

Narcotics Search Dog Teams

Patient information leaflet



Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust employs two narcotics search dog teams who make planned and unannounced visits to wards and departments. They can also search outside areas.

Why does the Trust have narcotics search dogs?

The Trust aims to create a safe environment for patients, visitors and staff. It is hoped that improved narcotics detection rates will lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour and reduce violence and aggression.

What do the dog teams search for?

The search dogs are fully trained and can locate illegal substances such as:

- Cannabis resin
- Herbal cannabis
- Heroin
- Cocaine
- Crack cocaine
- Amphetamine sulphate
- Ecstasy

When a substance is found the dogs are trained to freeze and indicate at the location.

What happens when the dog teams find substances?

If substances are found the dog handlers will take a photograph of them where they were found. They will be seized by the dog handler/ward staff and stored safely.

The ward manager and Northumbria Police will decide what action to take.

What happens during a search?

Consent

Consent should always be sought before a personal search, or a search of a personal possessions is attempted.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary for a search of a detained patient and/or their possessions to take place without their consent. This will be fully explained at the point of search.

Safeguarding and inclusivity

Please tell a member of staff if you have any dog related allergies.

If you have any religious needs regarding the search dog team, please explain to staff who will be able to help meet them.

For safeguarding purposes all searches by dog teams will be recorded with a body worn camera.

Search of individual's room and belongings

You will be escorted to your room where the search process will be explained. You will be invited to watch from outside of the room whilst the risk assessment and search is conducted. You will then be invited to inspect your room following the search.

Search of multiple rooms and areas

During this type of search patients will be asked to wait in a specified area until after the search is completed.

Personal body search

If it is thought that a patient has narcotics on their person the Trust search procedure will be followed. Ward staff will explain the process, they will conduct the search and inform you of your rights.

Therapeutic visits - Pets as Therapy (PAT)

The search dog teams may be able to visit in their other role as Pets as Therapy dogs (PAT). They can conduct activities that encourage engagement and promote wellbeing which include, but are not limited to, walking, grooming, play, companionship etc. This can be conducted with groups or on an individual basis.

* Please note that this will be dependent on availability as search duties will take priority*

Contact details

Email: Searchdoghandler@cntw.nhs.uk

Telephone the switchboard at St Nicholas Hospital on 0191 246 6800 who will provide contact details for the duty dog handler.



John McCarroll
and Sid



Sue Madsen
and Flash

Further information about the content, reference sources or production of this leaflet can be obtained from the Patient Information Centre. If you would like to tell us what you think about this leaflet please get in touch.

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Tel: 0191 246 7288

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