

Some Advice for Alcohol and Drug Users as Lockdown Restrictions Ease

Canolfan Gymraeg am Weithredu ar Ddibyniaeth

WCADA

Welsh Centre for Action on Dependency and Addiction

Inspiring Change  Achieving Potential



The last few months have been challenging for many people. The Covid-19 pandemic has been the source of much disruption, change and in the worst cases loss for individuals and communities across the world. We have been forced to lead more socially isolated lives by having to distance ourselves from our families, friends, neighbours and colleagues. There have been restrictions on when we go out, who we go with and where we go. This has been incredibly difficult for some and caused anxiety and stress.

If you are struggling with problematic substance use there could have been further complications such as being unable to source your drug of choice, using different substances as a substitute and/or difficulties in accessing the support you usually receive.

In the coming weeks some of the above measures are in the process of being relaxed and whereas this may give us an impression of 'returning to normality', it also comes with its own set of issues. Whilst shops are opening and services are starting to be resumed, there are still many precautions that we need to take.

We have put together a list of some hints and tips which may help you and your loved ones to stay as safe as possible.

Tolerance

If you have switched, reduced or stopped your substance use throughout this time, remember your tolerance may have dropped and you may not need the same amount to get the effect you are looking for. This is extremely important with all substances but particularly with opiates. Ensure you have a Prenoxad/Naloxone kit with you at all times and your friends/family know what to do should you overdose. If you are an IV user, try smoking your heroin for a while to gauge the strength of the substance.

Testing

If you have been engaging in practices such as unsafe sex or sharing drug using equipment, it is worth getting tested for blood borne viruses and other sexually transmitted infections. Contact your local alcohol and drug treatment agency for more information about how to do this. You will receive pre and post testing support throughout the process.

Continue to protect yourself

Practising good hygiene is important for your physical and mental health regardless of the pandemic. If you have increased the frequency of washing your hands or use antibacterial gel, continuing to do this will not do you any harm. If you do not have access to facilities which allow you to do this, contact your local alcohol and drug treatment agency as they may be able to help you and offer you some means to enable you to do this. Remember if you are injecting substances it could reduce the risk of serious infection, amputations or even death.

www.WCADA.org

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Do a drinking audit

Many individuals who have no prior experience of problematic alcohol use have disclosed that their alcohol use has dramatically increased during this period of enforced isolation. If you think there has been an increase in your drinking habits or if you think now may be a good time to get advice about an existing drinking pattern, please contact your local alcohol and drug treatment agency. We have provided contact details at the end of this leaflet.

Self-care

We have experienced a world crisis which has not been seen for generations. It has been and may continue to be a difficult time for all of us for a while yet. Ensure you are continuing to practice self-care by getting the help you need. Treat yourself to something you enjoy when you have coped well. Continue to speak to friends, family and support networks as you need to and remember, we all need a helping hand at some time.

AADAS

AADAS is a specialist alcohol and substance misuse service for people aged 18 and over. AADAS offers a single point of access for assessments, information and advice about alcohol and drug abuse for people concerned about their misuse. Following an assessment, AADAS can then refer cases to nearby specialist agencies, such as WCADA, for longer term support.

Swansea	01792 530719
Neath Port Talbot	01639 862872
Bridgend	01656 667717 (option 2)

Support available from WCADA

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had to reduce face-to-face contact with members of the public. However, we are still facilitating Needle Exchange and providing telephone support and are now operating at our original opening times:

Monday - Friday: 9am - 5pm

You can contact our agencies on the below numbers:

Swansea WCADA:	01792 472519
Neath WCADA:	01639 633630
Port Talbot WCADA:	01639 890863
Bridgend WCADA:	01656 667717

If you require support outside of these hours, please contact:



Wales Drug and Alcohol Helpline, DAN 24/7

Telephone 0808 808 2234
Or
Text DAN to 81066

Dan 24/7 is a free and confidential drugs helpline. Calls from public telephone boxes are free of charge: calls from a mobile phone may incur a charge from your network.

Dan 24/7 telephone number will NOT appear on your home itemised bill.

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