

In response to your request for comments for the alcohol harm reduction strategy. Having read through the document I feel that the best way to respond is to give you an outline of our service and what it is that we do. This will cover the section on Health: prevention, treatment and the impact on the NHS.

Porchester Day Unit is part of Nottingham Alcohol and Drug Team, the statutory service in Nottingham, part of Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust.

We provide a service to those individuals with chronic, long term alcohol problems, who have traditionally found it difficult to access mainstream services. The unit is open seven days a week from 10-5 and accommodates around 25 people. Every client is allocated a keyworker who works with that client towards mutually agreed goals. We operate along cognitive behavioural lines and view alcohol as a life choice. It is up to the client to set their own goals and this may involve moderate drinking (at agreed limits which may be over the sensible limits), or abstinence (with or without Disulfiram). All clients are free to attend the unit as often as they feel is necessary and we do not set time limits for attendance either. Treatment options that we utilise centre around the client and their own plans re alcohol. The client decides whether they wish to control the way in which they drink or whether they wish to be abstinent. Even for individuals with physical complications associated with alcohol it is often unrealistic to expect them to be abstinent for the rest of their lives. Often a large part of our work centres around reducing the harm that alcohol causes; social, physical and psychological. We look at the amount of alcohol that is being drunk, the strength and the setting, and look at ways in which the client can alter their behaviour.

If the client wants to be abstinent then we will not immediately resort to medical detoxification. We will initially try to get the client to reduce their alcohol intake until they have stopped and then encourage regular attendance in order to maintain it. We are able to, in conjunction with a voluntary agency (Framework), offer a supervised alcohol detoxification using a reducing regime of alcohol, which we will utilise if the client is unable to reduce on their own. If personal circumstances/physical problems (eg history of DT's) prevent the client from doing either, then we will resort to medical detoxification; community based and supervised on a daily basis. We have access to four beds on our sister unit Porchester Ward, a specialist inpatient detoxification unit for both alcohol and illicit drugs, which we can use for those individuals that are that damaged that they cannot detox in any other way. Or for those people who have no intention of stopping drinking but need a break from drinking for harm reduction reasons, to avoid prolonged admissions to general medical wards. We are also able to offer a service to general medicine, whereby we take people that have been admitted to a general medical bed for the purpose of detoxification, but who do not need to be in hospital, we can offer community based detoxification via the day unit.

Therapies centre around social skills and include; cookery, gardening, art, pottery, woodwork etc. We are hoping to introduce cue exposure therapy and a controlled drinking programme.

I hope that this gives you a bit of an insight into what current treatments are on offer within the alcohol services in Nottingham. If you want further information I can be contacted by email, or normal mail.

Yours Sincerely

Richard Gray
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