood pressure, information on the role of our healthcare assistant, the Alcohol and Drugs Support (ADS) service and as always our recipe, and question for the Dr sections. Again, we would like to thank those who have had input into the development of the newsletter. Please feel free to get in touch if you have any suggestion or ideas that you think may improve this.



### Information Box

- Please note the NHS Specialist Drug & Alcohol Service will be closed for Bank Holiday on Monday August 26th.
- It is International Overdose Awareness day on Saturday 31/8/13. Naloxone Overdose Awareness and Prevention Training is still available which is provided by the nurses at the Specialist Drug & Alcohol Service.
- If you need any changes to medication please allow at least 48 hours notice so we can arrange this for you.

### My Experience of Detox and waiting for Rehab



I felt happy that I was getting the opportunity that I was going to start getting my life sorted out. That would be around the 14<sup>th</sup> January because that was the last day I had a drink or a bag or anything like that. And I was relieved that that was the last of it all. Then I was welcomed at Midpark Hospital for my detox, of alcohol, and came off heroin as well. I was looked after well up there. I thought it was good that you had your own room so no one could bother you at all. On the other hand if you wanted to there was plenty to do, like you could go walks, play table tennis, have a coffee and have visitors. They cared for me; a nurse brought me a hot chocolate at night time when I was feeling a bit worse for wear. In fact all the nurses at Midpark were really supportive.

I felt safe in Midpark because you knew no one would bother you and that no one

would have a bag or a drink. I suppose I was a bit anxious about how everything was going to pan out – and on the other side of that excited that I was starting to get it together.

I knew I was being accepted for the Rehab and that gave me hope, but I was anxious about not going straight to Rehab, I was worried, not knowing if I was going to get into situations where there would be stuff about. There was no need really to worry because I have just been getting relationships sorted out with my family and staying away from situations where I would be offered anything. If you dinnae put yourself in that position in the first place, then you're not going to get offered it anyway are you?

Since I got home I've been trying to keep myself busy, and I've been playing badminton with my Occupational Therapist and spending time with the family. I've had good appointments with my Key worker at the Drug and Alcohol Service. I thought I wouldn't get along so well with my family, but I suppose being off the drink and drugs has helped us because they're not thinking I'm full of it. It helps with everybody and with me in my head because I don't have to worry about where I'm going to get a bag or a smoke or a drink anymore.

I wasn't doing anything much before, apart from cycling my bike to get from A

to B, but now with playing the badminton and doing the fitness DVDs my fitness is a lot better and I'm only going to improve on that when I go away.

It's even been good to have the appointments 'cos it gives you something to look forward to and something to do that day. The badminton's given me something to look forward to.

I'm excited and hopeful now and a wee bit uncertain about what's happening in the future – whether I'm going to be coming back or staying away. It's just a case of counting the days down now and keeping myself busy for the next couple of weeks.

Anonymous Service User – Age 40 -  
Dumfries



### Blood Pressure



#### **"Why should you have your blood pressure taken?"**

Many factors influence blood pressure such as age, weight, diet, stress, medication, smoking and alcohol intake. Increased drug and alcohol intake can have hidden effects on your physical health which may contribute towards cardiovascular and respiratory disease, malnutrition, infections, and sexual health issues. One of the most important ways we have of detecting health problems is to monitor your blood pressure. By taking your blood pressure this gives us a clearer picture of your health and can help mean early intervention of treatment.

**Karen Wells, Student Nurse.**

## NHS Drug & Alcohol Staff Profiles Raye Currie - Healthcare Assistant



My job at Lochfield Road covers many areas and is very varied. One of the aspects I thoroughly enjoy is completing Interest Assessments. This is to try and find out easy, enjoyable activities for clients to do on their own or with others.

I also complete Healthy Living Sessions which focus on a person's overall health, not about their substance use. This is a good way of checking on

your health and gives you a baseline for further medical advice if needed. My favourite role is teaching our clients how to cook. I have devised a really easy to follow cook book—"Tasty Bites". Each recipe makes enough to feed a family of four and costs under £5.00 to make. ( they can be adapted for one person). These cooking sessions can be carried out at your home, however, if this is not possible then I have access to a kitchen at the Lochfield Road unit. My recipes are featured in each Newsletter, however, the Tasty Bites cook book is awarded to each person I cook with as well as a certificate at the end of your sessions.

You can be referred to me for any of the above activities. Please ask your nurse to make a referral or contact me directly.

## Recipe of the Month Chilli Con Carne

### Ingredients

- 1 lb. minced Beef (or Quorn mince)
- 1 med. onion salt and pepper
- 1 can tomato soup
- 1 tsp mixed herbs
- 1/4 tsp. chilli powder
- 1 (1 lb.) can red kidney beans



### Method

- 1) Put chopped meat (or quorn) into a large pot. Cut onions up and add to meat. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- 2) Add approximately 1/2 cup water, cover and cook over low heat for approximately 1 hour.
- 3) Stir occasionally and keep adding water as is needed so meat does not stick to pot. As you stir, break meat up with spoon so you do not have big chunks.
- 4) When meat is done, add can of kidney beans, including the liquid, can of tomato soup and chilli powder. Mix well.
- 5) Cover and simmer for about 15 or 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Voila!

Enjoy with boiled rice, baked potato or nachos.

## OTHER SERVICES—Alcohol & Drug Support South West Scotland (ADS)

ADS delivers a range of community-based services across Dumfries and Galloway. We work together with the NHS Specialist Drug & Alcohol Service, Addaction and other organisations.

**If your life is affected in any way by alcohol, drugs or gambling problems, we may be able to help.**

Our services include...

### Talking Therapies

We offer a safe and private space in a relaxed and confidential setting, with a trained ADS counsellor who will help you explore your present situation in a non-judgemental way, giving you the opportunity to make sense of the issues affecting your life. Younger people [25 and under] can also access our Skype / telephone based counselling service – ShrinkRap.

### Befriending

ADS befrienders can provide company on social outings or simply ongoing support if you are experiencing difficulties coping.



Group sessions also offer the opportunity to socialise with like-minded people in a supportive, non-judgemental environment

### Gardening Projects

In Crossmichael, just outside Castle Douglas, a functioning garden growing over 25 different vegetables and a variety of flowers has been established by ADS service users, volunteers and staff. Plans are underway to develop other gardens in Dumfries and Galloway.

### Housing Support

If you have difficulty in obtaining or maintaining a tenancy in circumstances because of alcohol or drugs problems, an

ADS housing support worker may be able to help. We can assist you to develop independent living skills, such as managing finances, a healthier diet and general house maintenance.

### Help for Family and Friends

People close to a drug or alcohol user can find themselves trapped in the trauma of addiction; feeling responsible, but unsure how to help. They are often desperate for advice and support for themselves. Our service can help a family member, partner or friend regain control over their life, whether or not the drug or alcohol user is also receiving help. Currently this is being delivered in Annandale & Eskdale only.

**Accessing our services is simple—please phone 01556 503550 to speak to our of the ADS team, or contact us through our website at**

[www.adssws.co.uk](http://www.adssws.co.uk)

## Question for the Doctor: "What is the impact of long-term benzodiazepine use?"



It is well known that benzodiazepines also known as "benzos" can cause both physiological and physical dependence even at normal prescribed

doses. As a result, they are only recommended in short courses. But there are dangers for those who have been prescribed benzodiazepines (or who have abused illicit benzodiazepines) for a long time and any benefit of long term benzodiazepine use is likely to be far outweighed by the risks.

As well as drug dependence there is a possibility of adverse effects on cognitive

function, especially memory impairment, physical, and mental health. Some of the symptoms which may occur as a result of long term use include nausea, headaches, dizziness, personality changes, aggression, depression, irritability, agoraphobia, lethargy, sleep problems, anxiety and panic attacks.

Many of these adverse effects of long term use begin to show improvements 3—6 months after withdrawal, but the withdrawal itself can be severe if the drugs are stopped too quickly.

**Dr Waterhouse  
Consultant Psychiatrist**

## Contact us

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