

# Introduction



The team at Ashley House understands the range of difficulties you may face when using drugs, and the journey towards a stable lifestyle.

Ashley House staff aim to support you in many aspects of your life and will also help you if you decide to stop using.

This booklet will advise you of the type of things Ashley house can help you with.

There are a number of services available:

- Advice and treatment
- Aftercare and support to help you stay drug free
- Help finding training/education/volunteer and employment opportunities
- Health advice and support packages to keep you well.

**We want to support you throughout your journey.**

**If you have any questions we haven't answered in this booklet please call Ashley House on 0845 601 1500.**

# 1. User Group



The best people to ask about the quality and types of services needed, are the people who use the services. At Ashley House there are regular meetings for the Halton User Group (Hug) with the opportunity to get involved in the services offered, access to personal development training and computer facilities.

Members of the user group support each other through their journey.

You can get in touch with the user group by telephoning Ashley House and asking to speak to the service user group, or look out for details of the group and the fortnightly meetings/events on the notice board.

If you have any suggestions about the services at Ashley House there is a suggestion box for your use in the waiting area. The service user group check this box regularly and will act on your behalf.

Your voice is important. It is what helps to keep Ashley House providing a first class service.

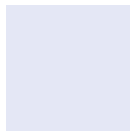
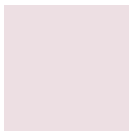
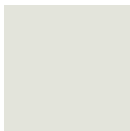
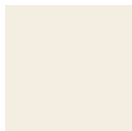
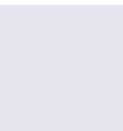
## 2. Family Support and CAF



At Ashley House we really understand the impact that drugs can have on your family, friends and others who are significant in your life.

We offer support to parents, partners and children that aims to lessen the impact of drug use on the people in your life that are important to you.

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) helps to support children, young people and their parents. It looks at strengths as well as needs, and can help you find appropriate services in your local area for you and your children.



### 3. Carers



You may have someone who is helping you. They could be a parent, partner or a child who might also need some advice and support. It maybe that you are caring for someone. Either way staff at Ashley House can help you work out what services would be helpful in your situation.

We will need to discuss:

- what help the person you care for needs
- the care you are giving at the moment
- the services already being received.

The way that this is done is called an 'assessment'. Carers assessments are designed to identify ways of making things easier for you and the person you care for.

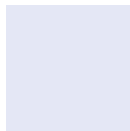
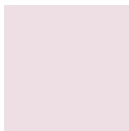
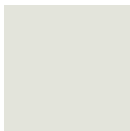
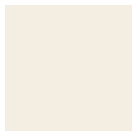
As with all the other services provided, your confidentiality will be respected if your carer decides to come to Ashley House.

## 4. Law



You may find yourself in trouble with the law or avoiding court orders, warrants or fines etc. At Ashley House, we can help you obtain legal advice or information. Ashley House aims to support you so that you can move away from the cycle of drugs, crime and prison.

Don't let being in trouble with the law get in the way of accessing the help you need.



## 5. Housing and Welfare

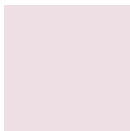
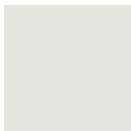
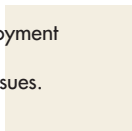
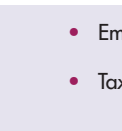


If you have a housing issue or want advice about benefit payments just ask, we may be able to help or we can put you in touch with somebody who could to act on your behalf with legal issues such as housing or evictions.

The benefits bus makes regular visits to Ashley House, and is there to help you get the right benefits. Check out the notice board for details of dates/times.

We can also help you to get general support and practical help with a range of:

- Debt
- Benefits
- Consumer
- Immigration
- Employment
- Tax Issues.



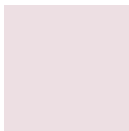
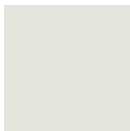
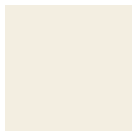
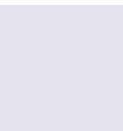
## 6. Detox and Rehab



When you are ready to make changes to your drug and/or your alcohol use, we can look at the options available to you such as becoming stable or drug free. There are a number of ways that we can help.

We will offer complimentary therapies before, during and after detox.

- Detoxification and support at home
- Organise referral to an inpatient detoxification unit
- Arrange a residential stay in a rehabilitation centre
- If you feel you would benefit from going to a residential centre for rehabilitation, (this is normally for 3-6 months) speak to the staff at Ashley House.



## 7. Oral Hygiene



Any drug use can have an affect on your teeth. Methadone is a painkiller that can mask toothache, it can also contain high levels of syrup which can cause plaque.

Some helpful advice:

- Cut down on sugary foods and sweets
  - If prescribed Methadone, ask for sugar free (staff at Ashley House can arrange this)
  - Clean your teeth morning and night
  - Never use anyone else's toothbrush
  - Don't let anyone use your toothbrush
  - Find a dentist and visit them regularly.
- } There is a risk of infection if you share

### **Emergency dental treatment is available at:**

Runcorn NHS Dental Access Centre, Unit 67-68, Town Walk Halton Lea, Runcorn

### **Telephone:**

01928 716254. You need to ring at 9am for an appointment.

## 8. Blood Borne Viruses



Those who inject, have unprotected sex or snort drugs are more at risk of blood borne viruses. There are ways of reducing the risk. Make sure you don't share equipment to inject, smoke or snort drugs. Don't have sex without a condom.

Clean works and sharps bins are available from Ashley House, the outreach team and a number of pharmacies in the area.

Think about the place you are preparing your hit. Has anyone cooked up before you? Could there be a risk? Always ensure your injection site is clean by using an alcohol swab or other cleaning methods.

Always use protection for sex - blood borne viruses can be found in bodily fluids such as semen or vaginal fluids. There can be a small risk with oral sex too, so think about using a condom or dental dams. These are available from Ashley House, Sexual Health Clinic or your local Pharmacy.

Many drugs users are infected with hepatitis C and do not know. We can arrange for you to be tested for hepatitis C and/or HIV, and whether the result is positive or negative we can help you make positive changes to your lifestyle to protect yourself and others.

Vaccinations and screenings are available at Ashley House.

# 9. Injecting



You can run into problems if you are injecting drugs, such as collapsed veins, deep vein thrombosis and abscesses.

Remember:

- It **won't** affect your script if you tell staff at Ashley House that you are injecting
- If you have pain it means something is wrong - get it checked out as soon as possible
- Try to avoid the neck or groin for injecting
- Don't inject in the same area all the time
- Don't skin pop, it can cause infection
- Don't re-use equipment - clean sterile equipment is readily available
- Always dispose of your used works in a sharps bin and return it to the Outreach team, Ashley House or your local Pharmacy
- Ask the staff at Ashley House if you are unsure about the condition of your veins
- If there is an emergency dial 999.

# 10. overdose



Many drug users die every year from drug overdose. Often it's those who have just detoxed, long term users or those released from prison that are most at risk.

Be aware:

- Tolerance to drugs drops quickly
- You can't safely go back to using the same amounts right away
- Don't mix your drugs, this includes alcohol
- Smoke rather than inject your drugs
- Don't use alone or in places where it might be difficult to get help if you need it
- If you or someone you're with overdoses - get help immediately
- Get some overdose training; this is available through Ashley House.

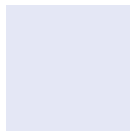
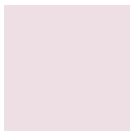
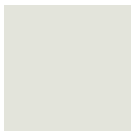
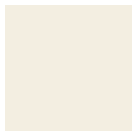
# 11. Stimulant Use



If you are using stimulants such as amphetamine (speed), cocaine or crack, problems can occur with your physical health and/or how you are feeling emotionally. This can include paranoia and depression.

Try not to mix your stimulant drugs with alcohol, as with any drug use this can produce a lethal combination in the body, which may lead to serious health problems. Remember not to share snorting equipment because of the risk of blood borne viruses. **Don't forget, it is** possible to overdose using stimulants.

If you are using stimulants, help is available at Ashley House. This will enable you to look after yourself. The staff will advise you about diet, equipment use and other helpful tips.



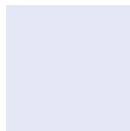
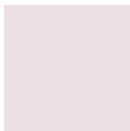
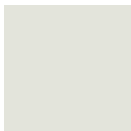
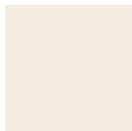
## 12. Contraception



Remember, if you are using drugs and your periods have stopped, you can still become pregnant. Support is available at Ashley House if you need to talk about contraception, unplanned pregnancy or general advice with pregnancy.

Remember:

- Oral contraception such as the pill or injectable contraceptives do not prevent sexually transmitted infections
- Condoms help to protect you from most sexually transmitted infections, these are available free from Ashley House or the outreach team
- Always use a condom or Femidom for penetrative sex.



# 13. Alcohol



If your alcohol use is becoming a problem we can help you - there are staff at Ashley House who can advise you about alcohol use and can also help with detox or cutting down the amount you drink.

Alcohol is a drug, and like most other drugs you can become physically or psychologically dependent on it.

**It will increase your chance of overdose if mixed with other drugs.**

It can make you more likely to be at risk of crime.

Committing or being a victim of crime.

If you have Hepatitis C or chronic Hepatitis B you should avoid using alcohol as it can make you more likely to suffer liver damage in the long term.

There are different daily recommended alcohol units for both men and women. To find out further information telephone or call into Ashley House and speak to a member of staff.

# 14. Safe Storage and Medication



Many children are hospitalised each year because they swallow toxic substances found around the home. For many children these brightly coloured liquids and pills can look like sweets and just by telling a youngster not to touch doesn't guarantee they won't.

Here are some tips and hints for you to reduce the risk to children:

- Lock away harmful substances such as medication. Don't keep medicines in the fridge for small hands to reach
- Never put your methadone in a different container, always keep methadone in the bottle provided
- Safely put away medication as soon as it has been taken. Always keep medication in its original container
- If you have unused medication or any medication which has passed its expiry date, take it to your local pharmacist who can dispose of it safely – do not put it in household refuse
- If you have empty medication bottles wash them, remove the labels and take to the local recycling point
- Never tell children that medicines are sweets or soft drinks
- Don't allow children to play with medication bottles even if they have 'child proof' lids. They are not 100% child proof
- Lock away any drugs and paraphernalia that you have used or are likely to use
- Dispose of any syringes and needles in sharps boxes as soon as they have been used.

# 15. Education, Training and Volunteering



It could be that you are ready to find work or a new job, train and learn new skills or spend time helping others.

At Ashley House we can help you to;

- Get the training you may need
- Apply for full time or part time education courses
- Get support with writing your cv and job applications
- Start your work experience through volunteering opportunities.

Talk to the staff at Ashley House about what you would like to do and they will help you move towards your goals.

