

Information for Doctors and other Health Professionals

Bristol & District Tranquilliser Project (BTP) The Organisation and Services

What are the Objectives of the Project?

The Bristol Tranquilliser Project is a voluntary sector organisation set up originally in 1985 to help those having problems with prescribed psychotropic medication. It is mainly funded by the Bristol Primary Care Trust to help clients in the Bristol area under an annual Service Level Agreement.

The Project has the following main objectives:-

1. To help people to withdraw successfully from benzodiazepines at a sustainable pace.
2. To help people to withdraw successfully from all other prescribed psychotropic medication where appropriate.
3. To encourage people to lead normal lives after withdrawal, without recourse to any psychotropic medication.
4. To educate people about alternatives to prescribed medication and to carry out preventative work to help people avoid becoming addicted to prescribed medication.

We work closely with doctors and other health professionals to support anyone needing help. If you wish to contact us for further information telephone the office line on: 0117 9622509 open 10am – 4-m Monday – Thursday or e-mail us at enquiries.btp@hotmail.co.uk

Who is the Project for?

Adults who are taking, considering taking or have recently taken prescribed benzodiazepine tranquillisers/sleeping tablets, non-benzodiazepine sleeping tablets or antidepressants.

How do Clients Contact us?

Either by phoning, e-mailing or writing to us.

- Phone us on our helpline (0117) 9628874, open from 10.00am to 4.00pm Mondays to Thursdays.
- Email us at help.btp@hotmail.com
- Write to us at 88 Henleaze Road, Henleaze, Bristol BS9 4JY

We do not require that they are referred to us by a doctor. We do however inform doctors of all clients coming to the Project, and ask clients to keep their doctor informed of progress.

What does it Cost the Client/Doctor?

We do not make any charge. Clients can make a small donation if they wish.

Who Works at the Project?

There are five part-time staff, namely a Project Manager, a Senior Project Worker and a Project Worker, who all counsel clients on prescribed medication issues, and two job-share Admin Workers. Most of our prescribed drugs counselling staff have personal experience of involuntary addiction to prescribed psychotropic medication. We also have a small team of volunteers who have similar experience.

What Services does the Project Provide?

We offer the following main services:-

1. A one-to-one prescribed drugs counselling service particularly for those new to the Project or who are experiencing especially severe withdrawal symptoms.
2. Weekly group meetings at Henleaze, led by our prescribed drugs counselling staff, with a strong user involvement.
3. Weekly outreach group meetings at Knowle and Southmead, and also home visits and visits to hospitals and health centres.
4. A drop-in service at Henleaze 5 times a week for those in particular distress and already using the services of the Project.
5. A telephone helpline service (10.00am to 4.00pm Mondays to Thursdays). Anyone, whether they are attending the Project or not, can use this service.

How does the Project Help People to Withdraw?

The Project provides a safe, supportive atmosphere where clients can discuss the problems caused by benzodiazepine addiction or problems caused by other prescribed psychotropic medication with our prescribed drugs counselling staff and volunteers. Clients are encouraged to cut down gradually on the dose of the drug they are taking. With short or medium acting benzodiazepines there often comes a point where further reductions become difficult or impossible. We usually then advise that the client switches over to an equivalent dose of diazepam.

Clients are supported by the Project throughout withdrawal and the post-withdrawal period, which may go on for several months or even longer.