LSCP
Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Harm Reduction Tool

Reducing the risk of harm to children in your household
Advice for parents who use drugs or alcohol



2025 Edition



Medication



Always store any medication in the bottle or box in which it was originally dispensed and make sure it is clearly labelled.

Medication should be kept out of reach of children in a high cupboard with child proof locks. Remember, children grow and like to climb and pull things down. Consider how medication that needs to be stored in the fridge can be done so safely.

Do not have medication on your person, such as in a handbag. Should you need to have your medication with you when away from home, make sure it is in an appropriate child proof container.

Methadone bottles should be washed out after use and disposed of with the lid securely on.

For extra safety you can store your medication in a lockable “cash” box. If there are children in the household and you are accessing one of their services, Lincolnshire Recovery Partnership (LRP) will give you a free lockable safe storage box.

Medication should only be taken by the person for whom it is prescribed. It is dangerous and can be fatal for children to take medication not prescribed for them. If a child ingests your medication, you should seek immediate medical attention as this could be life threatening.

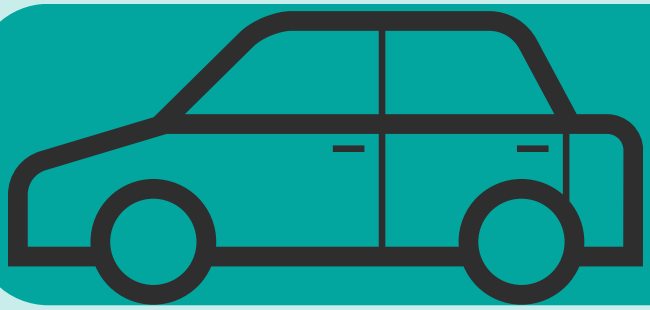
Tell children in a way that they will understand, not to touch or take anyone else’s medicine or medication.

In the event of accidental ingestion, seek immediate medical attention by calling an ambulance.

Paraphernalia

Whether or not you have children please:

- Store your drugs and equipment in a safe place out of the reach of children. Remember, children grow and like to climb.
- Make sure you have access to sterile injecting equipment from your local needle & syringe programme (NSP). Try to avoid reusing equipment as this can cause infections and damage to your skin/veins.
- Avoid sharing equipment, including spoons, water, snorting pipes and filters to reduce the risk of blood borne virus (BBV) transmission. You can get a free BBV test from LRP or can be requested through your GP.
- Dispose of all your equipment safely through a needle exchange program at your local pharmacy, LRP service or local council collection/drop off service.
- Safe disposal bins and sterile paraphernalia are widely available from pharmacies and LRP. LRP provides free, confidential, and non-judgemental NSPs across the county. You do not have to access treatment support to access an NSP.
- Naloxone can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. If you or someone in your household is using drugs it is important to have naloxone available so you can save someone's life in the event of an overdose. LRP provide free naloxone kits and training in person or through their online naloxone Click & Deliver service.



Driving

If you drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs you are placing your children, yourself, and other road users at risk. If you are unsure whether you can drive on your prescribed medication, then speak to your Recovery Worker, Prescriber or GP.

Drugs and Driving: The Law

It's illegal to drive if either:
·you're unfit to do so because you're on legal or illegal drugs
·you have certain levels of illegal drugs in your blood (even if they have not affected your driving)
Legal drugs are prescription or over-the-counter medicines. If you're taking them and not sure if you should drive, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or healthcare professional.
The police can stop you and make you do a 'field impairment assessment' if they think you are under the influence of drugs. This is a series of tests, for example asking you to walk in a straight line. They can also use a roadside drug kit to screen for cannabis and cocaine.
If they think you're unfit to drive because of taking drugs, you'll be arrested and will have to take a blood or urine test at a police station.
You could be charged with a crime if the test shows you've taken drugs.

Prescription Medicines

It's illegal in England, Scotland, and Wales to drive with legal drugs in your body if it impairs your driving.
It's an offence to drive if you have over the specified limits of certain drugs in your blood and you have not been prescribed them.
Talk to your doctor or prescriber about whether you should drive if you've been prescribed any of the following drugs:
·amphetamine, for example dexamphetamine or selegiline
·clonazepam
·diazepam
·flunitrazepam
·lorazepam
·methadone
·morphine or opiate and opioid-based drugs, for example codeine, tramadol, or fentanyl
·oxazepam
·temazepam
You can drive after taking these drugs if:
·you've been prescribed them and followed advice on how to take them by a healthcare professional
You could be prosecuted if you drive with certain levels of these drugs in your body and you have not been prescribed them.
More information can be found here: www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law

Alcohol and Driving: The Law

This section is taken from Police.UK

The legal alcohol limit in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for driving is 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood or 35 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath.

There is no way to know how much you can drink and stay under the limit, since it can depend on your weight, age, metabolism, the amount of food you've eaten and other factors.

It's impossible to get alcohol out of your system quickly, it always takes time. A shower, a cup of coffee or other ways of 'sobering up' may make you feel better but won't remove the alcohol from your system.

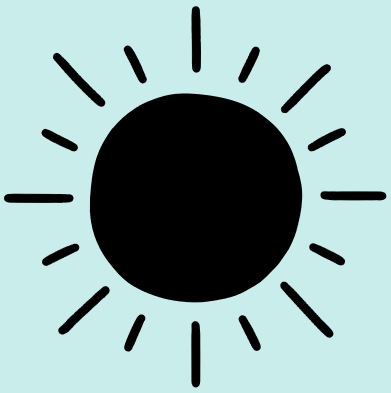
If you've been out drinking, you may still be affected by alcohol the next day and could lose your licence if you drive and are still over the legal limit.

Alcohol affects everyone differently and any amount can impair your ability to drive. The only safe option is to avoid alcohol completely if you're driving as even 'just one drink' could put you over the limit.

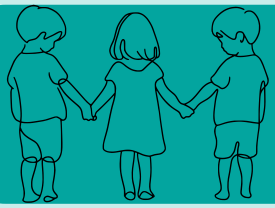
If you're driving, don't drink any alcohol at all.



Routines



- **Maintaining routines for children around sleeping, eating, going to school, and other activities is essential. It is also essential that they attend their health checks.**
- **It may be necessary to ask for the help of a close friend or family member to enable you to do this.**
- **For younger children it is important to access local play groups and nurseries. This can also give you a break.**
- **Advice and information are available from your health visitor, Children's Centres and Family Hubs. Your children's school, nursery or childcare provider may have information about local activities and after school clubs.**



Care of Children

- It is essential to ensure that your children are properly supervised while you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Don't use in front of children and not in the same house.

- If both you and your partner use drugs or alcohol, then you should arrange to use one at a time, so that one of you is always keeping an eye on the children.

- Leave a sufficient time delay between using so that one of you is always alert enough to look after and respond to the children.

- Make sure a responsible adult, that you know well, is around to care for the children whilst you are under the influence or withdrawing.

- Children need their parents and can be very sensitive to changes in your mood particularly when you are coming down or experiencing withdrawal. Plan ahead for these times to ensure that your ups and downs don't affect them.

- You should never give your baby or toddler your medication or drugs to soothe them. This is very dangerous. You should never transfer a dummy that has been in your mouth to the mouth of a baby.

- With older children, develop safety plans including who they should contact in an emergency. Have up to date telephone numbers available, including how to call an ambulance if necessary. Remember this is a big responsibility for children of any age.

- Think about who the children are coming into contact with. Children are more aware than you would think about what is going on around them which is worth remembering. You should never score, deal, or use when they are around.

- Don't leave your children with people you don't know as this can lead to abuse or other forms of harm.

zzZ Safer Sleeping

The safest place for a baby to sleep is in their own separate space such as a cot or moses basket free from toys, blankets and pillows. Many parents find themselves co-sleeping whether this is planned or unintentional due to falling asleep together. This means that their baby shares the same adult bed for most of the night, and not just to be comforted or fed. It is important for you to know that there are some circumstances in which this can be very dangerous.
You should never sleep together with your baby. It is especially dangerous if any of the points below apply to you, or even if you just feel very tired. You must be especially careful when giving feeds that you are not in a position where you could both fall asleep in the bed, an armchair or on the sofa together.

Unsafe bed sharing increases the chance of 'Sudden Infant Death Syndrome' (also known as SIDS) and accidental suffocation, and is particularly dangerous if:

• Either you or your partner smokes (even if you do not smoke in the bedroom)

• Either you or your partner has drunk alcohol

• Either you or your partner has taken drugs (including medications that may make you drowsy).

• Similarly, bed sharing with a baby of low birth weight (2.5kg or 5 ½ lbs. or less) or a premature baby (37 weeks or less) is strongly linked to a significantly increased likelihood of death (SIDS).

Please follow this link for more in-depth advice around safer sleeping
www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/co-sleeping/

Remember: It is normal for babies to cry but it can be stressful and sometimes it's hard to cope. Lincolnshire professionals support the ICON programme:

Infant crying is normal and it will stop

Comfort methods can sometimes soothe the baby and the crying will stop

Ok to walk away for a few minutes if you have checked the baby is safe and the crying is getting to you

Never ever shake or hurt a baby

Violence and Conflict

·Research shows that witnessing violence and conflict in the household is one of the most damaging things that can happen to children.

·Poorly resolved parental conflict places children's mental health and future development at risk.

·The impact of parental conflict can happen without the child being present to witness it, due to the impact on the parent-child relationship.

·Children won't feel safe if the adults in the home don't. Children will need reassurance about their safety – it's not just about being safe; it's about feeling safe.

·Further information, regarding seeking/getting help and support if you are experiencing domestic violence, is available from your case manager.

But my Kids Don't Know I Use...

·Research shows that from about four years of age, and often younger, children are aware of their parents' drinking and drug use.

·While you may protect your children from seeing you use drugs or drink, they are often very aware of conversations that you are having and other things that are going on in their home.

·They can also be particularly affected by changes in your mood.
·Children can often feel they need to 'look after' their parents. This can put a lot of pressure on them.

·Older children and young people have said that they would prefer that their parents were open with them about what they are doing. It can be difficult to find the words to do this. Simple, honest explanations are often best. It can help to talk this over with someone that you trust before approaching the subject with your children.

Help and Support in Lincolnshire

- If you are using drugs or alcohol, it can be very scary to ask for help because of fear of being 'found out' and people questioning your ability to look after your children.

- Parenting is not an easy task. Like many other parents, parents who use drugs and alcohol need extra support at times.

- Ensuring that there are people around who can help you and your children can make a real difference to them and you.

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Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adult Board