

07/02/18 Message sent on behalf of Lynn Lock, Health & Wellbeing Hub Manager, Youth Resilience Service

Dear colleague

Further to the hospitalisation of six young people in Wandsworth from their school setting yesterday for "Xanax misuse" I write to remind you of the following:

Xanax is a tradename of a benzodiazepine called Alprazolam which is **not** prescribed on the NHS in the UK. It is a class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

Across Kingston and Richmond this drug is prevalent – it is important to ensure that young people know the health dangers of taking this drug and that as professionals we do not respond in a way that is judgmental or punitive.

Xanax can be addictive and can cause significant concerning symptoms in young people such as seizures, inability to communicate, lethargy and not knowing what is going on. These symptoms can be heightened and exacerbated by other substances particularly alcohol.

It is important that agencies including schools have a proactive and educative response to Xanax and other drug use that is realistic and based on the fact that young people will use drugs and messages that are simply "say no to drugs" do not work.

If you have concerns that a young person has taken Xanax, the advice is that they should be seen by a medical professional as soon as possible. This can be by attending their own GP; liaising with 101 for health advice; or, where there are symptoms of concern, by taking them to the nearest accident and emergency department.

When discussing substance use with young people it is always important to ensure that they are given correct factual information and offered the opportunity for a referral to the young people's substance misuse team which is not posed as a direct closed question, and is part of a discussion around support and learning. The team can offer consultation and advice to professionals as necessary.

You can also source advice and information from the government's Frank website at <http://www.talktofrank.com/>

I attach a leaflet that I would be grateful if you could distribute to young people and their parents and to colleagues.

Kind regards

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