Management and Treatment Guidelines for Acute Alcohol Withdrawal Policy

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**Abbreviations:**

ALN: Alcohol Liaison Nurse

ARBD: Alcohol Related Brain Damage – an umbrella term for various psycho-neurological / cognitive conditions that are associated with long term alcohol misuse and related vitamin deficiencies. At one extreme is the classical presentation of Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome and at the ‘milder’ end subtle frontal lobe dysfunction.

AWS: Alcohol Withdrawal Syndrome

DTs: Delirium Tremens

CDZ: Chlordiazepoxide

**Screening / assessment tools:**

AUDIT: Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (appendix 3). A simple tool used to detect alcohol problems experienced within the last year. The test contains 10 multiple choice questions on quantity and frequency of alcohol consumption, dependence and alcohol-related problems.

CIWA-Ar: Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment of Alcohol Scale, Revised (appendix 4) is a guide to measuring the severity of alcohol withdrawal symptoms and in turn affords some guidance to the amount of benzodiazepine to give.

PAT: Paddington Alcohol Test (appendix 2) is a pragmatic screening tool for identifying alcohol-related problems in A and E attenders and those in hospital beds. PAT is non-judgemental, enabling patients to develop insight into their drinking, its cause and effect.

SADQ: The Severity of Alcohol Dependence Questionnaire (appendix 5) is a self-administered, 20-item questionnaire designed by the World Health Organisation to measure severity of dependence on alcohol. It can be useful as an indicator of how severe potential withdrawals may be and give guidance on starting doses of detox medication.
Terms:

**Symptom-triggered detoxification**: treatment is tailored to the patient’s requirements as determined by the severity of their withdrawal signs and symptoms.

**Fixed dose detoxification**: regimens start with a standard dose, which is then reduced over several days. Most include an “as required” option to treat breakthrough symptoms.

**High risk drinking**: males consuming more than 50 and females more than 35 units of alcohol / week on a regular basis

**Dependence**: A cluster of physiological, behavioural, and cognitive phenomena in which the use of a substance or a class of substances takes on a much higher priority for a given individual than other behaviours that once had greater value. Neuro-adaptation leads to tolerance (being able to consume larger amounts without intoxication) and withdrawal symptoms.
1. Introduction

Northern Ireland has a high prevalence of alcohol dependence and alcohol-related illness, with the Western Trust area having the highest proportion of individuals drinking above recommended daily drinking levels across the country. There were over 2000 admissions to the Trust's acute hospitals with a diagnosis of Alcohol Related Illness or with alcohol involvement (e.g. admitted with a trauma under the influence of alcohol) for the year 2013.

Most detoxifications from alcohol generally occur in the community (where patients in the Western Trust can be supported by an Alcohol Detox Nurse (ADN) working with the Alcohol and Drug Services). However there are individuals for whom community detoxification would pose a high risk of complications and hence require inpatient medical input (planned detoxes) and others who are admitted for an intercurrent illness and require detoxification medication due to being physically dependent on alcohol prior to admission (unplanned detox).

These guidelines outline who may require a detoxification as an inpatient and describes how to manage alcohol related detoxification and its potential complications in the hospital environment. They are derived from UK and international publications, being informed by both the available evidence base and by professional consensus where this is limited.

These guidelines refer to the treatment of individuals’ admitted to adult hospital beds. This can include anyone over the age of 14. For those under 18 it is important to consider an individual's size and level of development.

They are intended for use within the acute hospitals of this Trust, but may be used to help guide management in other clinical areas (guidelines are also available for supported community detox). It is important to remember that failure to consider alcohol misuse as an underlying diagnostic possibility may constitute negligence, whilst failure to identify and manage potentially serious withdrawal complications may lead to legal liability and awarding of damages.

In both Altnagelvin and SWAH, Alcohol Liaison Nurses (ALN) support the management of alcohol related disorders in both A and E and on the wards (available 9-5 Mon – Fri). Both work within the Alcohol and Drug Service and as well as managing addiction issues on the ward liaise with the wider Addictions team including the Alcohol Detox Nurse working in the community to facilitate transfer of patients both into and out of hospital.
2. **Goals of Guidelines:**

To minimise morbidity, mortality and patient distress through:

- Identification of alcohol-use disorders in hospital attendees
- Identification of sub-groups with, or at risk of, severe and potentially life threatening complications of alcohol misuse and withdrawal
- Prompt initiation of effective medical management for alcohol related conditions

3. **Alcohol Detoxification:**

Detoxification refers to a treatment designed to control the medical and psychological complications that may occur after a period of heavy and sustained alcohol use.

**NB** - Detox is more likely to be completed successfully and abstinence maintained if there is a period of preparation first and plans for aftercare are in place. Multiple and repeated detoxifications from alcohol are correlated with severe withdrawal symptoms (DTs, seizures, ARBD) and can therefore be harmful.

Many dependent patients manage their alcohol withdrawal symptoms every day with continued alcohol consumption and it is often appropriate for them to continue with this until they can be assessed formally by addiction services to determine the best treatment for their alcohol dependence. For people attending A and E who are alcohol dependent but do not require admission to hospital (see below), offer advice to avoid a sudden reduction in alcohol intake and provide an appointment with the ALN and / or information about how to contact local alcohol support services (see Appendix 10).

3.1 **Need for detox:**

Detoxification prescribing / pharmacotherapy **is** likely to be required for:

- patients drinking in a continuous pattern and showing symptoms and signs of a dependence on alcohol
- patients regularly drinking over 15 units of alcohol per day and / or who score 15 or more on the AUDIT / SADQ
Patients in groups below may not need medication for detox:

- patients with high risk but non-continuous alcohol use and / or low level dependence
- no recent withdrawal symptoms or recent drinking to prevent withdrawal symptoms
- no alcohol on breath test and no withdrawal signs / symptoms
- binge / periodic drinkers whose last bout was < 1 week long
- typical consumption < 15u /day
- drinking pattern 3-4 days / week only
- recent detox within last 2/52
- AUDIT < 15
- SADQ <15

3.2 Need for hospital detox:

Consider the need for hospital detoxification if any of the below factors:

- Absolute indications / urgent admission required:
  - Acutely confused state / hallucinating / severe tremor and autonomic disturbance (probable delirium tremens)
  - Any symptoms of confusion / ataxia / nystagmus / ocular palsies / hypotension and hypothermia / reduced conscious level (potential Wernicke’s encephalopathy)
  - Following or in withdrawal seizure
  - Current suicide risk

- Consider strongly:
  - Persistent vomiting so as to be unable to sustain regular oral intake / severe diarrhoea
  - Signs of malnutrition / BMI < 18.5 or recent significant weight loss (increased risk of Wernicke’s)
  - Drinking > 30 units / day (scoring > 30 on SADQ)
  - Showing marked signs and symptoms of AWS / autonomic over-activity with blood ethanol concentration greater than 100mg / 100ml
  - History of epilepsy (especially if unstable)
  - Electrolyte imbalance – especially K or Mg instability (increased seizure risk)
  - History of seizures or delirium tremens during previous withdrawal
  - Associated significant benzodiazepine or other drug abuse / dependence
  - Any other severe concomitant physical or psychiatric co-morbidity
  - Pregnancy
  - A recent history of aggression towards staff / public
  - Unable to take medication by mouth

Consider a lower threshold for inpatient withdrawal in vulnerable groups, for example, homeless, under 18s and older people, those with cognitive impairment or learning disability
4. Alcohol Withdrawal Syndrome:

- Withdrawal symptoms are variable in presentation, onset and intensity
- Usually begins within 6 to 8 hours after an abrupt reduction in alcohol intake, but can be earlier in severe dependence or may not manifest for up to 72 hours
- Can develop before the blood alcohol level has fallen to zero
- Generally peaks within 10 to 30 hours and lasts for 3 to 7 days.

**Mild to moderate symptoms (generally earlier onset):**

- Tremulousness of hands, arms, legs, may include head and trunk
- Sweating
- Insomnia, nightmares
- Nausea, retching, vomiting, diarrhoea
- Autonomic disturbance (pyrexia, tachycardia, hypertension)
- Muscle pain
- Hyperactivity, anxiety and agitation - “must leave hospital”

**Severe symptoms:**

Failure to assess the risk and effectively treat AWS can result in three potentially life threatening complications:

4.1 *Delerium Tremens (DTs)*

- Occurs in less than 5% of patients during withdrawal
- Usual onset 24 – 72 hours after alcohol cessation or decreased intake
- Can last for 3-5 days
- Is fatal in 15-20% of inappropriately managed patients
- Appropriate prophylactic sedation reduces mortality to 1-5%.
- NB – there is an increased risk of death if associated with an underlying physical disorder. Always check for other medical condition(s) e.g. head injury, metabolic disturbance, infection, pancreatitis *(see section 5.5)*

**Symptoms:**

- Course tremor
- Fear, paranoid thinking and agitation
- Disorientation in time, person and place, especially at night
- Clouding of consciousness
- Visual illusions, misperceptions, hallucinations
- Tachycardia, fever and hypertension
- Profuse sweating and dehydration
- Risk of circulatory collapse, ketoacidosis
4.2 **Seizures**

- Generally occur between 12 and 48 hours after alcohol cessation or decreased intake, only rarely after this
- Occur in about 8% of chronic alcohol misusers
- Tend to be generalised
- Predisposing factors include hypoglycaemia, hypocalcaemia, hypomagnesaemia and history of epilepsy.
- Risk of death associated with seizures occurring in risky situation e.g. in bath, up ladder or prolonged seizures. Therefore safety advice recommended and appropriate supervision necessary during at risk period

4.3 **Wernicke’s Encephalopathy**

- May occur in as many as 12.5% of chronic alcohol misusers (post-mortem studies)
- May develop rapidly or sub-acutely over a number of days
- Inappropriately managed it is the primary or a contributory cause of death in up to 20% of patients and results in permanent brain damage (Korsakoff’s Amnesic Disorder / Alcohol Related Brain Damage) in 85% of survivors
- Is initially reversible with parenteral B vitamins so treatment should be initiated immediately a diagnosis is suspected or risk factors identified
- May be difficult to separate out from intoxication, DTs, other causes of delirium, head injury
- **NB** - As it is a medical emergency a low index of suspicion in making the diagnosis / commencing treatment is recommended

**Symptoms:**

- clouding of consciousness, global confusional state)
- ataxia of gait)
- nystagmus, ocular nerve palsies)
- hypothermia, hypotension
- reduced conscious level, coma or unconsciousness

**The following characteristics identify a group at high-risk of developing Wernicke’s:**

- signs of malnourishment or risk of malnourishment
- persistent vomiting so as to be unable to sustain regular oral intake / severe diarrhoea
- recent significant weight loss
- reduced BMI < 18.5
- homelessness
- alcohol-related liver disease / associated acute illness / chronic ill health
- peripheral neuropathy
5. Assessment stages to clinically manage alcohol withdrawal

5.1 Establish a comprehensive alcohol history:

- Drinking pattern - daily / continuous or episodic / binge drinking
- Units of alcohol consumed per typical drinking day / week
- Date and time of last drink
- Symptoms indicative of physical dependence on alcohol – tolerance, morning / relief drinking to manage withdrawals, regular episodes of amnesia / ‘blackouts’
- Symptoms during previous episodes of alcohol withdrawal (with / without medication), particularly any history of fits, confusion or hallucinations
- Levels of prescribing required during any previous detoxes
- Other physical / psychiatric history
- Medication
- Other substance use – prescription / illicit / over the counter
- Social circumstances
- Involvement with treatment services
- Obtain collateral history if possible

5.2 Consider use of assessment tools:

- PAT (appendix 2) – screening for harmful alcohol use
- AUDIT (appendix 3) – screening for harmful alcohol use, guide to severity of dependence
- SADQ (appendix 5) - can give indication of whether detoxification is required and act as a guide to potential medication requirement

5.3 Complete full physical and mental state examination especially for alcohol related conditions

5.4 Carry out the following essential investigations:

- Full Blood Picture
- Renal function / Electrolyte Profile, Magnesium, Phosphate and Calcium
- Liver profile
- Serum glucose
- Serum ethanol / Breath alcohol level
- Coagulation screen
- Consider urinary drug screen

NB - Treatment with sedatives should not be delayed whilst awaiting results
5.5 Be wary of and treat any complications which may need managed:

- **Dehydration and Electrolyte depletion**
  - Both are likely in those who are withdrawing from prolonged alcohol binges
  - The degree of dehydration and electrolyte deficiency may be profound and require substantial replacement (particularly potassium, magnesium and phosphate)
  - Hypomagnesaemia is particularly significant and should be treated as it decreases seizure threshold, failure to replace magnesium may make treatment of hypokalaemia refractory and hypomagnesaemia reduces thiamine absorption
  - Dehydration and volume depletion increases autonomic activity and contributes to the physiological challenge posed by AWS
  - Crystalloid fluids containing potassium at standard maintenance rates are necessary while the patient is sedated and not ingesting normal fluid intake
  - Fluids may need to be given at an accelerated rate initially depending on estimates of haemodynamic compromise, dehydration and serum electrolyte levels. Caution should be exercised where there is suspicion, or evidence of decompensation of liver or cardiac function
  - Sodium chloride 0.9% should be given initially to replete electrolytes and fluid.
  - **Glucose 5% should be reserved until after haemodynamic stability is achieved and IV thiamine (Pabrinex®) is given**

- **Hypoglycaemia**
  - **IV thiamine (Pabrinex®) should always be given before IV glucose administration**

- **Alcoholic ketoacidosis**
  - A form of starvation ketosis due to carbohydrate depletion. Contributes to the illness and physiological instability. Low pH with raised serum or capillary ketones (beta-hydroxybutyrate). Treated after initial high-dose IV thiamine (Pabrinex®) with glucose 5% with KCl.

- **Delirium caused by alternative causes such as infection, aspiration or head injury**

- **Complications such as liver failure, pancreatitis, subarachnoid / subdural haemorrhage and GI bleeding can occur in these patients. Additional investigations may be required.**
5.6 Consider which category of potential severity of AWS the patient is in:

Low:
- patients with high risk but non-continuous alcohol use and / or low level dependence
- neither recent withdrawal symptoms nor recent drinking to prevent withdrawal symptoms
- binge / periodic drinkers whose last bout was < 1 week long
- no alcohol on breath test and no significant withdrawal signs / symptoms (CIWA < 8)
- typical consumption < 15u /day
- drinking pattern 3-4 days / week only
- recent detox within last 2/52
- AUDIT < 15
- SADQ <15

Medium:
- continuous pattern to alcohol consumption
- consuming 15 - 30 units / day
- drinking to relieve withdrawal symptoms
- evidence of significant alcohol withdrawal
- no evidence or history of severe withdrawals (seizures / DTs)
- 15 - 30 SADQ

High:
- current high alcohol intake (>30 units/day) for at least 5 days consecutively
- history of severe withdrawal, DTs or withdrawal seizures
- signs suggestive of Wernicke’s encephalopathy
- high medication requirement during previous detoxifications
- multiple substance addiction e.g. heavy regular or chronic benzodiazepine use in particular
- high levels of agitation / confusion
- high physiological early warning score
- evidence of visual or auditory hallucinations
- hyperpyrexia or profuse sweating
- significant withdrawal symptoms / signs at blood alcohol level >100mg/100ml
- SADQ score > 30
5.7 Assess the severity of withdrawal using the CIWA-Ar scale:

The CIWA-Ar scale (Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment of Alcohol Scale, Revised) *(appendix 4)* is a guide to measuring the severity of alcohol withdrawal symptoms and in turn affords some guidance to the amount of benzodiazepine to give. The scale takes less than 5 minutes to complete. It is not always necessary to ask the patient all 10 questions as observations will often be sufficient to rate symptoms. The maximum possible score is 67.

- Assess the patient and rate each of the 10 criteria
- Add the score for each criterion to give the patient’s total CIWA-Ar score
  - 0 – 7: absent or minimal withdrawal
  - 8 – 15: moderate withdrawal
  - more than 15: severe withdrawal
- Consider score in context of time since last drink and blood ethanol level
- Pulse, BP and temperature are also useful indicators of withdrawal severity

6. Prescribing

The aim of detox prescribing is to rapidly control symptoms of withdrawal, stabilise the patient and then gradually reduce the dosage down to stop over 5-7 days keeping the patient safe and comfortable.

It is important to avoid either under-treatment, which may lead to DTs or seizures or overtreatment, which is associated with excess sedation, aspiration pneumonitis, hypotension and paradoxical agitation. The overall therapeutic aim with prescribing benzodiazepines is to achieve light sedation, or light sleep from which the patient can be easily roused.

**Chlordiazepoxide** (Librium) is the **benzodiazepine of choice** for alcohol withdrawal due to its long half-life (less risk of rebound symptoms). Diazepam is also effective but has higher abuse potential and resale value. There is also more risk of accumulation when compared to Chlordiazepoxide. An alternative diazepam detox regimen is included in *Appendix 7*.

Short-acting benzodiazepines (such as Lorazepam) may be preferred in those for whom oversedation must be avoided, for example in people with liver disease who may not be able to metabolise long-acting agents efficiently, in people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and in the frail elderly – *see more complex detoxes section 8*

If a patient is being sedated for other reasons it may be more appropriate to adjust the dose of their current sedating regimen if required rather than e.g. add in chlordiazepoxide

**NB Chlormethiazole** (Heminevrin) is **not recommended** (particularly in community detoxes) as it is shorter acting; therefore has higher abuse potential and more importantly, it can have fatal consequences in overdose resulting from coma and respiratory depression, especially when taken with alcohol.
6.1 Principles of dosing:

Stage 1 – achieving stability

- The primary goal is for the patient to achieve stability / control over any withdrawal symptoms
- This is best achieved in the initial stages by making an estimation of starting dosage required (determined by clinical picture – see section 6.2) followed by symptom triggered / as needed dosing with close monitoring of ongoing withdrawal symptoms (see section 7)
- Large enough initial doses are important to prevent severe withdrawal developing
- Stabilisation should ideally be achieved in the first 24-48 hours and is indicated by repeated minimal withdrawal symptoms (CIWA-Ar < 8) and no further need for prn dosages
- Doses should not be reduced in the first 24 hours unless the patient is clearly already over-sedated
- If PRN doses are required after 48 hours of therapy then initial doses have been inadequate and the patient’s AWS has not been stabilised. Persist with the doses on that day for a further 24h and the sedative effect will accumulate.

Stage 2 - fixed –dosage reduction

- Once stability is achieved prescribing can move to a fixed dose reducing regimen with a lesser degree of monitoring required
- Steady state of blood chlordiazepoxide levels occur after 3 days on average and sedation requirements during AWS fall with time, therefore the dose after stabilisation should generally be reduced in the region of 20% on a daily basis. This also prevents replacing one dependence with another.
- All too often patients receive PRN doses long after stabilisation has been achieved and even without any further evidence of physical withdrawal – chlordiazepoxide is then serving as an anxiolytic rather than for withdrawal management and this should be avoided.

6.2 Deciding on starting doses:

Pharmacotherapy should be delivered with the dose tailored to the patient’s requirements.

To individualise treatment, several factors have to be taken into account, including:

- the severity of dependence (history and assessment tools e.g. SADQ)
- the severity of the current withdrawal episode
- the patient’s physical status / other medication being taken

For example, a young male patient with a high alcohol intake, a history of withdrawal seizures and normal liver function will likely require higher doses of pharmacotherapy than a small older female patient with cirrhosis who develops mild withdrawal on the background of a moderate alcohol intake.

Working through the steps in section 7 and following the flowchart (appendix 9) should give some guidance, although clinical judgement will still need to be used alongside this
6.3 Deciding when to give first dose:

It is better to give medication before significant withdrawal symptoms begin to emerge. Delay in initiating treatment can result in withdrawal symptoms either becoming difficult to control or the emergence of complications such as DTs or seizures.

However it should be noted that the use of benzodiazepine sedation while the patient is still intoxicated with alcohol can lead to respiratory depression with its complications and death itself.

Therefore personal clinical judgement needs to be used alongside the guidelines below:

- Ideally 6-8 hours after last drink
  - NB patients may have consumed significant amounts of alcohol just prior to entering hospital
- Blood ethanol level should be as close to zero as possible, ideally <100mg/100ml and falling
  - Falling implies two successive levels or by clear evidence of patient becoming clinically less intoxicated over time
  - Metabolism generally reduces serum ethanol by 20mg/100mL/hour, although this may vary and in habituated drinkers reaches up to approximately 30mg/100mL/hour
- The more severe the alcohol dependence, the earlier withdrawal symptoms emerge after last alcohol intake.
  - Some people who are severely alcohol dependent can experience significant withdrawal with a blood alcohol concentration of 100mg per 100ml or more. Medication may be required but use caution with dosages and consult with senior doctors.

6.4 Omitting doses:

- If patient is asleep or appears over-sedated omit prescribed dose and then review when next dose due
- Beware risk of respiratory depression - monitor pulse, oximetry and respiratory rate.
- There should be access to Flumazenil.
- Consider re-using breathalyser if there is any suspicion of alcohol consumption on ward
7. Steps for managing alcohol withdrawal: (see flowchart Appendix 9)

Always ensure patients are nursed in a well-lit, cool environment with good ventilation. As with anyone with or at risk of delirium a calm and reassuring environment can help settle the patient.

1. History / examination / assessment tool / investigations (see sections 5.1 – 5.5) indicate heavy alcohol use / dependence
2. Determine category of risk patient is in (see section 5.6)
3. If detox medication is required assess appropriate time to give first dose (see section 6.3)
4. Treat any electrolyte imbalances (see section 5.5)
5. Prescribe Thiamine (see Section 10)
6. Start detox - Remember 2 prescribing stages – initial stabilisation followed by fixed dose reduction

- If low risk category:
  o Monitor using CIWA every hour
  o Write up for prn chlordiazepoxide (CDZ) 20mg dosages, up to 80mg in 24 hrs
  o Review after 1 hour
  o If CIWA < 8 – nil If CIWA ≥ 8 give 20mg CDZ stat
  o Review after 1 hour
  o If CIWA < 8 – nil If CIWA ≥ 8 give 20mg CDZ stat
  o If 2 consecutive CIWA scores of < 8 probably OK to stop formal monitoring
  o If > 2 prn doses required review clinical picture, consider re-categorising patient and consider commencing fixed dose regimen starting from 20mg qds (see p19)

- If medium risk category + initial CIWA < 15:
  o Give 30mg CDZ stat
  o Write up for prn CDZ 30mg dosages, up to maximum 250mg in 24 hrs
  o Review after 1 hour
  o If CIWA < 8 - nil If CIWA ≥ 8 – give further 30mg CDZ stat
  o Review after 1 hour
  o CIWA < 8 - nil If CIWA ≥ 8 – give 30mg CDZ stat
  o Continue hourly reviews until 2 consecutive CIWA < 8 then start fixed dose regimen from 30mg qds (see p19)
  o If > 2 consecutive 30mg stat doses needed review clinical picture and consider transfer to high risk pathway

- If high risk category or medium risk + initial CIWA ≥ 15
  o Give 40mg CDZ stat
  o Write up for prn CDZ 40mg dosages, up to maximum 250mg in 24 hrs
  o Review after 1 hour
  o If CIWA < 8 - nil If CIWA ≥ 8 – give further 40mg CDZ stat
  o Review after 1 hour
  o If CIWA < 8 - nil If CIWA ≥ 8 – give 40mg stat
  o Continue hourly reviews until 2 consecutive CIWA < 8 then start fixed dose regimen from 40mg qds (see p19)
  o If > 3 doses at 40mg look at policy on difficult to stabilise patients (see section 8.1)
Fixed dose Chlordiazepoxide reducing regimen:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Dose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>40mg qds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2</td>
<td>30mg qds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>20mg qds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
<td>20mg tds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 5</td>
<td>10mg qds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 6</td>
<td>10mg bd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Community detoxes generally start on Day 2 (i.e. 5 day reducing course from 30mg qds).

- Hospital detoxes have the initial stabilisation period which is essentially ‘front loading’ the patient before the fixed dose reducing regimen begins.

- Having comparable reducing regimens in hospital and in the community allows for ease of communication if patients are admitted or discharged.
8. Managing more complex detoxifications

8.1 Severe / uncontrolled withdrawal symptoms:

- First step for withdrawals not being controlled is to consider increasing the frequency and dose of **chlor Diazepoxide up to 40mg hourly up to a maximum of 3 doses**.
- When increasing chlordiazepoxide doses or giving PRN doses, use caution as over-intoxication may cause a paradoxical agitation.
- Review the patient’s diagnosis for the presence of any psychotic illness or other organic pathology.
- If patient not settling consider options below:

**Higher doses of chlordiazepoxide:**

- Appropriate initial dosing estimation, intensive symptom monitoring and use of regular prn doses when indicated in the early stages is the most effective way to manage withdrawal symptoms and helps to reassure the anxious patient.
- It is generally more clinically effective to increase the dose of Chlordiazepoxide to adequately control alcohol withdrawal symptoms than to add another type of medication.
- In severe alcohol dependence higher than standard initial doses of Chlordiazepoxide may be required (exceeding the British National Formulary prescribing range).
- Maximum dose in these situations is determined by clinical response and the likelihood of accumulation.
- Examples of higher regular doses are 50-60mg qds for the first 24-48hrs.
- Occasionally prior clinical knowledge of the patient may predict the need for such higher regular doses of chlordiazepoxide from the start and is at the discretion of the individual senior doctor / consultant.
- Night time brings on more severe symptoms in many patients; increasing the *nocte* dose of chlordiazepoxide is considered first line treatment for night sedation; otherwise Zopiclone 7.5mg *nocte ‘For hospital use only’* can be added.
- **NB** patients exhibiting significant symptoms over the BNF recommended maximum of 250mg in 24 hours may have other complications and should be discussed with a senior doctor/consultant.

**Alternatives to chlordiazepoxide:**

- Some patients do not respond well to chlordiazepoxide. Persistence with chlordiazepoxide in these cases may lead to delayed initial effect and late over-sedation as the drug effect accumulates. They may do better changing to lorazepam for a more rapid effect and reduced risk of dose accumulation.
- Where maximum PRN doses have been reached and symptoms of withdrawal are not settling consider switching the choice of PRN benzodiazepine e.g. from chlordiazepoxide to lorazepam instead of the regularly prescribed chlordiazepoxide dose (see appendix 7: Equivalence Table).
- At the time of writing this policy lorazepam did not have UK marketing authorisation for the management of alcohol withdrawal. If possible informed consent should be obtained and documented.
8.2 Delerium tremens / confusional state / severe agitation

(This section may be revised to be in accordance with any newly developed WHSCT Rapid Tranquillisation Policy. Any advice here will be superseded by such a policy).

Using lorazepam:

- For delirium tremens or acute disturbances putting patients at risk to themselves or others lorazepam will generally be a better option due to its more rapid effect.
  - If patient not settling after 3 doses of chlordiazepoxide 40mg or acutely disturbed, consider escalation to lorazepam 2-4mg oral / IM / IV
  - Repeat if required up to 2 doses at 15 minute intervals
  - Always consider oral before the IM route. Absorption from the injection site is considerably slower if the intramuscular route is used and as rapid an effect may be obtained by oral administration.
  - The IM route should not be used in patients with bleeding / clotting disorders
  - NB i.m. Lorazepam injection is contraindicated in severe liver impairment. See section 9.1 and consult with senior medic (also do not use with i.m. Olanzapine)

- If patient is not responding to benzodiazepines then the receptor may be saturated and further doses will give no increase in sedation / tranquilisation and can lead to paradoxical agitation; in this case addition of Haloperidol may give an independent and adjunctive effect.

Using Haloperidol:

- Saturation of benzodiazepine receptors is a plausible explanation for limited benefit from dose escalation above usual levels and sedation using neuroleptic and anaesthetic agents may be required.

- For troublesome hallucinations, severe agitation or patient refractory to the above benzodiazepine loading schedule, consider giving:
  - PO / IM haloperidol in addition to the regularly prescribed benzodiazepine.
  - Haloperidol should be used with caution and only short-term due to the risk of decreasing seizure threshold, but may be given early on with or after lorazepam for the severely disturbed who are at risk to themselves or others.
### Adult Haloperidol Dose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Dose</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Max/24hrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>500micrograms to 5mg</td>
<td>8 to 12 hourly</td>
<td>15mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM/IV</td>
<td>2 to 10mg</td>
<td>4 to 8 hourly</td>
<td>18mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Elderly >75 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Dose</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Max/24hrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>500micrograms to 2.5mg</td>
<td>8 to 12 hourly</td>
<td>15mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM/IV</td>
<td>2 to 5mg</td>
<td>4 to 8 hourly</td>
<td>18mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Significant Liver impairment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Dose</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Max/24hrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>500micrograms</td>
<td>8 to 12 hourly</td>
<td>2mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Refractory cases:

- For patients refractory to the above sedation schedule:
  - Sedation by anaesthetic staff in HDU / ICU may be necessary.

### 8.3 Seizures:

Alcohol related seizures occur usually within 12 hours after cessation / significant reduction and are rare beyond 48 hours. Patients presenting with a seizure should be admitted and observed for 24 hrs

- Adequate doses of chlordiazepoxide usually prevent withdrawal seizures.
- For isolated seizures continue with the standard regimen ensuring the patient has received an adequate dose, increasing the dose if necessary.
- If a patient develops prolonged or recurrent seizures
  - Give lorazepam 2-4mg IV as a single dose (in addition to existing benzodiazepine).
  - Dilute 1:1 with Water for Injection before administration.
  - Lorazepam injection is stored in the fridge.
  - Repeat with a second dose after 15 minutes if required.
- If seizing is prolonged (status epilepticus) seek senior medical advice.
9. **Treatment of special patient groups**

9.1 **Liver Impairment:**

Suspected significant liver impairment can be defined as any one of the following, although many of these features are neither sensitive nor specific for significant liver impairment and the full clinical context should be considered:

- Previously diagnosed chronic liver disease.
- Clinically evident liver disease (jaundice, ascites, hepatic encephalopathy, spider naevi, palmar erythema, hepatomegaly, or other clinical stigmata of cirrhosis)
- ↑ Serum bilirubin, ↓ albumin, ↑ prothrombin time

- For mild to moderate liver disease start with half typical doses of chlordiazepoxide or use lorazepam
- Caution is needed with any fixed dose regimen so monitor very closely for signs of build up
- For more severe / decompensated liver disease monitor closely and consider symptom triggered approach using lowest possible prn dosages
- Consider strongly discussing with senior colleague

9.2 **Respiratory disease**

- For severe respiratory disease / type 2 respiratory failure again great caution is needed with fixed dose regimens
- Lowered doses of chlordiazepoxide, lorazepam or symptom triggered approaches as in 9.1 are recommended

9.3 **Patient’s ‘Nil by mouth’:**

- Regular or PRN IV or IM diazepam or lorazepam are alternatives to chlordiazepoxide in patients unable to take oral treatment. Absorption from the IM injection of diazepam may be variable, particularly for the gluteal muscles. This route of administration should only be used if IV administration is not possible.
- Give diazepam 10mg slow IV into a large vein over 2 minutes. Repeat after an interval of not less than 4 hours if no improvement.
- IM route should not be used in patients with bleeding / clotting disorders
- Facilities for resuscitation / Flumazanil should always be available.
- Please note **Diazepam Injection is contraindicated in severe liver impairment.**
- Do not use i.m. Lorazepam with i.m. Olanzapine
9.4 Pregnant patients:

- Management of AWS in pregnancy is specifically excluded in NICE Clinical Guideline 100 (July 2010)
- Avoidance of benzodiazepine therapy in pregnancy is advocated in the BNF and use is unlicensed.
- There are limited data on detoxification of alcohol dependent pregnant patients with benzodiazepines or IV thiamine (Pabrinex®). Longest experience and data are available for diazepam, but teratogenicity with even this agent has been described in animal models.
- It is important to balance the risk of significant withdrawals / seizure against the risk of foetal exposure to benzodiazepines
- It is **essential the obstetric team is informed** if the patient presents for detoxification during pregnancy
- Local consensus has been forced by a small number of cases of AWS requiring medical assistance.
- The recommended agent is diazepam 5mg which can be assumed to have an equivalent sedative effect to 15mg of Chlordiazepoxide.
- Probably the best approach is a closely monitored symptom triggered one
- Work closely with the ALN on monitoring doses
- Any benzodiazepine use should be at the lowest possible dose for the minimum amount of time.

9.5 Elderly patients (>75 years old or >65 with frailty):

- The elderly are particularly vulnerable to the effects of over-sedation and to its complications such as falls, particularly with fractures and subdural haematomata.
- The elderly have a reduced capacity to metabolise and eliminate benzodiazepines
- **NB** - Particular wariness should be had during routine reviews for over-sedation, paradoxical agitation or delerium.
- A general principle to compensate for these factors is to **reduce usual sedation doses by half**
- Dosage intervals can also be increased if necessary
- **Doses must be reviewed at 24 and 48 hours in this group**
- Again consider lorazepam as an alternative to chlordiazepoxide if there is a risk of accumulation

9.6 Children and young people:

- There is a lack of clinical evidence suggesting the appropriate dose of medication for assisted withdrawal
- In general doses should be lower than that provided for a working-age adult
- Take into consideration the age, size, and gender of the individual.
- This population is particularly vulnerable and admission should be considered at a lower threshold in those under 18 and advised in those under 16.
9.7 Benzodiazepine dependent patients:

- Patients dependent on regular doses of other benzodiazepines, e.g. temazepam or regular diazepam, prior to admission should generally be continued on the same dose in addition to the Chlordiazepoxide reducing dose. Such patients are often habituated to their therapy and may suffer benzodiazepine withdrawal if these were discontinued during detox.
- Bear in mind that tolerance to benzodiazepines may have an impact on the required dosages of chlordiazepoxide to control alcohol withdrawals.
- However also consider that hospital alcohol detoxification may present an opportunity to discuss with the patient the option to reduce or even come off their benzodiazepines.
- Work closely with ALNs in this group of patients.
10. Prescribing Thiamine

- As the majority of patients undergoing alcohol detoxification in hospital will either be severely dependent and at risk of severe withdrawals or have an associated co-morbidity, it is advised that they all receive parenteral Thiamine (Pabrinex®) as a protection against or treatment for Wernicke’s encephalopathy.

- This ideally should be given by intravenous infusion, although can be by deep intramuscular injection if venous access is not possible.

- Facilities for treating anaphylaxis should be available when administered

- IV thiamine (Pabrinex®) should always be given before IV glucose administration

- Oral thiamine 100mg tds should be prescribed and administered at the same time as IV therapy and should be continued for 3-6 months after abstinence is achieved or indefinitely if heavy drinking continues

- Prescribing guidelines (BNF, NI formulary, NICE, BAP) vary slightly in their recommendations on dosages required and length of treatment

- Taking these above mentioned guidelines into consideration and bearing in mind other factors such as the difficulty in diagnosing Wernicke’s Encephalopathy accurately and the advantage of only having one regieme; these guideline’s authors felt that a pragmatic and safer approach was to not try and separate out patients at risk and those with suspected / confirmed WE but to have a set regimen for all those undergoing an alcohol detoxification in hospital (see below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV Thiamine (Pabrinex®) dose for all patients admitted with AWS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 x pairs (amps 1 and 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- If patient has suspected Wernicke’s on admission Pabrinex should continue for a minimum of 5 days even if symptoms settle

- Guidance suggests extending Pabrinex courses for further than 5 days if there are ongoing signs of memory improvement or if a patient has a very poor nutritional state and is not taking an adequate diet
11. Discharge:

- All patients should have been referred to the **Addiction Liaison Nurse** by this point.
- Once patients have been seen by the Consultant and a treatment plan is in place, nurse led discharge may proceed for patient’s on 30mg QDS or less of chlordiazepoxide.
- It is preferable for there to be someone available in the community to manage medication and monitor the patient’s progress.
- Discuss with the patient who can continue to support them through the remainder of their detox
- For those without adequate support at home consider referral to Damien House (Derry – male only) or Ramona House (Omagh - male or female) for ‘tail-end’ detox
- Both home and hostel detoxes can be supported by the **Alcohol Detox Nurses** based in the community (see numbers in Appendix 10 for contact details)

**Medication on discharge for in-patient detoxification:**

- All patients should be prescribed oral thiamine and the **minimum amount of benzodiazepine** to complete the reducing course on discharge (see p 19).
- Shorter acting benzodiazepines (e.g. lorazepam) have a higher addictive potential and should **generally not be prescribed at discharge**. Patients should be switched to equivalent dose chlordiazepoxide to complete the reducing course.
- Patients should be advised to complete the course and of the significant risks associated with drinking on top of benzodiazepines
- A **maximum** 5 days’ supply of chlordiazepoxide should be dispensed on discharge
- However always consider the need for **splitting the script** and the **exceptions below**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exceptions</th>
<th>Maximum supply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• History of overdose</td>
<td>1-2 day supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Previous history of benzodiazepine dependence / abuse / diversion</td>
<td>Advise patient to attend GP as soon as possible Liaise with ADN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No social support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exceptions</th>
<th>Maximum supply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Expressed or strongly suspect intention to divert dispensed medicine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intention to continue drinking</td>
<td><strong>No supply</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Justification for this must be clearly recorded in the medical notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- An initial discharge letter should be completed by the doctor at ward level / A&E dept.
- Provide a copy of the patient / supporter information leaflet re managing breakthrough symptoms
- Formal GP discharge letter to follow
Appendix 1: A and E Alcohol Treatment Pathway

Triage - suspected heavy / dependent alcohol use

Alcohol history / Ethanol level / PAT / CIWA score

Confirmed regular heavy alcohol consumption / dependent alcohol use

Consider commencing iv Pabrinex in A and E (monitor for anaphylactic reaction)
Consider stat dose of Chlordiazepoxide if significant withdrawals

Need for hospital admission?

No

Offer next available appt with ALN
Commence oral Thiamine 100mg tds
Advise not to stop drinking suddenly but to try and control / stabilise use of alcohol
Give out alcohol advice sheet

Yes

Need for urgent detox

Medical need for admission plus alcohol dependent

• Acutely confused state / hallucinating (potential delirium tremens)
• Any symptoms of ataxia / confusion / nystagmus / ocular palsies (potential Wernicke’s encephalopathy)
• Persistent vomiting / diarrhoea / signs of malnutrition associated with BMI <18.5 and / or recent significant weight loss (increased risk of Wernicke’s)
• Following or in withdrawal seizure
• Current suicide risk
• Or patient seen to be too high risk to send home ? due to associated physical / mental health issue

Commence detox regimen
Contact ALN (mon-fri 9-5) to support
Appendix 2: PADDINGTON ALCOHOL TEST

Consider PAT for ALL the **TOP 10 reasons for attendance**. Circle number(s) – for any specific trigger(s):

1. FALL (i. trip)
2. COLLAPSE (i. fits)
3. HEAD INJURY (i. facial)
4. ASSAULT
5. ACCIDENT (i. Burn, RTA)
6. UNWELL (i. Request detox / help, self neglect)
7. NON-SPECIFIC G.I.
8. PSYCHIATRIC (specify)
9. CARDIAC (i. Chest pain)
10. REPEAT ATTENDER

Other (specify) :-

Proceed only after dealing with patient’s ‘agenda,’ i.e. patient’s reason for attendance.

We routinely ask all patients with (state reason for screening) about their use of alcohol.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO (end)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you drink alcohol?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the most you will drink in any one day? total per day (standard alcohol units)=

If necessary, please use the following guide to estimate total daily units.

(Standard pub measures in brackets; home measures often three times the amount!)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beer / Lager / Cider</th>
<th>Strong Beer / Lager / Cider</th>
<th>Wine</th>
<th>Fortified Wine (Sherry, Martini)</th>
<th>Spirits (Gin, Vodka, Whiskey)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pints (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cans / Small Bottles (1.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Bottles (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 How often do you drink more than twice the recommended amount?

: Everyday
: __________ times per week
: Never / Less than weekly

**Dependent Drinker** (PAT+ve) (Pabrinex)

**Hazardous Drinker** (PAT+ve ?)

**GO TO QUESTION 4**

4 Do you feel your attendance here is related to alcohol?

YES (PAT+ve)

NO

**IF PAT +ve give feedback** eg “We advise you that this drinking is harming your health”.

5 Would you like to see our Alcohol Liaison Nurse?

YES

NO - give leaflet

If “YES” to #5 give ALN appointment card and make appointment in diary

DATE ................................ TIME ..........................

Please note if patient admitted to ward .................................................................

SIGNATURE:  NAME:  DATE:
HOW TO USE ‘PAT’

The Paddington Alcohol Test (PAT) is a clinical and therapeutic tool for screening hospital patients for alcohol problems such as hazardous drinking and dependency.

The PAT was specifically developed for use by clinicians in a busy Accident & Emergency department, employing the admission to hospital as a “TEACHABLE MOMENT” (Williams S et al, Drug & Alcohol Dependence 2005).

PAT is non-judgemental, enabling patients to develop insight into their drinking, its cause and effect.

Using the PAT, plus referral for specialist alcohol assessment, results in lower alcohol consumption and reduces the likelihood of re-attendance. (Crawford, Patton, Touquet et al, Lancet, 2004)

It takes only about 30 seconds to complete the PAT.

- Deal with the patient’s reason for attending and their presenting condition first, thereby gaining their confidence so they are in a more receptive frame of mind.
- If patient has one of the TOP 10 conditions, listed overleaf at the top of PAT, or other indication of recent consumption of alcohol, proceed with the PAT questions.
- Question 1: ‘We routinely ask all patients with (this condition) if they drink alcohol - do you drink?’ If No: PAT-ve, discontinue (providing clinician agrees with the answer).
- If yes: go to Question 2: What is the most that patient will drink in one day.

For United Kingdom: 8gms absolute alcohol = 10ml alcohol = 1 unit
Standard Alcohol Units (SAU) = % ABV x volume (in litres)
where “% ABV” is “% of alcohol by volume” as indicated on bottle or can.

Please use the guide to help you (and the patient) calculate amounts - drinks vary so much that the use of standard alcohol units is necessary for consistency. It may be less judgemental to focus solely on quantity rather than what they drink.

- Having estimated the number of units consumed, if this is more than double the recommended daily limits, ie 8 units (male), or 6 units (female), ask Question 3: how often do they drink more than 8 or 6 units? This helps differentiate the dependent drinker, who will need more complex management, from the hazardous or “binge” drinker who will benefit from advise and information about cutting down or controlled drinking. The earlier that binge drinking is detected the more effective is the use of PAT. The acceptance of an appointment with an Alcohol Liaison Nurse (ALN) demonstrates awareness of a problem and the desire for help, thereby showing some insight.
- If there is evidence of chronic alcohol misuse, poor diet and confusion/ataxia/ophthalmoplegia: then give I.V. Pabrinex at the earliest opportunity (I&II (X2) in 100ml 0.9% saline infused over half an hour). (Thompson et al., Alcohol & Alcoholism, 2002).
- Everyone who has said yes to Q.1 should be asked Question 4: ‘Do you feel your current attendance is related to alcohol?’ If yes then you have started the process of brief intervention by the patient associating drinking with resulting hospital attendance. If they deny any association, but in your clinical judgement have been drinking, you might say: ‘would you be in hospital if you had NOT been drinking?’
- Question 5: If “YES” Leave PAT form in AHW referrals box, with diary. Offer the patient an appointment with the Alcohol Liaison Nurse at 10am on the next morning when Alcohol Liaison session is scheduled. NB it is known that the earlier that appointment is offered, the more likely the patient will be to attend – please encourage them to take the next available appointment rather than defer it.
- Prepare GP letter (“for appointment” or “declined”) unless patient admitted to ward.

For further information about the Paddington Alcohol Test (PAT) contact:
Professor R. Touquet - robin.touquet@st-marys.nhs.uk or Adrian Brown RMN – ade.brown@nhs.net
Appendix 3: AUDIT TOOL

1. How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?
   (0) Never (Skip to Questions 9-10)
   (1) Monthly or less
   (2) 2 to 4 times a month
   (3) 2 to 3 times a week
   (4) 4 or more times a week

2. How many drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?
   (0) 1 or 2
   (1) 3 or 4
   (2) 5 or 6
   (3) 7, 8, or 9
   (4) 10 or more

3. How often do you have six or more drinks on one occasion?
   (0) Never
   (1) Less than monthly
   (2) Monthly
   (3) Weekly
   (4) Daily or almost daily

4. How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?
   (0) Never
   (1) Less than monthly
   (2) Monthly
   (3) Weekly
   (4) Daily or almost daily

5. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of drinking?
   (0) Never
   (1) Less than monthly
   (2) Monthly
   (3) Weekly
   (4) Daily or almost daily

6. How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?
   (0) Never
   (1) Less than monthly
   (2) Monthly
   (3) Weekly
   (4) Daily or almost daily
7. How often during the last year have you needed an alcoholic drink first thing in the morning to get yourself going after a night of heavy drinking?
(0) Never
(1) Less than monthly
(2) Monthly
(3) Weekly
(4) Daily or almost daily

8. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?
(0) Never
(1) Less than monthly
(2) Monthly
(3) Weekly
(4) Daily or almost daily

9. Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking?
(0) No
(2) Yes, but not in the last year
(4) Yes, during the last year

10. Has a relative, friend, doctor, or another health professional expressed concern about your drinking or suggested you cut down?
(0) No
(2) Yes, but not in the last year
(4) Yes, during the last year

Add up the points associated with your answers above.
A total score of 8 or more indicates harmful drinking behaviour.
## Appendix 4: Alcohol Withdrawal Assessment Chart (CIWA-Ar Scale)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time (24hr)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Assess and rate each of the following:** Refer overleaf for guidance to using the CIWA-Ar scale

### Nausea/Vomiting (0-7)
0) None, 1) mild nausea with no vomiting, 4) intermittent nausea with dry heaves, 7) constant nausea, frequent dry heaves and vomiting

### Tremors (0-7)
0) no tremor, 1) not visible, but can be felt finger tip to finger tip

### Anxiety (0-7)
0) no anxiety, at ease, 1) mildly anxious, 4) moderately anxious, or guarded, so anxiety is inferred, 7) acute panic states as seen in severe delirium or acute schizophrenic reactions

### Agitation (0-7)
0) normal activity, 1) somewhat more than normal activity, 4) moderately fidgety and restless, 7) paces back and forth or constantly thrashes about

### Paroxysmal Sweats (0-7)
0) no sweat visible, 1) barely perceptible sweating, palms moist, 4) beads of sweat obvious on forehead, 7) drenching sweats

### Tactile disturbances (0-7)
0) none, 1) very mild itching, pins & needles, burning /numbness, 2) mild itching, pins and needles, burning or numbness, 3) moderate, 4) moderately severe hallucinations

### Auditory Disturbances (0-7)
0) not present, 1) very mild harshness or ability to frighten

### Visual Disturbances (0-7)
0) not present, 1) very mild sensitivity, 2) mild sensitivity, 3) moderate

### Headache (0-7)
0) not present, 1) very mild, 2) mild, 3) moderate, 4) moderately severe, 5) severe, 6) very severe, 7) extremely severe

### Orientation (0-4)
0) orientated and can do serial additions

### Total CIWA-Ar score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRN medicine administration</th>
<th>Dose given</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Repeated CIWA-Ar score:** (1 hour after PRN dose)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attach patient details / addressograph</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Always ensure patients are nursed in a well-lit, cool environment with good ventilation**
Guidance Notes
Please refer to full treatment guidelines

Using the CIWA-Ar Scale.

- Assess the patient and rate each of the 10 criteria overleaf.
- Add the score for each criterion to give the total CIWA-Ar score for the patient. It is not always necessary to ask the patient all 10 questions as observations will often be sufficient to rate symptoms. The maximum possible score is 67.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nausea and Vomiting</td>
<td>Do you feel sick to your stomach? Have you vomited?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tremor</td>
<td>Arms extended and fingers spread apart or holding a cup. Patient feels tremulous inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Do you feel nervous?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactile Disturbances</td>
<td>Have you any itching, pins and needles sensations, any burning, numbness or do you feel bugs crawling on or under your skin?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditory Disturbances</td>
<td>Are you more aware of sounds around you? Are they harsh? Do they frighten you? Are you hearing anything that is disturbing to you? Are you hearing things you know are not there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Disturbances</td>
<td>Does the light appear to be too bright? Is its colour different? Does it hurt your eyes? Are you seeing something that is disturbing to you? Are you seeing things you know are not there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Does your head feel different? Does it feel like there is a band around your head? Do not rate for dizziness or light-headedness. Otherwise, rate severity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>What day is this? Where are you? Who am I?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5: SADQ

First of all, recall a recent month when you were drinking heavily in a way, which, for you, was fairly typical of a heavy drinking period. Please fill in the month and year:

Month…………………………… Year

During this time and during other periods when your drinking was similar, how often did you experience the feelings listed below? Please reply to each statement by circling the number for the most accurate answer for each question.

These questions are about the physical symptoms that you have experienced first thing in the morning during these typical periods of heavy drinking.

PLEASE ANSWER EVERY QUESTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle one answer</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>Some-Times</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Nearly Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) During a heavy drinking period I wake up feeling sweaty.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) During a heavy drinking period my hands shake first think in the morning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) During a heavy drinking period my whole body shakes violently first thing in the morning if I do not have a drink</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) During a heavy drinking period I wake up absolutely drenched in sweat.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following statements also refer to the recent period when your drinking was heavy, and to periods like it.

PLEASE ANSWER EVERY QUESTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle one answer</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>Some-Times</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Nearly Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5) During a heavy drinking period I like to have a morning drink</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) During a heavy drinking period I gulp my first few morning drinks down as quickly as possible</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) During a heavy drinking period I drink in the morning to get rid of the shakes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) During a heavy drinking period I have a very strong craving for a drink when I awaken</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following statements refer to moods and states of mind you may have experienced first thing in the morning during these periods of heavy drinking.
### Please answer every question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle one answer</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>Some-times</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Nearly Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9) When I am drinking heavily I dread waking up in the morning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) During a heavy drinking period I am frightened of meeting people first thing in the morning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) During a heavy drinking period I feel at the edge of despair when I awaken</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) During a heavy drinking period I feel very frightened when I awaken</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again the following statements refer to the recent period of heavy drinking and the periods like it.

### Please answer every question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle one answer</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>Some-times</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Nearly Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13) During a heavy drinking period I drink more than a quarter of a bottle of spirits per day (4 doubles or 1 bottle of wine or 6 beers)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) During a heavy drinking period I drink more than half a bottle of spirits per day (or 2 bottles of wine, or 12 beers)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) During a heavy drinking period I drink more than one bottle of spirits per day (or 1 gallon of wine, or 24 beers)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) During a heavy drinking period I drink more than two bottles of spirits per day (or 2 gallons of wine, or 48 beers)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IMAGINE THE FOLLOWING SITUATION:

1) You have COMPLETELY ABSTAINED FROM ALCOHOL FOR A FEW WEEKS
2) You then drink VERY HEAVILY for TWO DAYS

How would you feel the morning after those two days of heavy drinking?

PLEASE ANSWER EVERY QUESTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle one answer</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Quite a lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17) I would start to sweat</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) My hands would shake</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) My body would shake</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20) I would be craving for a drink</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you!
Appendix 6: Information about alcohol withdrawal for patient and supporter

INFORMATION ABOUT ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL FOR PATIENT AND SUPPORTER

Alcohol and Drug Service
**Environment**
- It is advisable to remove any remaining alcohol from the house.
- It is helpful that other people around stop drinking during the detox programme. It is more difficult for you if those persons around are drinking whilst you are trying to detox.
- It is essential that the home atmosphere is calm and supportive.

**Withdrawal Symptoms**
If someone has been physically dependent on alcohol, stopping drinking may cause them to get tense, edgy, perhaps shaky or sweaty, and disrupt their sleep. They may have vomiting or diarrhoea.

**Medication**
The aim of detox medication is to best control these symptoms while the body adjusts to being without alcohol. This usually takes three to seven days from the time of the last alcoholic drink.

Without medication, the symptoms would be worst in the first 48 hours, and then gradually disappear. This is why the dose starts high and then reduces.

Chlordiazepoxide will usually be prescribed to increase safety and comfort during the withdrawal period. As with many drugs this is potentially addictive, therefore, it is important the correct dosage is given and only over a limited number of days (usually 5 days). It is important that the supporter takes responsibility for the medication, holding it and giving it as prescribed.

**Monitoring / Role of Supporter**
There are on occasions risks associated with alcohol withdrawal. In general if those risks are predictable detox is undertaken in a supported environment. Occasionally, however, they are unpredictable and a key role of the supporter is to monitor the individual undergoing detox and respond appropriately if risky situations occur. The Alcohol Detox Nurse and GP will discuss this with you prior to detox commencing and there is guidance below on how to respond if anything risky does arise.

**Safety**
During detoxification the patient may feel tremulous or drowsy; it is therefore important to make the environment as safe as possible, e.g.
- supervise smoking
- don’t allow the person to pour hot water
- avoid swimming or unsupervised bathing (shower may be safer than bathing)
- no driving or operating machinery
Mood Changes
Someone undergoing detox from alcohol may be anxious, restless or irritable, or even appear suspicious. They may experience significant cravings for alcohol. Alternatively they may be sleepy or drowsy. Moods may fluctuate throughout the detox.

When the patient is feeling anxious, fearful or unable to sleep, it is best to act in a reassuring manner and avoid unnecessary demands or stresses. Plenty of rest is required, especially in the first few days. Sometimes withdrawal symptoms are worse at night time and if so this may be helped by a light being left on, either in the bedroom or outside the room. If the anxiety or irritability is getting worse it is important that the Detox Nurse / GP are informed of this. Think about ways to help someone to relax e.g. by going for a walk or listening to music. This may also help with cravings.

Hygiene
There may be excessive sweating during detoxification. This is not unusual. Assistance with washing and bathing may be helpful.

Hydration
If there is excessive sweating or vomiting in the early stages of withdrawal, it is important that the patient drinks plenty of fluids. Avoid too much fruit juice or caffeinated drinks, e.g. tea, coffee or fizzy drinks.

Eating
Small meals, little and often, are probably the best in the first few days, but if the appetite is very poor do not worry as it will improve steadily throughout the detox period. A nutritious diet is best which should include fruit and vegetables.

Sleep
You may find that even with medication, sleep is disturbed. Do not worry about this – lack of sleep does not seriously harm you, starting to drink again does. It is preferable to try to resist sleep during the daytime as this may hinder sleep at night time. A good sleep pattern will generally return to normal with continued abstinence. It is better not to take sleeping pills so that your natural sleep rhythm returns. Try going to bed later. Take a bedtime snack or milky drink. Avoid too much tea or coffee.

Withdrawal Fits
Very rarely withdrawal fits occur. In the unlikely event of this happening it is important that the supporter follows a few simple rules.

When a person is having a fit the initial stage visible will be collapse and shaking / twitching of the limbs and torso. This may appear dramatic and frightening, but no intervention is
required at this stage except to remove any obstacles that may cause injury. This stage can last for a few seconds, or a few minutes, during which time the person may appear to stop breathing and go blue in the face and hands. This is a normal part of a fit and normal colour will return when the fit stops.

For the supporter, please note the following points:

- Call 999 to request an ambulance.
- **Do not** try to restrict the person when he or she is having a fit.
- **Do not** put, or force anything into the mouth when the person is having a fit.
- **Do** remove any obstacles that the person may knock his or herself on.
- **Do** time the fit if possible. When the person has stopped fitting, he or she will go into a drowsy/semi-conscious state. This is a normal part of the process.
- **Do** check the mouth and make sure the airway is clear after the fit. If there are any obstructions in the mouth, remove them.
- **Do** ensure that breathing is normal and then lie the person on one side. Ensure that the mouth is clear of any obstruction and place the head in such a way as to allow any fluids or vomit to run freely without being inhaled.
- For a short time after waking the person may appear irritable or confused, this again is a normal part of the process and will not last long. If the fit continues for longer than a few minutes or stops and starts again then continue to monitor until the ambulance arrives.
- **Do** allow the person time to come round completely then make him or her comfortable and explain what has happened.
- A loss of muscle control during the fit can cause incontinence, which may be embarrassing for the patient. **Do** reassure that this is all right and as soon as the patient is ready, assist in a change into comfortable dry clothes.
- During a fit the person may bite their tongue causing some bleeding in the mouth; although painful this will not harm them.
- **Do** ring the GP/ Detox Nurse to inform him / her of events.

**Confusion**
If the patient starts to lose the sense of where he or she is, or what day it is, or starts to see and hear things that are not there then the GP / Detox Nurse should be informed immediately, or the patient taken to A&E.

**Over-sedation**
If the individual undergoing detox gets very drowsy, miss out a dose and if this continues, or they become difficult to rouse, contact the GP or Detox Nurse.
IF DRINKING IS RECOMMENDED
****CHLORDIAZEPoxide MUST NOT BE COMBINED WITH ALCOHOL AND THE DETOX
SHOULD STOP IF THE PATIENT STARTS DRINKING****

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Alcoholics Anonymous 028 90 4434848
Al Anon 028 90 682368
GP Out of Hours 02871 865195
Lifeline 0808 808 8000
Samaritans 028 82 244944
Gransha Hospital 02871 860261
Altnagelvin Hospital 02871 345171
South West Acute Hospital 028 66 382000
Tyrone County Hospital 028 82 833100

Alcohol and Drug Service

Alcohol and Drug Service, Woodlea 02871 865237
Addiction Treatment Unit, Omagh 028 82 835453 or 028 82 835365
Community Addiction Team, SWAH 028 66 382073
Damien House, Derry 02871 361156
Ramona House, Omagh 028 82 252730
Foyle Haven, John Street 02871 365259

Number of your own General Practitioner:

...................................................................................................................................................

Supporter’s Contact Number:

.....................................................................................................................................................
Appendix 7: Benzodiazepine Equivalence Table and example lorazepam and diazepam withdrawal regimens

### Equivalence Table (BNF 66, September 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benzodiazepine</th>
<th>Dose equivalent to chlordiazepoxide 15mg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lorazepam</td>
<td>500 micrograms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diazepam</td>
<td>5mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrazepam</td>
<td>5mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temazepam</td>
<td>10mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Example Lorazepam withdrawal regimen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lorazepam Stabilisation Dose Day 1 / A&amp;E</th>
<th>Low risk plus CIWA ≥ 8</th>
<th>Medium risk plus CIWA &lt;15</th>
<th>Medium risk plus CIWA ≥ 15 or High Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.5mg qds</td>
<td>1mg qds</td>
<td>2mg stat Repeat hourly up to 3 doses or CIWA-Ar &lt;8 Then 2mg qds + 2mg hourly PRN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 0.5mg 2-hourly PRN</td>
<td>1mg 2-hourly PRN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stabilisation dose Day 2</th>
<th>Low risk plus CIWA ≥ 8</th>
<th>Medium risk plus CIWA &lt;15</th>
<th>Medium risk plus CIWA ≥ 15 or High Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.5mg tds + 0.5mg 2-hourly PRN</td>
<td>1mg qds</td>
<td>1-2mg qds + 1mg 4-hourly PRN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>0.5mg qds</td>
<td>1mg qds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
<td>0.5mg bd</td>
<td>0.5mg tds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 5</td>
<td>0.5mg nocte</td>
<td>0.5mg bd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 6</td>
<td>0.5mg nocte</td>
<td>0.5mg bd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the time of writing this policy, Lorazepam did not have UK marketing authorisation for the management of delirium tremens. Informed consent should be obtained and documented.
Steps for managing alcohol withdrawal using diazepam:

- **If low risk category:**
  - Monitor using CIWA every hour
  - Write up for prn diazepam 10mg dosages, up to 40mg in 24 hrs
  - Review after 1 hour
  - If CIWA < 8 – nil  If CIWA ≥ 8 give 10mg diazepam stat
  - Review after 1 hour
  - If CIWA < 8 – nil  If CIWA ≥ 8 give 10mg diazepam stat
  - If 2 consecutive CIWA scores of < 8 probably OK to stop formal monitoring
  - If > 2 prn doses required review clinical picture, consider re-categorising patient and consider commencing fixed dose diazepam regimen starting from 10mg qds (*Day 3 - see below*)

- **If medium risk category + initial CIWA < 15:**
  - Give 15mg diazepam stat
  - Write up for prn diazepam 15mg dosages, up to maximum 100mg in 24 hrs
  - Review after 1 hour
  - If CIWA < 8 - nil  If CIWA ≥ 8 – give further 15mg diazepam stat
  - Review after 1 hour
  - CIWA < 8 - nil  If CIWA ≥ 8 – give 15mg diazepam stat
  - Continue hourly reviews until 2 consecutive CIWA < 8 then start fixed dose regimen from 15mg / 10mg / 10mg / 15mg (*Day 2 - see below*)
  - If > 2 consecutive 15mg stat doses needed review clinical picture and consider transfer to high risk pathway

- **If high risk category or medium risk + initial CIWA ≥ 15**
  - Give 20mg diazepam stat
  - Write up for prn diazepam 20mg dosages, up to maximum 100mg in 24 hrs
  - Review after 1 hour
  - If CIWA < 8 - nil  If CIWA ≥ 8 – give further 20mg diazepam stat
  - Review after 1 hour
  - If CIWA < 8 - nil  If CIWA ≥ 8 – give 20mg diazepam stat
  - Continue hourly reviews until 2 consecutive CIWA < 8 then start fixed dose regimen from 15mg qds (*see below*)
  - If > 3 doses at 20mg look at policy on difficult to stabilise patients (*see section 8.1*)
Fixed dose diazepam reducing regimen:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>15mg qds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2</td>
<td>15mg / 10mg / 10mg / 15mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>10mg qds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
<td>10mg tds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 5</td>
<td>5mg qds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 6</td>
<td>5mg bd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Community detoxes generally start on Day 2 (i.e. 5 day reducing course).

- Hospital detoxes have the initial stabilisation period which is essentially ‘front loading’ the patient before the fixed dose reducing regimen begins.

- Having comparable reducing regimens in hospital and in the community allows for ease of communication if patients are admitted or discharged.
Appendix 8: Dependence: ICD-10 Diagnostic guidelines

A definite diagnosis of dependence should usually be made only if three or more of the following have been present together at some time during the previous year:

- A strong desire or sense of compulsion to take the substance;
- Difficulties in controlling substance-taking behaviour in terms of its onset, termination, or levels of use;
- A physiological withdrawal state when substance use has ceased or have been reduced, as evidenced by: the characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance; or use of the same (or closely related) substance with the intention of relieving or avoiding withdrawal symptoms;
- Evidence of tolerance, such that increased doses of the psychoactive substance are required in order to achieve effects originally produced by lower doses (clear examples of this are found in alcohol- and opiate-dependent individuals who may take daily doses sufficient to incapacitate or kill nontolerant users);
- Progressive neglect of alternative pleasures or interests because of psychoactive substance use, increased amount of time necessary to obtain or take the substance or to recover from its effects;
- Persisting with substance use despite clear evidence of overtly harmful consequences, such as harm to the liver through excessive drinking, depressive mood states consequent to periods of heavy substance use, or drug-related impairment of cognitive functioning; efforts should be made to determine that the user was actually, or could be expected to be, aware of the nature and extent of the harm.
Appendix 9: Standard Alcohol Detoxification Management Flowchart

Evidence of heavy alcohol use / dependence / potential need for detox

Determine risk category *

Low
- patients with high risk but non-continuous alcohol use and / or low level dependence
- neither recent withdrawal symptoms nor recent drinking to prevent withdrawal symptoms
- no alcohol on breath test and no significant withdrawal signs / symptoms (CIWA <8)
- typical consumption < 15u /day
- drinking pattern 3-4 days / week only
- recent detox within last 2/52
- SADQ <15

Medium
- continuous pattern to alcohol consumption
- consuming 15 - 30 units / day
- drinking to relieve withdrawal symptoms
- evidence of significant alcohol withdrawal
- no evidence or history of severe withdrawals (seizures / DTs)
- 15 - 30 SADQ

High
- current high alcohol intake (>30 units/day) for at least 5 days consecutively
- history of severe withdrawal, DTs or withdrawal seizures
- signs suggestive of Wernicke’s
- high medication requirement during previous detoxifications
- multiple substance addiction e.g. heavy regular or chronic benzodiazepine use in particular
- high levels of agitation / confusion
- evidence of visual or auditory hallucinations
- hyperpyrexia or profuse sweating
- significant withdrawal symptoms / signs at blood alcohol level >100mg/100ml
- SADQ score > 30

Initial CIWA score / Prescribe Thiamine / Review electrolytes

Start stabilisation stage of detox (see below when to start detox)

Low risk
- Monitor / consider using CIWA every hour
- Write up for prn chlordiazepoxide (CDZ) 20mg dosages, up to 80mg in 24 hrs
- Review after 1 hour
- If CIWA < 8 – nil
- If CIWA > 8 give 20mg CDZ stat
- Review after 1 hour
- If CIWA < 8 – nil
- If CIWA > 8 give 20mg CDZ stat
- If 2 consecutive CIWA scores of < 8 probably OK to stop formal monitoring
- If > 2 prn doses required review clinical picture, consider re-categorising patient and consider commencing fixed dose regimen from 20mg qds

Medium Risk plus CIWA <15
- Give 30mg CDZ stat
- Write up for prn CDZ 30mg dosages, up to maximum 250mg in 24 hrs
- Review 1 hr
- If CIWA < 8 - nil
- If CIWA > 8 – give further 30mg CDZ stat
- Review 1 hr
- CIWA < 8 - nil
- If CIWA > 8 – give 30mg CDZ stat
- Continue hourly reviews until 3 consecutive CIWA <8 then start fixed dose regimen from 30mg qds
- If > 2 consecutive 30mg stat doses needed review clinical picture and consider transfer to high risk pathway

Medium Risk plus CIWA ≥ 15 or High Risk
- Give 40mg CDZ stat
- Write up for prn CDZ 40mg dosages, up to maximum 250mg in 24 hrs
- Review 1 hr
- If CIWA < 8 - nil
- If CIWA > 8 – give further 40mg CDZ stat
- Review 1 hr
- If CIWA < 8 - nil
- If CIWA > 8 – give 40mg stat
- Continue hourly reviews until 3 consecutive CIWA < 8 then start fixed dose regimen from 40mg qds
- If > 3 doses at 40mg look at policy on difficult to stabilise patients

Fixed dose Chlordiazepoxide reducing regimen:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>40mg qds</th>
<th>20mg tds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Day 2</td>
<td>Day 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30mg qds</td>
<td>10mg qds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20mg qds</td>
<td>10mg bd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Omit doses:
- If patient is asleep or appears over-sedated omit prescribed dose and then review when next dose due
- Consider re-using breathalyser if any suspicion of alcohol consumption on ward

When to start detox:
- Ideally 6-8 hours after last drink
- Blood ethanol level should ideally <100mg/100ml and falling
- Some people who are severely alcohol dependent can experience significant withdrawal with a blood alcohol concentration of 100mg per 100ml or more.
- Medication may then be required but use caution with dosages and consult with senior doctors.

Difficult to stabilise – consider higher dose CDZ, change to Lorazepam Section 8.1

DTs / Seizures / Severe agitation / Behavioural disturbance
Section 8.2 – 8.3

Vulnerable groups – elderly, young, Liver D, pregnant, benzodiazepine dependent  Section 9

* Extra caution and dose adjustment may be needed if patient is on other sedating medications
Appendix 10: Useful contacts for people with alcohol / drug problems

**AA**
SELF REFERRAL

**ALCOHOL DETOX NURSES**
WOODLEA: 07740761312
OMAGH: 07940598037
ENNISKILLEN: 07769302385

**ALCOHOL LIAISON NURSES**
ALTNAGELVIN: 02871345171
SWAH: 02866382000 ext 252042

**ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICE, WOODLEA HOUSE, GRANSHA PARK** 02871865237
**ADDITION TREATMENT UNIT, T and F, OMAGH** 02882835443/5365
1-1 COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR ALCOHOL AND DRUG USERS 18 – 65 YRS
SUBSTITUTE SUBSCRIBING FOR OPIATE USERS
COMMUNITY DETOX
ACCESS TO IN-PATIENT PROGRAMME
HIDDEN HARM SOCIAL WORKERS
REFERRAL VIA GP / SS / ALN / PROBATION

**DAISY, 29 STRAND ROAD / OPPORTUNITY YOUTH** 02871371162
SERVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE FROM TEENAGE TO 26YRS
DEALS WITH ALCOHOL AND DRUGS / SELF REFERRAL / OPEN REFERRAL

**DAMIAN HOUSE** 02871361156
MENS HOSTEL, COMMUNITY DETOX FACILITY.
ACCESS VIA GP / WHSCT

**DOMICILLARY OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR OLDER PEOPLE** 02871314239
65 YEARS +
REFERRAL GP / WHSCT
CONTACT EVELYN BRETT

**FOYLE HAVEN** 02871 865259
DROP IN CENTRE FOR ALCOHOL USERS / STREET DRINKERS.
ADDRESSES PRACTICAL ISSUES / DROP IN CENTRE
OPEN REFERRAL / SELF REFERRAL, 9AM – 10PM

**FOYLE VALLEY HOUSE** 02871362689
14 BEDDED HOSTEL FOR WOMEN WITH SEVERE ALCOHOL PROBLEMS

**GATEWAY TEAM** 02871314090
FIRST POINT OF CONTACT FOR CHILDCARE CONCERNS

**HOUSE IN THE WELLS** 02871266392
25 BEDDED HOSTEL FOR MEN WITH SEVERE ALCOHOL PROBLEMS
HURT HAVE YOUR TOMORROWS  02871369696
LISTENING EAR / ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ALCOHOL OR DRUG PROBLEMS
FAMILY / USER SUPPORT
SELF REFERRAL / CONTACT SADIE

LIFELINE  0808 808 8000
CRISIS SUPPORT
CONFIDENTIAL COUNSELLING
SIGNPOSTING TO ALTERNATIVE SERVICES

NEEDLE AND SYRINGE EXCHANGE SCHEME
LLOYDS PHARMACY, EBRINGTON TERRACE, DERRY
SUPERDRUG, FERRYQUAY STREET, DERRY
LLOYDS, BELMORE STREET, ENNISKILLEN

NORTHLANDS  02871313232
ADVICE AND COUNSELLING
IN PATIENT PROGRAMME
SELF REFERRAL

OAKS DROP IN CENTRE MAIN STREET LISNASKEA  02867751913

RAMONA HOUSE  02882252730
RESIDENTIAL FACILITY / COMMUNITY DETOX FACILITY FOR MALE / FEMALE
GP / WHSCT

Samaritans  08457909090

SR CONCILLIOS, NEWRY  02830262429
IN PATIENT PROGRAMME / GP REFERRAL

SOLACE, IRVINESTOWN  02868628737
COMMUNITY SERVICE TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES EFFECTED BY THE MISUSE OF ALCOHOL

ST VINCENT DE PAUL  02871265489
PROVIDE CLOTHING / PARCTICAL AID

Substitute Prescribing for Opiate Users  02871865239
DERRY
CONTACT LORNA FOREST / JENNIFER HEGGARTY
OMAGH / ENNISKILLEN  02882835852
CONTACT JOSEPHINE MULLAN
SERVICE PROVIDED BY LOCAL TRUST ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICE

Supporting Women Alcohol Project Omagh Area (Bernie Kerlin)  07590353384
TYRONE & FERMANAGH HOSPITAL, OMAGH 02882833100.

WHITE OAKS CENTRE, CO.DONEGAL 0035374938440
ADVICE AND COUNSELLING
IN PATIENT PROGRAMME / GP REFERRAL / SELF REFERRAL
RING FOR UP TO DATE INFO
References:


Department of Health. MOCAM – Model of Care for Alcohol Misusers. 2006

DHSSPSNI.gov.uk. Adult Drinking Patterns in Northern Ireland 2011 Central Survey Unit

Drugs and Therapeutics Bulletin. Managing the heavy drinker in primary care DTB 2000;38:8 60-64


National Institute for Clinical Excellence. Alcohol use disorders and clinical management of alcohol-related physical complications, NICE Clinical Guideline 100, July 2010

National Institute for Clinical Excellence. Alcohol dependence and harmful alcohol use, NICE Clinical Guideline 115, Feb 2011


Royal College of Physicians (RCP). Alcohol – can the NHS afford it? Royal College of Physicians of London 2001


