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**Drugs Policy**

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| **Policy name** | Drugs Policy |
| **Department** | Housing |
| **Author** | Rhian McKnight |
| **Responsible Trustee** | Becky Banks |
| **Approved by Board** | 28 September 2021 |
| **Review Date** |  |

**Aim of the Policy**

YMCA Crewe works with people in need of accommodation and support. This includes those who currently use legal and/ or illegal drugs. YMCA Crewe neither condones nor approves of the possession, use or supply of illicit drugs or Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS). However, the organisation seeks to work with clients to promote their well-being and reduce harm and it seeks to offer a service that is accessible to drug users and will seek to avoid excluding drug-using clients where possible.

While wishing to provide an accessible and inclusive service to people who use drugs, the organisation also recognises that it has other duties and obligations including:

* Ensuring that the YMCA works within the framework of the law including regarding substance misuse
* Provide a safe environment for all staff, volunteers and visitors.
* Provide a safe environment for all residents, including non-users, and ensure that the balance of the community within the accommodation is maintained.
* Work with and be sensitive to the local community with regard to substance misuse.

The organisation recognises that the intention to work with drug users may create tensions between staff and residents, between residents themselves and between YMCA Crewe and the wider community. This policy is intended to minimise these tensions and ensure safe and legal provision for all parties concerned.

**Legislation**

This policy is based on Section 8 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (and the subsequent **Psychoactive Substances Act** 2016). The Misuse of Drugs Act places obligations on managers of premises to discourage and prevent drug-related activities. It states:

*A person commits an offence, if being the occupier or concerned with the management of any premises, he knowingly permits or suffers any of the following activities to take place on those premises; that is to say:*

1. *Producing or attempting to produce a controlled drug.*
2. *Supplying or attempting to supply a controlled drug to another…. or offering to supply a controlled drug to another.*
3. *Preparing opium for smoking.*
4. *Smoking cannabis, cannabis resin or prepared opium.*

**Scope**

* This policy includes the activities mentioned in Section 8 of the Misuse of Drugs Act but also includes the possession, suspected possession, use, or suspicion of use of any controlled drugs on the premises. It also covers solvent misuse
* The drugs covered by this policy include controlled drugs, prescribed controlled drugs, solvents and NPS’s
* The policy covers activities on the premises which include the main accommodation site and other disbursed accommodation. It also includes activities off site that have been organised by the YMCA
* This policy affects service users, staff, volunteers or visitors who are involved with controlled drugs, or solvent abuse.
* The policy can apply to drug related paraphernalia or advertising (e.g. posters, T shirts)
* This policy includes the misuse of prescribed or over the counter medication where activities that place risk the Health and safety of service users staff or visitors is thought to be at risk.

**Definitions**

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| Controlled drugs  Prescribed controlled drugs | Some substances (e.g. cannabis, heroin and ecstasy) are designated as controlled substances under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and using them is illegal  Examples include: Methadone, Subutex, Diazepam |
| Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS ) | Sometimes called ‘legal highs’, These substances have stimulant or mood-altering properties which were designed to replicate the effects of illegal substances like cannabis, cocaine and ecstasy |
| Solvent Abuse | The deliberate inhaling of intoxicating fumes given off by certain solvents |

**Policy Statements**

1. YMCA Crewe’s house rules, that form part of the license agreement state:

* ‘A resident must not be under the influence of substances on site’
* ‘A resident must not use, possess, supply, or attempt to supply any illegal drug, or substance in the YMCA building or site.’
* ‘A resident must not use, possess, supply, or attempt to supply prescribed medication to other parties other than the named person in the YMCA. This includes solvents and legal highs.’

1. The YMCA recognises that drug misuse can vary from stable to chaotic in each individual case. The YMCA will not accept unreasonable behaviour, which places staff, volunteers or service users in danger or causes nuisance or unacceptable levels of stress.
2. Anyone bringing prescribed and/or controlled drugs (e.g. Methadone) into the building will be required to:

* Inform their housing coach they are bringing a prescribed and or/controlled drug into the premises.
* Either keep prescribed and/or controlled drugs on their own person or otherwise securely stored.
* Keep prescribed and/or controlled drugs in their original packaging with the labels intact so that the YMCA knows to whom they belong
* Always either keep drugs on your own person or store them somewhere securely.
* To understand that the YMCA cannot store or administer prescribed or controlled drugs
* To understand that the YMCA cannot store prescribed drugs, except in cases of emergency and for short periods, as agreed by the Housing and Support Manager (see Medication & First Aid Policy).
* Refrain from giving or selling controlled and/or prescribed drugs to other persons for any reason whatsoever.

1. All residents will have the rules and responsibilities around drug use explained to them on entry to the service. This will include the reasons why the rules and responsibilities are in place and the consequences for breaking them.
2. The safety and wellbeing of service users at all times is of paramount concern to YMCA Crewe. This policy is to be cross referenced with the YMCA’s Policy and Procedure documents entitled Protection from Abuse (of Children & Young People) and Safeguarding (of Vulnerable Adults). These procedures take precedence in all circumstances.
3. YMCA staff appointed to manage the premises and deliver support will take safe steps to stop drug related activity as described in Section 8 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 or to deal with activities where these raise concerns to the Health and Safety of staff service users or any other persons.
4. YMCA Crewe will maintain appropriate staffing levels and carry out regular duty tours of the building to helps to reduce the likelihood of drug misuse on the premisis.
5. The YMCA will deal with onsite drug use through its licence agreement and Licence Sustainment Policy. This may include you being temporary or permanently barred, and may result in the police involvement.
6. YMCA Crewe will keep accurate and up to date records of drug-related incidents and these will be shared amongst members of staff on a “need-to-know” basis.
7. YMCA Crewe will maintain effective working relationships with the Police. Where the law requires it or the situation warrants it the organisation will ensure that it supports the police in their work.
8. YMCA Crewe recognises it has a responsibility and considerable opportunity to ensure that its service users are provided with appropriate advice, information and guidance towards treatment pathways and wherever possible any person who discloses drug misuse issues will be offered a referral to an appropriate partner agency and be supported to sustain their engagement with that agency.
9. YMCA Crewe will embrace partnership working to enhance its service delivery by establishing strong links with external agencies which have been created to assist clients who have substance misuse problems.
10. Supporting people who have substance misuse problems can require patience, perseverance and empathy. It is important that staff build good rapport with residents and can develop new strategies for building more authentic and more productive relationships with clients, so that they do not feel judged, patronised, stigmatised or and discriminated against and they feel comfortable in discussing and disclosing problems that they are facing, including the use of drugs. YMCA Crewe is therefore comitted in training staff and will promote a psychologically informed enviroment. Examples of training and that may assist include: Drug Awareness Training, Counselling Skills and Psychologically Informed Enviroments.
11. Staff will be trained in first aid, including overdose awareness how to administer naloxone. Naloxone will be stored onsite and available to be used in the event of opiate overdoses. Staff will use Naloxone in line with their training and national guidelines.
12. All staff will be advised during their induction to consult their GP regarding Hep B vaccination.
13. Service users who have a drug misuse issue will be given the opportunity to share this with staff when being interviewed for accommodation. A risk assessment will be undertaken at interview stage which will include asking questions about drug misuse issues. The interview process and risk assessment are used as tools to highlight concerns about individual service users with regard to chaotic drug use. A more detailed risk action plan of will form part of the process of support in the early stages of occupancy. Service users who want to address their drug misuse issues can begin to do this through the process and a GLO plan.
14. The YMCA will work within the GPDR policy where there is no risk to health or safety or breach of the law. Risks to the safety or wellbeing of other service users, staff, the organisation or the community may result in the disclosure of information to police or others without necessarily obtaining service users’ consent.