

Drug misuse prevention overview

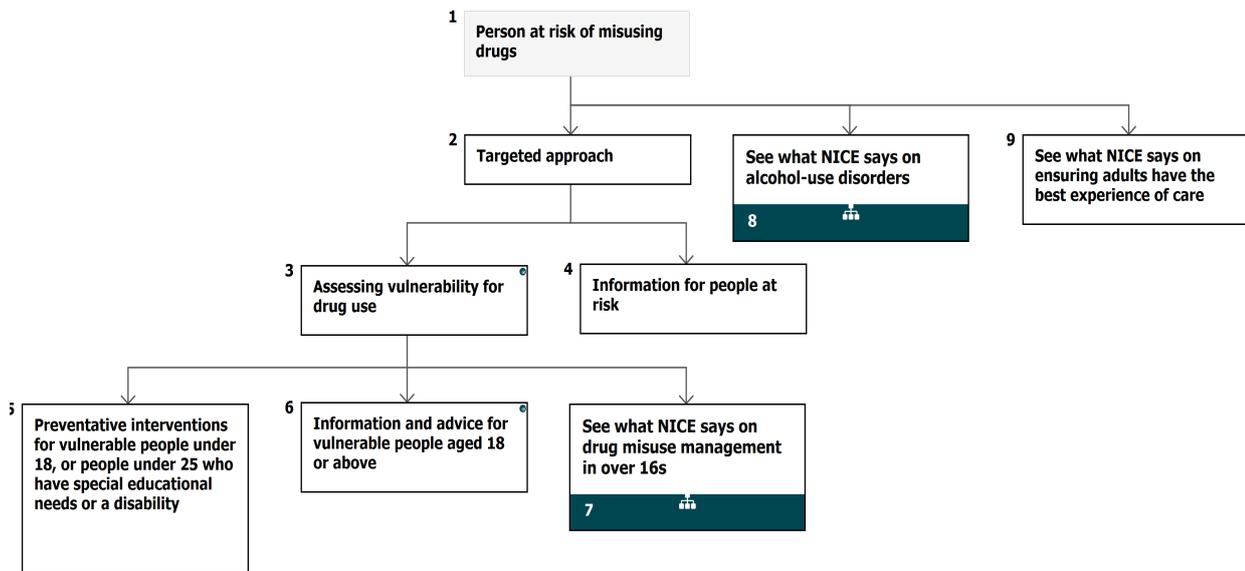
NICE Pathways bring together everything NICE says on a topic in an interactive flowchart. NICE Pathways are interactive and designed to be used online.

They are updated regularly as new NICE guidance is published. To view the latest version of this NICE Pathway see:

<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/drug-misuse-prevention>

NICE Pathway last updated: 28 March 2018

This document contains a single flowchart and uses numbering to link the boxes to the associated recommendations.



1 Person at risk of misusing drugs

No additional information

2 Targeted approach

Deliver drug misuse prevention activities for people in groups at risk [See page 8] through a range of existing services statutory, voluntary or private services, including:

- health services, such as primary care services, community-based health services, mental health services, sexual and reproductive health services, drug and alcohol services, and school nursing and health visiting services
- specialist services for people in groups at risk
- community-based criminal justice services, including adult, youth and family justice services
- accident and emergency services.

Ensure activities targeting groups at risk are consistent with any population-level (universal) activities aimed at preventing drug misuse.

3 Assessing vulnerability for drug use

At routine appointments and opportunistic contacts with statutory and other services such as those listed in targeted approach [See page 3], assess whether someone is vulnerable to drug misuse. Examples of routine appointments and opportunistic contacts include:

- health assessments for children and young people who are looked after or care leavers, including initial assessments, any reviews and contacts
- appointments with GP, nurses, school nurses or health visitors
- attendances at emergency departments as a result of alcohol or drug use
- contacts with the community-based criminal justice system.

Use a consistent, locally agreed approach to assessment that is respectful, non-judgemental and proportionate to the person's presenting vulnerabilities. For an example, see the practice standards for young people with substance misuse problems.

Discuss the person's circumstances, taking account of their age and developmental stage. The initial discussion could include:

- their physical and mental health and their personal, social, educational or employment circumstances (which may trigger a more in-depth assessment)
- any drug use (including the type used and how often).

If the person is already misusing drugs, see what NICE says on [drug misuse management in over 16s](#), [alcohol-use disorders](#), and [needle and syringe programmes](#).

Think about the immediate safety of the person being assessed and any people under their care, and whether any action is needed.

Discuss with the person what their priorities are and take into account how these might affect next steps or referral to other services.

Quality standards

The following quality statements are relevant to this part of the interactive flowchart.

1. Assessment of looked-after children and young people
2. Assessment of care leavers
3. Assessment of children and young people in contact with youth offending services

4 Information for people at risk

Consider providing information about drug use in settings that groups who use drugs or are at risk of using drugs may attend. These settings could include:

- nightclubs or festivals
- wider health services, such as sexual and reproductive health services or primary care
- supported accommodation or hostels for people without permanent accommodation
- gyms (to target people who are taking, or considering taking, image- and performance-enhancing drugs).

Consider providing information in different formats, including web-based information (such as digital and social media) and printed information (such as leaflets).

Consider providing information on:

- drugs and their effects (for example, [NHS Choices](#))

- local services and where to find further advice and support
- online self-assessment and feedback to help people assess their own drug use.

Ensure that information provided is in line with NICE's recommendations on [behaviour change](#) and [patient experience in adult NHS services](#).

5 Preventative interventions for vulnerable people under 18, or people under 25 who have special educational needs or a disability

General principles

Consider skills training for children and young people who are assessed as vulnerable to drug misuse. If skills training is delivered to children and young people, ensure that their carers or families also receive skills training. For older children and young people, think about whether providing information (see [information and advice for vulnerable adults \[See page 6\]](#)) may be a more appropriate approach.

Ensure any skills training is:

- commissioned as part of existing services (see [targeted approach \[See page 3\]](#))
- delivered as part of activities designed to increase resilience and reduce risk
- delivered by people competent to provide skills training.

Discuss and agree a plan for follow-up at the skills training sessions, to assess whether additional skills training or referral to specialist services is needed.

Tailoring skills training sessions

Take into account the age, developmental stage, presenting vulnerabilities, cultural context, religion, ethnicity and any other specific needs or preferences of the child or young person when deciding:

- whether to offer training sessions to children and young people and their carers or families together, or whether to offer separate sessions
- the content of the skills training
- whether to provide individual or group-based sessions
- the number of sessions needed (a minimum of 2 sessions should be offered)
- where to hold the sessions
- how long each session should last.

For more information, see the Department of Health's [quality criteria for young people friendly services](#).

Skills training for children and young people

If skills training is offered to children and young people and their carers or families, ensure it helps children and young people develop a range of personal and social skills, such as:

- listening
- conflict resolution
- refusal
- identifying and managing stress
- making decisions
- coping with criticism
- dealing with feelings of exclusion
- making healthy behaviour choices.

Ensure that personal and social skills training for children and young people who are looked after and care leavers put particular emphasis on how to deal with feelings of exclusion.

Skills training for parents and carers

If skills training is offered to children and young people and their carers and families, ensure that it helps carers and families develop a range of skills, such as:

- communication
- developing and maintaining healthy relationships
- conflict resolution
- problem-solving.

Ensure that skills training for foster carers includes using behaviour reinforcement strategies alongside the other skills listed.

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Information and advice for vulnerable people aged 18 or above

Offer adults who are assessed as vulnerable to drug misuse (see [assessment \[See page 3\]](#)) the following:

- clear information on drugs and their effects

- advice and feedback on any existing drug use
- information on local services and where to find further advice and support (see [information for people at risk \[See page 4\]](#)).

This information should be provided at the same time as the assessment.

Offer information and advice both verbally and in writing. Provide advice in a non-judgemental way and tailor it to the person's preferences, needs and level of understanding about their health. Ensure that information and advice is delivered in line with NICE's recommendations on [behaviour change](#) and [patient experience in adult NHS services](#).

Discuss and agree a plan for follow-up at the assessment, to determine whether additional information or referral to specialist services is needed.

Quality standards

The following quality statement is relevant to this part of the interactive flowchart.

4. Information and advice for adults

7 See what NICE says on drug misuse management in over 16s

[See Drug misuse management in over 16s](#)

8 See what NICE says on alcohol-use disorders

[See Alcohol-use disorders](#)

9 Patient and service user experience

See what NICE says on:

- [patient experience in adult NHS services](#)
- [service user experience in adult mental health services](#).

Groups at risk of drug misuse, including:

- people who have mental health problems
- people who are being sexually exploited or sexually assaulted
- people involved in commercial sex work
- people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender
- people not in employment, education or training (including children and young people who are excluded from school or who truant regularly)
- children and young people whose carers or families use drugs
- children and young people who are looked after or care leavers
- children and young people who are in contact with young offender teams but not in secure environments (prisons and young offender institutions)
- people who are considered homeless
- people who attend nightclubs and festivals
- people who are known to use drugs occasionally or recreationally.

Glossary

Care leavers

people aged 25 or under who have been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since age 14, and who were looked after by the local authority at school leaving age or after that date

Drug

any drug that is described in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016, as well as new psychoactive substances (often described as 'legal highs'), solvents, volatile substances, image- and performance-enhancing drugs, prescription-only medicines and over-the-counter medicines

Drugs

any drugs that are described in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016, as well as new psychoactive substances (often described as 'legal highs'), solvents, volatile substances, image- and performance-enhancing drugs, prescription-only medicines and over-the-counter medicines

Drug misuse

dependence on, or regular excessive consumption of, psychoactive substances, leading to physical, mental or social problems; it does not refer to occasional or experimental drug use

Drug use

dependence on, or regular excessive consumption of, psychoactive substances, leading to physical, mental or social problems; it does not refer to occasional or experimental drug use

Misusing drugs

being dependent on, or regularly making an excessive consumption of, psychoactive substances, leading to physical, mental or social problems; it does not include occasional or experimental drug use in adults

Misuse of drugs

being dependent on, or regularly making an excessive consumption of, psychoactive substances, leading to physical, mental or social problems; it does not include occasional or experimental drug use in adults

Foster carers

people who care for children and young people who are looked-after; this includes long-term care, emergency overnight care, and short-term care

Children and young people who are looked after

children and young people looked after by the state where the Children Act 1989 applies, including those who are subject to a care order or temporarily classed as looked after on a planned basis for short breaks or respite care; it includes residential care, foster care, or boarding school, or with birth parents other family or carers – children and young people who are in young offender or other secure institutions are not included in this definition, because this group is outside the scope of these recommendations

Prevent

prevent or delay drug use, prevent people who are already using some drugs from using other

drugs, and prevent people who already experiment or use drugs occasionally from using drugs regularly and excessively

Prevention

preventing or delaying drug use, preventing people who are already using some drugs from using other drugs, and preventing people who already experiment or use drugs occasionally from using drugs regularly and excessively

Skills training

the teaching of specific verbal and nonverbal behaviours (including personal and social skills) and the practising of these behaviours by the person receiving the training

Vulnerable to drug misuse

people who are vulnerable to drug use are those in multiple groups at risk, whose personal circumstances put them at increased risk, who may already be using drugs on an occasional basis or may already be regularly excessively consuming another substance, such as alcohol

Young people

people aged 10 to 18, as well as people aged up to 25 who have special educational needs or a disability (consistent with the Children and Families Act 2014)

Sources

[Drug misuse prevention: targeted interventions](#) (2017) NICE guideline NG64

Your responsibility

Guidelines

The recommendations in this guideline represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service. It is not

mandatory to apply the recommendations, and the guideline does not override the responsibility to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual, in consultation with them and their families and carers or guardian.

Local commissioners and providers of healthcare have a responsibility to enable the guideline to be applied when individual professionals and people using services wish to use it. They should do so in the context of local and national priorities for funding and developing services, and in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities. Nothing in this guideline should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with complying with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

Technology appraisals

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, health professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients. The application of the recommendations in this interactive flowchart is at the discretion of health professionals and their individual patients and do not override the responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or their carer or guardian.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to provide the funding required to enable the recommendations to be applied when individual health professionals and their patients wish to use it, in accordance with the NHS Constitution. They should do so in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

Medical technologies guidance, diagnostics guidance and interventional procedures guidance

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, healthcare professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account. However, the interactive flowchart does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to implement the recommendations, in their local context, in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Nothing in this interactive flowchart should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.