

# Narcotics Search Dogs

Patient information leaflet



## **Narcotics search dogs and dog handlers**

Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust employs two narcotics search dogs and two dog handlers 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 narcotics search dogs look 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 the search dogs find illegal substances they are trained to freeze and stare at the location.

## **What happens during a search?**

### **Consent**

Your consent should always be sought before a personal search, or a search of your possessions is attempted.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary for a search of a detained patient or their possessions to take place without their consent. This will be fully explained with you at the point of search. A search will only take place for informal patients based on consent being given.

## **Individual search**

You will be escorted to your room and will be body searched by a same sex member of staff. You will then be asked to stand outside of your room until a risk assessment has taken place. You will then be asked to inspect your room.

## **Communal search**

During a communal search patients will be asked to wait in a communal room until after the search is completed.

## **Personal body search**

If it is thought that a patient has drugs on their person the Trust's Search Procedure will be followed. A member of staff will inform you of your rights.

Please tell a member of staff if you have an allergy to pet hair.

If you have particular religious needs following the visit of the narcotics search dog then staff will be able to help you meet them.

## **What happens if the narcotics search dog finds drugs?**

If drugs are found the dog handlers will take a photograph of the drugs where they were found. The drugs will be seized by the dog handler and stored safely.

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

## **Therapeutic visits Pets as Therapy (PAT)**

The narcotics search dogs can also visit you in their other role as Pets As Therapy dogs (PAT). You can request a visit through your ward manager and get involved in activities such as walking, grooming and generally enjoying the company of a dog.

## Dog Agility

One of the Trust dog handlers also owns other dogs who take part in agility; you may have seen this on television. The dog enjoys jumping over and running through brightly coloured obstacle courses. If you and other patients on your ward are interested in this activity, which is normally a group activity, ask your ward manager or activities co-ordinator to contact us.

## Contact details

Please ask your ward manager to get in touch with the narcotics search dog handlers:



John McCarroll  
and Sidney  
Tel: 07929 794 613



John Ashworth,  
Coco and Jasper  
Tel: 07880 513 436

Email: [Searchdoghandler@cntw.nhs.uk](mailto:Searchdoghandler@cntw.nhs.uk)

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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