



SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

Date: May 2026

SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

Contents

1. Introduction to the Policy
2. How this Policy Benefits the Home
3. Definitions & Legislation
 - 3.1 Definitions
 - 3.2 Key Legislation and Statutory Guidance (table)
4. The Policy
 - 4.1 Policy Statement and Commitment
 - 4.2 Scope – Where and to Whom the Policy Applies
 - 4.3 Illicit Drugs (Controlled Substances)
 - 4.4 Alcohol
 - 4.5 Smoking and Vaping (E-Cigarettes)
 - 4.6 Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medicines
 - 4.7 Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS), Solvents, Gases and Other Intoxicants
 - 4.8 Confiscation, Storage and Disposal of Substances (DOE/ACPO Guidance)
 - 4.9 Support Services for Children and Young People
 - 4.10 Effective Drugs Education
 - 4.11 Staff Support and Training
5. How the Home Trains its Staff About this Policy
6. Related Policies and Guidance
7. Policy Approval and Review Details

1. Introduction to the Policy

This policy sets out the framework, principles, and procedures that **Byram House** follows to manage substance misuse by children, young people, staff, and visitors. The policy applies to all staff, agency workers, volunteers, and anyone acting on behalf of Byram House, whether at 62 Deighton Road, 66 Deighton Road, or elsewhere, including on trips, visits, and residential activities outside the home. **The Home is Byram House, which comprises the two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road.** This policy applies equally across both residences.

Byram House is committed to providing a healthy environment in which neither the misuse of drugs (including legal substances such as medicines, tobacco, alcohol, and vaping products) nor the illegal or unauthorised supply of these substances is condoned. The first concern in managing substances is the health and safety of the children and young people in placement and the safe operation of the home.

We wish to continuously work towards being a **drug-aware home** in all aspects of residential life, providing an environment, ethos, and routine that supports and prepares children and young people for the choices they may be required to make in their lives.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, including the **Misuse of Drugs Act 1971**, the **Psychoactive Substances Act 2016**, the **Health Act 2006** (smoking ban), the **Children and Families Act 2014**, and the **Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015**.
- Prioritise early intervention and support over criminalisation where appropriate, while involving police for serious or repeated offences.
- Provide clear guidance on confiscation, storage, and disposal of substances in line with **DOE/ACPO guidance** (Department for Education / Association of Chief Police Officers).
- Ensure staff are trained to recognise substance misuse, respond appropriately, and refer children to specialist support services.
- Deliver effective drugs education through key working sessions and partnerships with local education providers and drug services.

2. How this Policy Benefits the Home

This Substance Misuse Policy benefits Byram House in the following ways:

- **Legal Compliance** – It ensures the home meets its duties under the **Misuse of Drugs Act 1971** (possession and supply offences), the **Psychoactive Substances Act 2016** (bans production and supply of NPS), the **Health Act 2006** (smoke-free premises), the **Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015** (Regulation 23 and Quality Standard 10 – Health and Wellbeing), and the **Human Medicines Regulations 2012**.
- **Child Safety** – It prioritises health and safety, with clear procedures for handling discarded syringes/needles, confiscating substances, and involving police only when necessary to avoid criminalisation where support is more appropriate.
- **Early Intervention** – It recognises that substance misuse can indicate deeper problems (e.g., trauma, exploitation, mental health) and commits to exploring root causes and referring to specialist young people’s substance misuse services.
- **Clarity for Staff** – It defines what is meant by “substance” (including illicit drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping, NPS, solvents, glues, gases, and prescription medicines). It sets out when and how to confiscate substances, with a two-witness rule and police notification.
- **Education and Prevention** – It requires drugs education as part of key working, using age-appropriate resources and methods that build skills (risk assessment, resisting pressure, finding help).
- **Staff Training** – It requires regular substance misuse training for staff, including e-learning, external professionals, and upskilling.
- **Inspection Readiness** – The **Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) 2026** expects homes to promote health and wellbeing, including managing substance misuse risks. This policy provides clear evidence.

3. Definitions & Legislation

3.1 Definitions

Term	Definition
Home	Byram House, the children’s home registered with Ofsted, comprising two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road.
Company	IMS Care LTD, the registered provider and legal entity responsible for operating Byram House.
Byram House	The name used throughout this policy to refer to the home and its staff.
Substance	Any prescribed or over-the-counter medication, tobacco and nicotine products (including e-cigarettes), alcohol, novel psychoactive substances (NPS), caffeine products, solvents, glues, gases, other intoxicants misused to get high, and illegal drugs covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.
Illicit Drugs	Controlled drugs classified under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (Class A, B, C), possession or supply of which is a criminal offence unless authorised.
Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS)	Formerly “legal highs”, banned under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. It is an offence to produce, supply, or possess with intent to supply.
Volatile Substances	Solvents, glues, gases (e.g., butane, nitrous oxide) that can be inhaled to produce intoxication.

DOE/ACPO Guidance	Joint guidance from the Department for Education and the Association of Chief Police Officers (now NPCC) on the management of controlled drugs in schools and children's homes.
Harm Reduction	A pragmatic approach focusing on reducing the negative consequences of substance use rather than solely demanding abstinence.
Psychoactive Substances Act 2016	Bans the production, supply, and possession with intent to supply of any substance capable of producing a psychoactive effect, excluding exempted substances (alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, medical products).

3.2 Key Legislation and Statutory Guidance

Legislation / Guidance	Key Provisions	Relevance to this Policy
Misuse of Drugs Act 1971	Classifies controlled drugs into Class A, B, and C. Makes it an offence to possess, supply, or produce controlled drugs.	Staff must understand the legal status of substances. Possession or supply on home premises is a criminal offence. Police may need to be involved for serious incidents.
Psychoactive Substances Act 2016	Bans the production, supply, and possession with intent to supply of any psychoactive substance (NPS). Possession alone is not an offence for individuals (except in custodial settings).	Staff should be aware that NPS cannot be supplied legally. If a child possesses NPS, the home may confiscate and dispose of it (but cannot supply to others).

Health Act 2006	Prohibits smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces, including children’s homes. E-cigarettes are not covered by the ban but most homes have policies restricting them.	Byram House is a smoke-free premises. Staff and visitors must not smoke inside. Designated smoking areas may be provided outside.
Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015	Regulation 23 – health and wellbeing. Quality Standard 10 – Health and Wellbeing – requires homes to promote healthy lifestyles and manage health needs.	The home must have policies addressing substance misuse as part of health and wellbeing. This policy fulfils that requirement.
Human Medicines Regulations 2012 (replacing Medicines Act 1968)	Governs the sale, supply, and administration of medicines. Prescription medicines must be stored securely and administered as prescribed.	The home must manage prescription and over-the-counter medicines safely, including checking for misuse or diversion.
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026	Published March 2026. Strengthens multi-agency accountability and responses to extra-familial harms, including exploitation (which may involve substance misuse).	Substance misuse can be linked to criminal exploitation (county lines). Staff must be alert to signs of coercion and report concerns under safeguarding procedures.
Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children’s Homes 2026	Effective 1 April 2026. Focuses on children’s lived experience and whether the home promotes healthy lifestyles and manages risks.	Inspectors will evaluate how the home educates children about substance misuse, supports those

		with problems, and maintains a safe environment.
DOE/ACPO guidance (updated 2024)	Provides advice on managing controlled drugs in schools and children's homes, including confiscation, storage, police notification, and recording.	This guidance is followed for the safe handling of suspected controlled substances found on the premises.
NICE guideline NG226 – Substance misuse prevention (2022, updated 2025)	Recommends multi-component interventions, including education, family support, and community programmes, tailored to local needs.	The home's drug education programme should be evidence-based and tailored to the needs of the children.

4. The Policy

4.1 Policy Statement and Commitment

Byram House is committed to providing a healthy, safe, and supportive environment. We do not condone the misuse of any substance (legal or illegal) by children, young people, staff, or visitors, nor the illegal or unauthorised supply of such substances.

Our first priority is the health and safety of the children and young people in our care and the safe operation of the home.

We aim to:

- Promote a **drug-aware** culture.
- Provide early intervention and support to children who misuse substances.
- Work in partnership with specialist substance misuse services, the police (where necessary), and placing authorities.
- Educate children about the risks of substance misuse and develop their skills to make informed choices.
- Ensure staff are trained and confident to respond to substance-related incidents.

4.2 Scope – Where and to Whom the Policy Applies

This policy applies to:

- **All staff**, agency workers, volunteers, and contractors of Byram House.
- **All children and young people** placed at Byram House.
- **All visitors** to the home.

It applies:

- Within the home boundaries (62 and 66 Deighton Road).
- On all home visits, trips, and residential activities outside the home.
- In all online interactions where substance misuse is promoted or arranged.

The policy covers:

- Illicit drugs (controlled substances under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971).
- Alcohol.
- Smoking and vaping (including e-cigarettes).
- Prescription and over-the-counter medicines (when misused).
- Novel psychoactive substances (NPS), solvents, glues, gases, and other intoxicants.

4.3 Illicit Drugs (Controlled Substances)

Possession and supply:

- Possession or supply of controlled drugs on the home premises is a criminal offence. Byram House will not condone such activity.
- The home will handle minor incidents internally where possible, prioritising support and behaviour change over criminalisation, in line with the principle of avoiding unnecessary criminalisation of children.
- For serious or repeated offences (especially supply), the police will be involved.

Discarded needles / syringes / drug-use equipment:

- If a syringe, needle, or other drug-using equipment is found on the premises:
 - **Do not touch** without protection (use gloves and a sharps container).
 - Clear the area of children and secure the equipment safely.

- Place the sharps in a designated sharps disposal container (if available) or contact the local authority for safe collection.
- Report the incident to the Registered Manager.
- If the equipment is suspected to be contaminated with blood-borne viruses, follow infection control procedures.

Confiscation of suspected controlled drugs (see section 4.8 for detailed procedure):

- If staff have reasonable suspicion that a child is concealing drugs, the home manager may authorise a property search in line with the home's Search Policy.
- Any suspected drugs found will be confiscated, stored securely, and the police notified without delay.

Information sharing:

- Appropriate individuals/relevant professionals (e.g., social worker, placing authority) will be informed of incidents unless there are safeguarding reasons not to (e.g., ongoing police investigation).

Support and intervention:

- Substance misuse may indicate deeper or complex problems (e.g., trauma, exploitation, mental health). The home will explore the individual circumstances of any incident before deciding on action.
- The home will make referrals to **local specialist substance misuse support services for young people** where there is any concern about substance use.

4.4 Alcohol

- The use of alcohol by **any child or young person** at the home is prohibited at all times.
- **Staff members** are not permitted to consume alcohol while on duty or on call. Staff must not attend work under the influence of alcohol.
- **Visitors** are not permitted to bring alcohol onto the premises or consume alcohol while on the premises.

- If a child arrives at the home under the influence of alcohol, staff will:
 - Ensure the child's immediate safety (monitor for alcohol poisoning, seek medical advice if needed).
 - Record the incident and inform the child's social worker and the Registered Manager.
 - Use the incident as a key working opportunity to discuss risks of alcohol misuse.
- Repeated alcohol-related incidents may lead to referral to specialist young people's substance misuse services.

4.5 Smoking and Vaping (E-Cigarettes)

Smoking ban:

- Byram House is a **smoke-free premises** under the Health Act 2006. Smoking is prohibited in all enclosed areas of the home, including inside 62 and 66 Deighton Road.
- Designated smoking areas may be provided outside (away from windows, doors, and children's play areas). Smoking is only permitted in these designated areas.
- **Staff members** are not permitted to smoke or vape with children and young people.
- **Children and young people** are not permitted to smoke or vape inside the home. Where a child is of legal age (18) and their care plan permits, smoking may be allowed in an external designated area at agreed times. The home will support smoking cessation.

Vaping (e-cigarettes):

- The home recognises that vaping is less harmful than smoking but is still not permitted for children except where a child has been prescribed an e-cigarette as a smoking cessation aid (rare). Generally, vaping is treated the same as smoking.
- Staff must not vape in the presence of children or in any indoor area of the home.

Support for reduction / quitting:

- Individual plans will be in place for children who smoke or vape, focusing on harm reduction, education, and support to quit.

- Key working sessions will address the dangers of smoking and vaping, including nicotine addiction and long-term health effects.

4.6 Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medicines

- All prescription and over-the-counter medicines must be stored securely in accordance with the home's Medication Policy.
- Medicines must only be administered as prescribed or as indicated on the packaging (for OTC).
- Misuse of prescription medicines (e.g., taking more than prescribed, sharing with others, using for non-medical purposes) will be treated as substance misuse and addressed under this policy.
- Staff must be alert to signs of medicine misuse (e.g., stock discrepancies, unusual behaviour, frequent requests for pain relief).
- Any concerns about diversion of prescription medicines (e.g., a child selling or giving their medication to others) will be reported to the Registered Manager and the child's social worker, and the police may be involved.

4.7 Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS), Solvents, Gases and Other Intoxicants

- NPS (formerly "legal highs") are banned under the **Psychoactive Substances Act 2016**. Production, supply, and possession with intent to supply are criminal offences. Simple possession is not an offence for individuals (except in custodial settings), but the home will confiscate any NPS found and dispose of them safely.
- Solvents, glues, gases (e.g., butane, nitrous oxide), and other intoxicants are covered by this policy. The home will remove such items from children's possession where there is a risk of misuse.
- Staff must be aware of signs of solvent or gas abuse (e.g., chemical smells, empty aerosol cans, red eyes, slurred speech).
- Health risks are significant (including sudden death from cardiac arrest). Any incident involving solvent/glue/gas misuse will be treated as a serious safeguarding concern and will trigger a referral to specialist services.

4.8 Confiscation, Storage and Disposal of Substances (DOE/ACPO Guidance)

When staff suspect or discover a controlled drug or other prohibited substance, the following procedure applies, based on **DOE/ACPO guidance**:

Step 1 – Two-adult witness

- Never handle suspected drugs alone. Ensure a **second adult witness** is present throughout.

Step 2 – Sealing and labelling

- Seal the substance in a **plastic bag** (or suitable container).
- Label the bag with the date, time, location found, name of the child (if known), and the names of both staff witnesses.

Step 3 – Secure storage

- Store the sealed bag in a **secure location** (e.g., safe or lockable cupboard) with access limited to senior staff (Registered Manager, Deputy).

Step 4 – Notify the police

- Contact the police **without delay** (using the non-emergency number 101, unless there is immediate risk – then 999).
- Obtain a **police incident reference number** and record it.

Step 5 – Recording

- Record full details of the incident in the home's incident report and the child's file, including:
 - Date, time, location.
 - Description of the substance (if known).
 - Names of witnesses.

- Police incident reference number.
- Any actions taken (confiscation, search authorisation, police collection).
- If the police collect the substance, obtain a receipt or reference.

Step 6 – Information sharing

- Inform the child's social worker and the placing authority.
- Identify any safeguarding concerns and develop a support and restorative response.

Step 7 – Disposal

- If the police do not collect the substance (e.g., they determine it is not a controlled drug or it is a small amount of NPS), the home must dispose of it safely in accordance with local waste disposal guidelines for pharmaceutical or hazardous waste. Do not flush down toilets or throw in general waste.

Search authorisation:

- The home manager may authorise a property search if there are **reasonable suspicions** that a child is concealing drugs. Searches must be conducted in line with the home's Search Policy and with respect for the child's dignity.

4.9 Support Services for Children and Young People

The home will provide children and young people with opportunities to gain appropriate support and information if they have worries or concerns about substance misuse.

Local specialist services:

- Each home will source local arrangements for young people's substance misuse support (e.g., Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service, early intervention hubs).

- Referrals will be made with the child's consent (if age-appropriate) and in partnership with the placing authority.

National helplines and resources:

- **Talk to Frank** – 0300 123 6600 (24/7) – www.talktofrank.com – free, confidential advice.
- **Childline** – 0800 1111 – for children and young people.
- **Narcotics Anonymous** – www.ukna.org – support for substance addiction.

The home will work with external agencies to deliver group sessions or one-to-one interventions where beneficial.

4.10 Effective Drugs Education

Drug education is an important aspect of the home's key working system and, where appropriate, in partnership with the child's school.

Aims of drug education:

- **Knowledge and understanding** – short- and long-term effects, risks, rules and laws, impact on individuals, families and communities, prevalence among peers, moral and social issues.
- **Skills development** – assessing, avoiding and managing risk, communicating effectively, resisting pressures, finding help and advice, problem-solving and coping strategies, self-awareness and self-esteem.
- **Attitudes exploration** – exploring own and others' attitudes towards drugs, challenging stereotypes, and examining media and social influences.

Teaching methods:

- OFSTED has stated that good drug education shares the features of well-taught lessons in any subject, but skills learned in one context (e.g., assertiveness to resist bullying) may not transfer automatically to substance use situations unless the link is made explicit.
- The home will ensure that drug education explicitly links skills to drug and alcohol situations.
- Drug education will be delivered through key working sessions, group discussions, and external speakers (e.g., from local drug services).
- Resources will be up-to-date, age-appropriate, and based on the needs of the young people (informed by surveys, discussion, and local data). The focus will be on substances most relevant to the age and experiences of the children (e.g., medicines, tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, NPS).

4.11 Staff Support and Training

To effectively support children and young people, staff will receive training and development on substance misuse.

Training available includes:

Training type	Frequency / Provider
Substance misuse awareness	Annually (e-learning or face-to-face) – covers signs and symptoms, risks, legal framework, and response protocols.
Substance misuse upskilling (internal)	As needed – delivered by the Registered Manager or senior staff.
External substance misuse professionals	At least annually – e.g., a local drug service worker joins a team meeting to provide guidance.
Harm reduction and first aid	As needed – including recognising overdose and naloxone use (where relevant to local need).

Staff are required to:

- Complete annual substance misuse training.
- Know how to report a substance-related incident.
- Know the local specialist substance misuse service referral pathway.
- Understand that substance misuse can be linked to exploitation and must be reported under the Safeguarding Policy.

5. How the Home Trains its Staff About this Policy

Byram House provides structured training to ensure all staff understand and can implement this Substance Misuse Policy effectively.

Training Element	Frequency	Method / Content
Induction	Upon appointment	Face-to-face training covering: definitions of substances (illicit, alcohol, tobacco, NPS, solvents), legal framework (Misuse of Drugs Act, Psychoactive Substances Act, Health Act 2006), the home's zero-tolerance approach to supply, handling discarded needles, confiscation and storage (DOE/ACPO procedure), smoking/vaping rules, support services, drugs education, and the dual-site operation (62 & 66 Deighton Road).
Annual refresher	Every 12 months	Classroom or virtual session covering updates to legislation (e.g., changes to drug classifications, NPS updates), case studies, and refresher on confiscation procedure.
Substance misuse awareness	Annually	E-learning or face-to-face covering signs of intoxication, health risks, withdrawal symptoms, and how to respond to an overdose (including calling 999, recovery position, naloxone where applicable).
Safeguarding and exploitation	Annually	Training on the link between substance misuse and criminal exploitation (county lines), CSE, and radicalisation. Reporting under the Safeguarding Policy.
Confiscation and police liaison	At induction and biennially	Practical training on the two-adult witness rule, sealing and labelling, secure storage, obtaining police incident reference, and recording.

Drugs education delivery	As needed	Training for key workers on delivering age-appropriate drug education, using resources, and making explicit links to skills.
Record keeping	Ongoing	All training recorded on staff personnel files; managers monitor compliance.

Staff are required to:

- Read and sign this policy annually.
- Complete all mandatory training sessions.
- Know the location of the safe or designated locked container for confiscated substances.
- Immediately report any substance-related incident or suspicion to the Registered Manager or On Call Manager.

6. Related Policies and Guidance

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Medication Policy
- Search Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children's Homes 2026
- DOE/ACPO Guidance (Department for Education / National Police Chiefs' Council) – *Searching, screening and confiscation* (latest edition)

7. Policy Approval and Review Details



Byram House

Policy Name	Substance Misuse Policy	
Home	Byram House	
Reviewed by	Danyaal Iqbal / Mustafa Amin	Deputy Manager / Registered Manager
Approved by	Stacey Wagstaffe	Responsible Individual
Date	May 2026	