



## Information About Our Service

### Frequently asked Questions

This leaflet tries to answer some of the most common questions that we are asked. If your question isn't answered here then please speak to a staff member.

#### Is the service open to anyone?

DNA offers its services to young people aged 14 to 25, who live, work or study in the borough of Croydon, whatever their gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability or religion.

#### What does the agency offer?

DNA offers counselling sessions and support sessions. Counselling is when you talk to a trained listener about any worries or difficulties you may have including your drug or alcohol use. You will not be given advice or told what to do. Your counsellor will offer you support so that you can reach your own decisions. Support sessions are for those who have recently stopped or are trying to stop using drugs or alcohol. Sessions are available by appointment.

#### How long is a session?

Sessions are 50 minutes.

#### How much does it cost?

All of our services are free.

#### Do my parents, teachers, family or friends have to know?

No one needs to know that you are visiting DNA.

#### What if I am under 16?

If you are under 16 we may need to ask your parents if they agree to you coming to talk with us if your counsellor believes that you are not able to take responsibility for your own decisions or if your counsellor believes you are at risk of serious harm.

Your counsellor will discuss this with you at your initial meeting. ***This meeting will***

#### Do I have to give my address and telephone number?

Yes. We ask for your telephone number so that we can contact you if, for example, your counsellor is unwell. We ask for your address so that we can write to you if, for example, you have missed a session and we have not been able to contact you by phone. We will however only write to you if you have told us it is okay to do so.

We also collect statistical information like age, gender, postcode, racial group and drug of use, which we need to enter on a database and submit on a monthly basis to the NDTMS, we will ask your permission for your details to be entered on this database.

#### How confidential is your service?

We keep what you tell us confidential to the agency. Basically, this means that your counsellor will not tell anyone what you talk about together. However, all counsellors talk about their work with a supervisor, who makes sure that the counsellor is working effectively. Occasionally, a counsellor may also need to speak to someone else within the agency, such as the Counselling Coordinator.

#### Are there any exceptions to this?

In the following circumstances, we may *have* to talk with someone else:

- If either you or someone else seems at risk of serious harm
- In an emergency situation
- If ordered to by a court of law

We would always try to talk to you about this first.

#### What happens if I see my counsellor outside of the agency?

Your counsellor will only greet you if you say hello first. Your counsellor will not stop for a chat.

#### How long can I see a counsellor?

You may want a few sessions of counselling, or you may want to attend for several weeks or months. This can be discussed with your counsellor and agreed between you.

**What happens when I reach my 26<sup>th</sup> birthday?**

Unfortunately the service is only available for people up to the age of 26. If your 26<sup>th</sup> birthday is approaching then talk to your counsellor and they will help you to think about other places to get support when you can no longer use our service.

**What if I want to stop coming to DNA or change my counsellor?**

If you want to stop after a few sessions or to change counsellor this is fine but it is helpful to try to discuss this with your counsellor rather than missing sessions. If you feel unable to discuss issues directly with your counsellor you can contact the Project Co-ordinator on 0208 296 9655. However decisions about whether or not to continue are yours.

**What if I arrive late for my appointment?**

Your counsellor will arrange to meet you at an agreed time each week, keeping a 50 minute time slot free for you. If you arrive late you will still be able to see your counsellor but the session will still need to finish at the end of the allocated 50 minute time slot.

**What if I miss a session?**

Please try to let us know in advance if you need to cancel. If we have not heard from you, we will either write or telephone confirming the time and date of your next appointment or whether you have decided to end counselling. If after a two week period we have not heard from you and have not been able to make contact with you, your session time will be given to someone else. However, you are welcome to make another appointment at any time.

**What should I do if I am unhappy with the service?**

DNA welcomes feedback from those who use the service. In our reception area there is a comments box for you to let us know what you think. However if you have a more serious complaint then DNA has a formal complaints procedure. Copies of this are available in the waiting and counselling rooms or through talking to the Project Co-ordinator. Please don't be afraid to raise any concerns - these will be treated seriously.

**When is the service open?**

The office is open Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 5.30pm. You can contact by phone during those hours for information and to make an appointment. Appointments for counselling can take place both during the day and evening.

**Who can I speak to in a crisis?**

Most of our counsellors work here part time so may not be available outside your appointment time. If this is the case and you need to talk to someone immediately, then you can either contact the agency for information about other services or contact one of the 24 hour helplines listed below.

<u>24 Hour Helpline Numbers</u>	
<b>Talk to Frank (Previously National Drugs Helpline)</b>	<b>0800 776600</b>
<b>Drinkline Youth</b>	<b>0800 917 8282</b>
<b>Childline</b>	<b>0800 1111</b>
<b>Samaritans</b>	<b>0345 909090</b>

DNA @ "Off The Record" Youth Counselling.  
Registered Charity No. 1051144. Registered Company No. 2987817  
Registered Office - 72 Queens Road, Croydon, Surrey. CR0 2PR