

Things to consider to keep people experiencing homelessness* safe



Medication for opioid users (e.g. methadone / buprenorphine)

Purpose:

To promote an open channel of communication between the Salvation Army and Change Grow Live teams.

The impact of coronavirus affects us all. More than ever, we need to work together to support the people who use our services, our staff and communities.

This is the first joint communication from The Salvation Army and Change Grow Live to discuss how we work with people experiencing homelessness who are on opioid medication assisted treatment (e.g. methadone / buprenorphine) during this time. Most people will now have had their prescriptions adjusted. This was done to guarantee ongoing supply of safe medication, and support people to keep themselves as safe as possible during a period of uncertainty. We recognise the potential issues this could present in a temporary accommodation setting, which is why people experiencing homelessness are our priority.

Over the coming weeks, we need to keep people as safe as possible, and provide any additional support they may need. We must continue to balance the importance of helping people stay safe and increase physical distancing, with the other risks relevant to that individual.

This is a challenging situation and a time for collaboration, to do things differently and think creatively about how we respond. These questions are to help you advocate in support of the people who use our services, make decisions about managing prescriptions and ultimately meet the needs of our community. An individual's preference, where appropriate, will always be taken into consideration when managing prescriptions.



We ask that the Change Grow Live team, including the prescribers, consider

- ▶ Has there been a recent history of overdose or attempted suicide?
- ▶ Are there any mental or physical health concerns?
- ▶ Are there any safeguarding concerns?
- ▶ How able is the individual to manage their own medication?
- ▶ How best can the individual store their medication?
- ▶ Is the individual in shared accommodation?
- ▶ Depending on the individual, is a daily, 2 or 3 day or a weekly prescription an option?



Things to consider for the temporary accommodation team

- ▶ Has there been a recent history of overdose or attempted suicide?
- ▶ How able are people to manage their own medication?
- ▶ Would people prefer daily, 2 or 3 day or weekly pick up?
- ▶ Can people pick up medication safely from the pharmacy?
- ▶ Are people able to safely store their own medication?
- ▶ Do people have a safe storage box in their room?
- ▶ Are emergency naloxone kits available?
- ▶ Do you feel confident using naloxone?

We would like you to tell us what you need. The situation is evolving, and our responses will change. If you have any concerns, requests or want to consider options, please contact your local Change Grow Live service. You might want to:

- ask a nurse to attend your service once a week to speak to staff and people that use our services
- request more safe storage boxes or naloxone kits
- arrange refresher naloxone training for the team and the people that use our services.

We will provide more information as things evolve, and to respond to your requests. We are working together to help you.

* homelessness includes people sleeping rough and people in temporary accommodation e.g. hostels, refuges, temporary arrangements with friends/family, B&Bs, night shelters and Housing First.