

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

Legal Parameters

Amendments to the Drugs Misuse Act were proclaimed on May 6 1989. These amendments include the following Key points:

1. Possession of needles and syringes is not an offence for any person.
2. Unsafe disposal of needles and syringes is illegal. The Drugs Misuse Act and Health Act require that needles and syringes be disposed of in a rigid walled, puncture-resistant, sealed container.
3. Possession of illegal drugs remain unlawful

Specific relevant sections of the Drugs Misuse Act 1986:

Section 10 (2): A person who unlawfully has in his or her possession anything (not being a hypodermic syringe or needle)

- (a) for the use in connection with the administration, consumption or smoking of a dangerous drug; or
- (b) that the person has used in connection with such a purpose; commits an offence against this Act. Maximum penalty – 2 years imprisonment.

Section 10 (3): A person (other than a medical practitioner, pharmacist or person of a class of persons authorised so to do by the Minister administering the Health Act 1937) who supplies a hypodermic syringe or needle to another, whether or not such a person is in Queensland, or for use in connection with the administration of a dangerous drug commits an offence against the Act. Maximum penalty 2 years imprisonment.

Section 10 (4): A person who has in his or her possession a thing being a hypodermic syringe or needle who fails to use all reasonable care and take all reasonable precautions in respect of such a thing so as to avoid danger to life, safety or health to another commits an offence against this Act. Maximum penalty 2 years imprisonment.

Section 10 (4) (A): A person who has in his or her possession a hypodermic syringe or needle that has been used in the connection with the administration of a dangerous drug who fails to dispose of such hypodermic syringe or needle in accordance with procedures prescribed by regulation commits an offence against this Act. Maximum penalty 2 years imprisonment.

Section 11: A person who, being the occupier or concerned in the management or control of a place, permits the place to be used for the commission of a crime defined in this part is guilty of a crime. Maximum penalty 15 years imprisonment.

CLIENTS USING ILLEGAL DRUGS

Policy

Clients with drug issues will not be excluded from accommodation however they will be expected to follow Lions Emergency Accommodation Centre Inc. (LEAC) guidelines.

There is to be no illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia (with the exception of injection equipment stored in appropriate containers) on any LEAC premises.

Clients are not permitted to use illicit drugs on any LEAC properties. Any staff member who knowingly permits a client to use drugs on LEAC properties is guilty of a crime under the drugs Misuse Act 1986 (Section 11) and is liable to up to 15 years imprisonment.

It is illegal for a person to have in their possession anything (apart from injecting equipment) for the use in connection with the administration, consumption or smoking of a dangerous drug under the Drugs Misuse Act 1986.

It is illegal for a person to cultivate, solicit or sell illegal drugs while a client of LEAC.

Procedures

When a client discloses they are currently using illicit drugs the worker must outline the following safety issues:

- There is to be no using/ injecting illicit drugs on LEAC premises.
- There is to be no illegal substances kept or stored in any LEAC premises
- Clients to be encouraged to use/ inject drugs in a safe place.
- Clients to be encouraged to use/ inject when other people are present.
- Clients to be encouraged to inject safely.
- Clients to be informed about where to access sterile injecting equipment (See Attached)
- Clients encouraged to use sharp disposal containers.

Sharps containers will be supplied in all LEAC units/houses.

Clients requesting clean injecting equipment will be advised of agencies and chemists within the area, which provide this service. Under no circumstances should a staff member supply clients with syringes.

If a staff member discovers that a client has used drugs on the premises or has been found to have illegal drugs in their possession, they will be immediately evicted from LEAC, at their own expense. If a worker has reason to believe the above has occurred but does not have direct evidence, one written warning will be issued. If after a written warning, staff assess the behaviour has continued, the client will be evicted from LEAC at their own expense.

Client Services

If a staff member discovers a client has drug paraphernalia (with the exception of injecting equipment), that client will be asked to dispose of the object and a written warning will be issued.

Under no circumstances must a staff member willingly take into their possession drugs or drug paraphernalia from a client.

In the event drugs are found on the premises and the worker is unable to identify who was in possession of the item, the worker is to notify the police of the item. The worker will record the event in the incident book. Under no circumstances are the workers to dispose of the item themselves.

When drug paraphernalia is found on LEAC properties and the worker is unable to identify who was in the possession of the item, the worker should attempt to locate another staff member and inform them of their intention to dispose of the item.

If workers have assessed a client to have solicited, cultivated or sold illegal drugs while a client of LEAC, depending on the source of this information, the client/s will be evicted from LEAC or issued a written warning. Police will be informed if drugs are believed to be on the premises or being sold from the premises.

OTHER DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Policy

There is to be no consumption of alcohol at the shelter. Residents of LEAC houses are permitted to consume alcohol in moderation.

There is to be no misuse of prescription drugs while on LEAC premises. Prescription drugs are to be used only as directed by the prescribing doctor.

Procedures

A client found to be consuming alcohol at the shelter will be evicted immediately from LEAC.

A client believed to have consumed alcohol on the premises will be issued with a written warning. If a worker believes this behaviour to have continued, the client will be evicted from LEAC.

If assessed that a client misusing prescription drugs while staying with LEAC has put themselves, their children, other residents/ neighbours or staff at risk, the client will be issued with a written warning. If after a written warning, staff assess the behaviour has continued, the client will be evicted from LEAC at their own expense.

CLIENT ENTERING LEAC UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF A SUBSTANCE

Policy

Clients may return to LEAC premises under the influence of a substance provided:

- They remain calm and quiet and do not act in an aggressive or threatening manner to other residents or staff
- Remain in their own house/unit
- Do not impact on other residents/neighbours right to a safe and peaceful environment
- Are able to adequately care for any dependant children

Procedures

If a worker discovers a client under the influence of a substance the following safety procedures may apply:

- Workers are to notify another worker. If possible staff must be in pairs when dealing with a client under the influence of a substance.
- Workers are not to challenge or threaten a client while under the influence of a substance.
- Workers will attempt to keep the client calm and quiet, and direct the client to their own unit/home. It may be appropriate for a client to sit in a room with no loud noises or bright lights.
- If a client under the influence of a substance is acting in a threatening or aggressive manner to other residents or staff it may be necessary to call the police. This behaviour will result in a client being evicted from LEAC.
- If a client under the influence of a substance is unable to adequately care for any dependant children, a worker is to ring *crisis care to assist with the care of the children*.
- It may be appropriate for workers to stay with a client under the influence of a substance. In this event the workers will attempt to find out what substance the client has used in case medical intervention is necessary.

OVERDOSE

Policy

Workers are to follow safety procedures for overdose.

Procedures

Worker to immediately notify another staff member. If possible two workers to attend to an overdosed client.

Workers are to notify the Coordinator of the incident.

Workers are to make a record of the event in the daybook and the incident book.

Safety procedures in the event of a client overdose is as follows:

- Keep calm
- Squeeze earlobe / press on finger nail
- If they respond, try to walk them around
- If no response, check breathing and pulse
- If no breathing start artificial respiration. If no pulse start CPR
- If unconscious, place in recovery position
- Call an ambulance
- Stay with client

An ambulance must be called if someone is:

- Unconscious
- Not responding to pain
- Breathing slowly or erratically
- Turning blue (This usually starts with the lips)
- Being sick while unconscious
- Still semi conscious after three minutes

When an ambulance is called the following information is given:

- Nature of the emergency
- Location of the emergency
- Whether the person is conscious or not
- Call back phone number
- Your name
- What the person has taken / used

NEEDLE STICK INJURY

Policy

Workers are to follow safety procedures for needle stick injury

Procedures

Workers are to notify the Coordinator of the incident.

Workers are to make a record of the event in the daybook and the incident book.

Safety procedures in the event of needle stick injury is as follows:

- If possible, keep the needle and syringe which caused the injury. Follow the correct procedure for handling syringes.
- Encourage the wound to bleed.
- Wash wound with running water and soap if available.

- Apply an antiseptic and band - aid.
- As soon as possible, contact your local family doctor, local hospital, sexual health clinic, or community health service. These services will advise you if there is a need for HIV or Hepatitis testing, etc.

It is important to remember that no one has ever contracted HIV/AIDS from a needle stick injury sustained within a community setting.

DISPOSAL OF USED INJECTING EQUIPMENT

Policy

Staff to encourage clients to dispose of their own used injecting equipment in a safe manner and in accordance with current laws.

Procedures

Staff to inform clients of how to dispose of used equipment safely.

If the owner of used injecting equipment cannot be located, staff will dispose of equipment using a non-touch method and following the safety procedures for picking up used syringes.

Unsafe disposal of needles and syringes is illegal. The drugs Misuse Act and the Health Act require that needles and syringes be disposed of in a rigid-walled, puncture-resistant, sealed container. If the disposal container is not available, an old hard shampoo bottle or similar is sufficient.

Disposal is a non-touch procedure. Staff members should never directly handle used needles and syringes, the return disposal container, nor should they hold the sharps container when the client places the return used syringes for disposal. There is a risk that clients will overfill the container with the possibility of the disposal container being punctured.

The safety procedures for picking up used syringes is as follows:

- Assess whether you feel confident and willing to dispose of the syringe yourself. If you don't, locate another staff member immediately.
- Find a rigid walled, puncture proof container large enough for the syringes. Do not use glass or cardboard boxes.
- Put on a pair of rubber or latex gloves.

Client Services

- Take the container over to the syringe and place it on the ground. This helps to prevent any possible needle stick injury.
- Pick up the syringe carefully by the middle of the barrel. Use a pair of tongs or pliers if available.
- Place the syringe into the container, sharp end first. Do not hold the container whilst you are doing this.
- Securely place the lid on the container.
- Wash your hands with running water and soap.
- Disposal of used injecting equipment needs to be through:
 - NASP service (i.e. SCIVAA, Sexual Health Clinic, NGH)
 - Community sharps disposal container (i.e. those found in some public toilets)