

Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

Bulletin No.2- H42

Source Christian Institute

Doctors and nurses are increasingly experiencing the negative impacts of England's drug problem, as figures reveal a sharp rise in opioid-based admissions.

Figures from NHS Digital show tens of thousands of admissions for heroin and other similar drugs in 2018-19, a rise of 121 per cent since 2006-07.

It comes as some politicians call for drug laws to be weakened and the expansion of centres where addicts can inject themselves without fear of arrest.

'Suspicious behaviour'

At one hospital, bosses had to lock wards after staff witnessed suspected drug dealing.

North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust said: "Staff have witnessed suspicious behaviour such as packages being stored behind drainpipes and using open newspapers as a cover in suspected drug deals.

"We suspect that patients are arranging illicit drug deals while in hospital."

The trust said there had been an average of two drug-related incidents a month.

'Stoned'

A senior nurse from a hospital in Yorkshire told The Independent that she spoke out after seeing a man hide drug-taking equipment on a hospital site.

David Harding, who worked at a hospital in the South West, explained how some new mums would take drugs while in hospital with their babies.

"Some mothers would come back to the ward stoned or admit to having gone out of hospital to score or had taken heroin in the hospital."

Rise

According to official figures, there were 30,409 "finished admission episodes" (see below) involving opioids and other synthetic narcotics in England in 2018-19.

This compares to 29,486 in the previous year and 13,720 in 2006-07.

The NHS points out that the figures "do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the period".

Election Briefing 2019

In October, MPs on the Health and Social Care Committee called on the Government to decriminalise all illegal drugs and to introduce so-called shooting galleries, where addicts can inject themselves without fear of arrest.

But the Government said it "has no plans to decriminalise drug possession".

Bernard Holden MBE JP

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