

# Churches for Tunbridge Wells

## Tunbridge Wells Churches' Winter Shelter



An Ecumenical Christian Charity  
www.twchurches.org.uk

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# ALCOHOL & CONTROLLED DRUGS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Approved by Management Committee: December 2015

Date of Review: December 2017

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a drug and alcohol free environment within the shelter in order to protect the wellbeing of guests, volunteers, visitors and staff.

### **1. Policy on Use of Alcohol and Drugs**

#### Upon arrival at the venue

- Guests deemed unmanageable due to being drunk or under the influence of controlled drugs are not to enter the premises.
- Volunteers are not to be under the influence of drink or controlled drugs when arriving for their shift.
- Alcohol or controlled drugs must not be carried onto the premises by any guest, volunteer, visitor or paid staff.
- If a guest is taking, for example, methadone, then they may be allowed to keep this on their person for controlled use. This must have been noted at referral and confirmed by a GP so there are no surprises.
- If handed in by a guest on arrival, the Team Leader at TWCWS can look after **unopened** bottles or tins of alcoholic drinks for guests overnight. These will be clearly labelled with the guest's name by the Team Leader.

#### Inside the shelter

- Alcohol or controlled drugs must not be consumed on the premises by any guest, volunteer, visitor or paid staff.
- In RARE circumstances, discussed and agreed by staff and Church Co-ordinators, some guests may take a controlled drug, so as not to have withdrawal fits or blackouts.
- Anyone found dealing drugs will be barred from TWCWS and asked to leave immediately.
- Smoking is not permitted inside any building.

### **2. Possible Examples of this Policy Being Broken**

- A guest takes a controlled drug in the toilet at a TWCWS venue.
- A guest drinks alcohol in bed at night.
- A guest smokes cigarettes at night within the building.

### **3. Procedure to be Taken if Policy is Breached**

#### **Procedure for admitting intoxicated guests**

- If a guest arrives and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or a controlled drug, the Team Leader will make a decision on whether the guest can be admitted. This decision must be based on level of drunkenness, perceived risk and previous experience of the individual. This may result in guests saying they are being treated differently, which in some cases will be true if we are individually assessing risk. If a decision is made that the guest cannot be admitted they will be asked to go away for

an hour or so and return when less intoxicated. This must still be before the 8.30pm cut off time for admissions.

- Argument, abuse and threats will be tolerated at this stage to a reasonable level acknowledging that this is the alcohol speaking.
- When the guest returns, before 8.30pm, the Team Leader will decide if the guest is okay to be admitted.
- If guest is admitted there is to be no further comment to them on their condition.
- If the Team Leader still believes that the guest should not be admitted they can be asked to return still later, if time allows OR be refused entry for the night and sleeping bag offered.

#### **Procedure for alcohol/drugs found in the shelter**

- If you see or suspect use of alcohol /drugs, politely, and almost routinely, ask for them to be handed over (alcohol will be returned in the morning, drugs or kit straight to sharps box).
- If the person is reluctant to hand over drink or drugs take them to one side, away from the group to reduce the risk of conflict, be firm but polite and reinforce how welcome they are but the stuff must be handed over.
- If the person is still reluctant to comply then use some of the 'guidelines for dealing with an incident', keep the guest away from others if possible and take as long as you need to resolve it.
- As a very last resort, non compliance would mean they have to leave.
- Discuss the incident with the guest the next day at an appropriate level; don't tell them off, but try and get their support.

#### **Timing of the implementation of a ban**

- A Team Leader may decide to exclude a guest from the shelter in the evening. Depending on how settled into the premises the guest in question is that night and what stage of the evening it is, the Team Leader may, however, decide to discuss a further ban of the guest the following morning. This is up to the Team Leader's discretion, and s/he should call the Project Manager to discuss the situation. It may be more disruptive and potentially irresponsible to remove the person from the church that night, depending on what kind of state they are in at that time and the weather conditions outside.

#### ***4. Communication of TWCWS Alcohol & Controlled Drugs Policy and Procedure to Guests and Volunteers***

- Guests will be clearly advised of the policy by the Project Manager or Referring Agency before entering the Shelter.
- Guidelines are contained within the wording of the TWCWS Guest Agreement that all guests have to sign as a condition of accessing the project.
- New volunteers should be informed of the policy (and directed to it in the Winter Shelter Reference File) at briefing meetings before the shelter opens that night.
- If anyone is excluded from TWCWS as a result of breaching the policy, all Team Leaders will be informed by the Project Manager. In particular, the church responsible for that/the following night must be informed with immediate effect.