

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 15

06 February 2026

Question No. 838

Ms Deborah Morris MLA: To ask the Minister for Corrections –

1. What support is offered to detainees found in possession of drugs that are suspected to be for personal use at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC).
2. What process is available to detainees at the AMC who wish to self-report struggling with drug addiction.
3. What process is available to detainees at the AMC who wish to report another detainee they suspect of struggling with drug addiction.

DR MARISA PATERSON MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. Where a detainee is found to be in possession of a prohibited item – including where these items are suspected to be drugs – ACTCS staff follow the *Detainee Discipline Policy 2023*.

Where a detainee receives a positive drug test result, Case Managers engage with detainees to discuss the results and make them aware of treatment options and, with detainee consent, will action a referral to the internal ACTCS Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) team to complete the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST) and provide harm minimisation information (see also section 6 of the *Drug and Alcohol Testing in Correctional Centres Policy 2022*), noting that participation in AOD programs is voluntary.

The Justice Health Services (JHS) AOD team provide health-focused support, which can include clinical assessment, withdrawal management, brief interventions, counselling, and harm minimisation education. Where clinically indicated, the AOD team creates a care plan in collaboration with a JHS Medical Officer (MO), and recommends withdrawal observations, including vital signs, which are completed by JHS nursing staff. Nursing staff are also trained to identify AOD intoxication, withdrawal signs and symptoms, and to escalate any concerns to the JHS MO and the AOD team as soon as practicable.

Symptom-directed pharmacological support for withdrawal is also provided where clinically indicated, in accordance with JHS guidelines and procedures.

The JHS Complex Care Team (CCT) is notified to provide clinical assessment, blood-borne virus screening and education focused on blood-borne virus prevention in instances when injecting equipment is found by ACTCS.

2. Detainees within the AMC can self-refer to the JHS AOD team and/or a JHS MO, for support with drug addiction. Referrals to the AOD team can either be made via a JHS self-referral form, or by letting the JHS nursing team know during one of the daily medication rounds in accommodation areas. Referrals are submitted through the electronic clinical record system and are reviewed and triaged by the AOD team.

From an ACTCS perspective, all detainees are seen during the induction process and, through the Footprint survey, are asked if alcohol and/or drugs contributed to their incarceration. Detainees who consent can be referred to the internal ACTCS AOD team to complete the ASSIST and are provided harm minimisation information. Detainees may also self-refer to JHS, SMART Recovery program and the SOLARIS program for AOD supports.

3. ACTCS has several formal and informal methods available should detainees have concerns regarding drug use or addiction of other detainees. These include reports made via peer mentors, directly to ACTCS staff, or anonymously via the complaints process.

If a detainee reports to JHS staff that another detainee is struggling with drug addiction, the AOD team will meet confidentially with the reporting detainee to discuss their concerns.

Where appropriate, the AOD team may speak confidentially with the detainee or their cohort, to offer targeted support services, noting all health interventions are voluntary, confidential, clinically indicated and operate independently of custodial processes.

Where appropriate, JHS engages with external organisations, such as Hepatitis ACT, to also provide targeted education and support to detainee groups identified as being at risk.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



**Dr Marisa Paterson MLA
Minister for Corrections**

Date: 13/03/26

This response required 6hrs 30mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$602.38.