

KAIROS
The Dispensary
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Responses to the National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

Introduction.

We are an eight-bedded residential alcohol rehabilitation unit based in the North East of England (County Durham). We are part of a range of services including supported housing projects offered by Norcare – a limited company and registered charity. We receive the majority of our referrals direct from Social Services and some from the NHS. Funding to stay at Kairos is means tested and made up of a contribution from the individual themselves and from the funding body (normally either Social Services or NHS). Our current fees are £295.60 per week. The average length of stay at Kairos is six months. Clients must be a minimum of eight days alcohol free before they can be admitted to the unit. In practise this normally means that a client undergoes a hospital or in some cases community de-tox prior to admission.

Question 14.

The definition we use is as follows **“If drinking is having a negative effect on any area of your life, be it physical, emotional, psychological or practical (work, money etc), then it may be defined as problematic.”**

Using this definition as a starting point when assessing a client’s suitability for our services we seek to establish in what way/s and to what extent drinking is having a negative impact on the client’s life.

Question 17.

Our professional objective is to work with people who have a history of alcohol abuse and seek, through a variety of means, to facilitate behavioural changes that will minimise a return to problematic drinking. The therapeutic programme we offer is made up of: group work,

one-to-one sessions and a social/life skills programme (including practical skills such as cooking, cleaning and shopping).

Anecdotal evidence from both our clients and our referrers indicates that a short-term intervention such as the opportunity to be de-toxed in hospital is in itself insufficient to minimise a return to problem drinking. We had one client who over a period of twenty years had attended over fifteen hospital de-toxes – he was known on the unit as the “De-tox king”. Each time he returned to problematic drinking within a matter of days and sometimes hours of leaving hospital. Since leaving Kairos eight months ago he has been able to maintain his sobriety.

Unfortunately we are not in a position to be able to offer anything other than our own view of the most effective methods of preventing alcohol dependence. We do however feel very strongly that interventions need to be long term – our programme is six months with the opportunity to continue to attend a weekly support group thereafter. Over and over again we see that the physical addiction is often the easiest element of problem drinking to overcome. The psychological, emotional and behavioural “addictions” far more complicated and requiring far more time than the average de-tox.

Staff at Kairos come from a variety of professional backgrounds and we value the diversity such backgrounds bring to our work. Qualifications vary and include those related to Teaching and Learning, Counselling and Social Work/Social Care. We would welcome a generic and accredited course of training in the field of addictions, and would also like to retain the opportunity for staff with varied backgrounds to continue to bring their blend of skills and experience to the work.

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