Practice Matters 

Parental Substance Use - Guidance in assessing and testing drug and alcohol abuse

**Introduction**

Alcohol and substance misuse can often be a feature of adult behaviour when working with families within Children’s Services. The care and treatment they receive is primarily provided by primary healthcare and specialist services. On the **rare occasions** when it is appropriate for Children’s Services social workers to become directly involved in this processes through ***drug testing***, the following guidance must be used in conjunction with the DDSCP guidance on [Working with Substance Misusing Parents](http://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_wking_par_misusing_subs.html).

Where the adult is known to adult substance misuse services then full details of their testing regime, outcomes of tests, drug use and clinical safety plan should be requested, to ensure there is no duplication in Children’s Services seeking to undertake testing and both agencies are working in partnership to achieve change and keep the child safe.

**How and when to test:**

1. Testing should only take place with prior agreement of a Team Manager as part of an active on-going care plan (the case must be complex, serious needs or child protection threshold).

1. All testing should have a:
	* + A clear rationale for testing – what drug is being tested for and why
		+ Permission of the person undertaking testing and this to be uploaded onto Mosaic
		+ The frequency of testing to be clearly outlined
		+ The outcomes of drug testing to be recorded in the Child’s Plan and each test result to be recorded in case notes on Mosaic.
2. A review date set for the testing should be identified in the ‘drug testing consent form’ to either continue or cease. This should also be reviewed as part of the Child’s Plan every 6 weeks.
3. Any challenges around the testing or requests for further confirmation testing should be agreed by the Team Manager prior to further actions.
4. All workers administering a test need to be fully trained, use designated gloves and be fully compliant with the testing regime.
5. All test kits should be ‘signed for’ on the ‘drug testing monitoring sheet’ when taken from the office, indicating the worker testing, manager agreement, subject details and drug test barcode. Any unused tests to be returned immediately to ensure they are used ‘in date’ (drug testing kits have a ‘use by’ date of 3 months).
6. The outcome of the drug test needs to be uploaded onto Mosaic, discussed with the subject and discussed in supervision to inform future testing. The regularity of drug testing should be reviewed as part of the Child’s Plan every 6 weeks.
7. Where legal proceedings are being considered under Public Law Outline (PLO) or are already initiated, hair strand testing may form part of the plan if this is deemed to be in the child’s best interests. This should be discussed with the Team Manager, Legal Services and the Head of Service prior to any agreement to ensure there is no duplication in testing.

**Drug Testing Workflow**

Social Worker speaks to Team Manager to obtain agreement for testing, recording decision on Mosaic



**Drug testing consent form** to be completed by the worker, this needs to include a clear rationale for testing and the frequency of testing.

Any drug testing should be reviewed as part of the Child’s Plan every 6 weeks.



Test kits are signed in / out from business services using the **drug testing monitoring sheet**.



Worker then obtains signature of service user being tested, record on the **drug testing consent form**



Testing is then completed, ensure that test kit is ‘in date’ also that **gloves are used** when completing the test and you are fully trained.



After testing the worker puts service user initials and DOB on the drug company testing form and uses customer code DCCXXX/DCCXXX and records customer name: ‘*your locality Children’s Services* ’. (e.g. *Amber Valley Children’s Services,* etc)

**Please specify what drug is being tested for, DO NOT TICK ALL BOXES.** It should be clear from the drug testing consent form what test the Team Manager has agreed and why. **All testing should be ‘*screen*’, a further discussion should be held with the Team Manager if a further ‘*confirm*’ test is required.**

Worker signs / dates white copy (bottom), Service user signs yellow copy (donor signature)

White copy goes to the lab with the completed drug test, yellow copy is kept by the worker and blue copy is given to Service User



Social Worker provides business services with the yellow copy of the testing - Swab is posted to lab and the results are returned to Business services once completed

**Once test results returned** - Business services then upload results onto adult’s documents and case notes the results onto the child’s file and then alerts Social Worker.