

# Treatment of addiction, harmful drug use and mental illness (dual diagnosis)

This information is for people who suffer from both an addiction and a mental illness (dual diagnosis).

[If you would rather read this information on your phone, you can go to \[www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/afhængighed\]\(https://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/afhængighed\)](https://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/afhængighed) (in Danish) or scan the QR code with your phone.



## Treatment of dual diagnosis in the mental health services

The mental health services currently offer outpatient and in-hospital treatment for those with a dual diagnosis. As part of a new policy, the mental health services will begin to make major changes in 2024, making it possible to offer integrated treatment for mental illness and addiction to anyone who needs it.

## Addiction and harmful drug use must be treated

For many people, addiction and harmful drug use is an illness that requires treatment before you can recover from it. If you also suffer from a mental illness, the challenge is even more complex – and the addiction is an extra heavy burden. The mental health services have therefore developed various

treatment options for people who have both a mental illness and an addiction or harmful drug use (dual diagnosis).

## Three targeted treatment options

The Capital Region of Denmark's Mental Health Services have three targeted treatment options for people aged 18 and over who have a dual diagnosis.

### **APU – outpatient treatment (not hospitalised)**

If you suffer from a non-psychotic mental illness and are addicted to alcohol, drugs or medication. The treatment is closely coordinated between the Stolpegård Psychotherapeutic Centre in Gentofte and the Alcohol and Drug Centre in your municipality. Please note that not all municipalities offer this.

[You can read more about APU at www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/apu](http://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/apu) (in Danish) or by scanning the QR code with your phone .



### **Department M – inpatient treatment**

Department M is a special function at the Sct. Hans Psychiatric Centre in Roskilde. It consists of three wards and an induction ward, where you can be hospitalised and treated for serious mental illness combined with an addiction or harmful use that is difficult to treat.

[You can read more about Department M at www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/afdeling-m](http://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/afdeling-m) (in Danish) or by scanning the QR code with your phone.



### **Treatment at the special outpatient clinic in Østerbro, Copenhagen (not hospitalised)**

The special outpatient clinic offers intensive psychiatric treatment and treatment for drug addiction under the same roof, and is part of Department M at the Sct. Hans Psychiatric Centre.

[You can read more about the special outpatient clinic in Østerbro at www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/specialambulatoriet](http://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/specialambulatoriet) (in Danish) or by scanning the QR code with your phone



## Withdrawal

Prolonged consumption of drugs and alcohol creates not only a mental dependence in your reward centre, but also a physical addiction, because your body adapts to the drugs you are taking.

If you stop taking the drugs and cease to have alcohol or drugs in your body, you may experience various withdrawal symptoms.

These include:

- nausea
- diarrhoea
- tremors
- sweating
- headaches
- fever
- and possibly convulsions.

The most serious and potentially fatal withdrawal symptoms are convulsions and/or delirium. Delirium is when you suddenly become very disoriented and confused, restless or apathetic. Convulsions and delirium must be treated urgently, and they are most often seen in connection with alcohol addiction.

### **Withdrawal symptoms must be treated**

You need help to treat your physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms, as stopping overnight can be potentially life-threatening. Withdrawal symptoms are treated using medication based on the specific drugs you have taken, and in what quantities and for how long.

With proper treatment, the strong discomforts from your physical addiction will fade, but your psychological dependence will still create feelings, thoughts and physical symptoms that it will take much longer to overcome.

## Changes and new treatment options

As part of a new policy, the mental health services' focus on addiction and drugs will undergo major changes between 2024 and 2027, such that mental illness and drug problems will be treated together.

The changes will mean that:

- the mental health services (the region) will be responsible for the integrated treatment of addiction and/or harmful drug use in people with mental illness
- in future there will be no 'wrong way in' to being treated for addiction. In the past, some people were deemed to have such a severe harmful drug use problem that traditional psychotherapy would be of no benefit, or to be too mentally unstable to undergo traditional addiction treatment. As a result, they slipped into a gap between municipal and regional treatment services.

### **Treatment of mental illness, addiction and harmful drug use must be integrated**

The integrated treatment of mental illness, addiction and/or harmful drug use will be based on the assumption that these things must be seen as a combined problem. That mental illnesses, addiction and harmful drug use cannot be seen as isolated conditions, but are intertwined, and therefore require treatment together.

Drug use and mental illness are intertwined because drugs are often used as a form of self-medication or to numb the side effects of medication, and can worsen mental symptoms.

In short, the purpose of the treatment effort will be to work out the aim of your detoxification and treatment. For example, do you want to stop taking drugs and drinking alcohol, reduce your consumption or reduce the harm caused by your addiction?

Reducing harm means helping you to do the least possible harm to yourself or those around you. For example, by reducing the number of drugs you take, by taking drugs that are less potent, or by pushing your drug use to later in the day. Once this has been decided, staff will work with you to develop an integrated treatment plan for both your mental illness and your addiction.

The aim should be to make your life as good as possible.

### **Gradual expansion of treatment offer**

Over the next four years, there will be a gradual expansion of the integrated treatment offered by the mental health services.

- From September 2024, integrated treatment will be offered to patients who are undergoing psychiatric treatment and who also have a drug problem.
- From July 2025, integrated treatment will be offered to patients who are undergoing psychiatric treatment and who should previously have been offered treatment for drug use by the municipal services.
- From July 2026, integrated treatment will be offered to patients who should previously have been offered treatment for drug use by the municipal services, and who are presumed to suffer from moderate to severe mental illness.

The fact that treatment for addiction must be integrated with the treatment of mental illnesses in the future means that:

- staff need further training
- new staff must be taken on to perform the task.

### **Special focus on research into dual diagnoses**

The Capital Region of Denmark's Mental Health Services already play a key role in the research being done into dual diagnoses in Denmark, and CORE at Copenhagen Psychiatric Centre, TRACK at Amager Psychiatric Centre and the Competence Centre for Dual Diagnoses have been working with this particular issue for a number of years.

In the future, a CAG (Clinical Academic Group) will be set up to focus on investigating which therapies work best for people with a dual diagnosis, with a view to developing comprehensive new recommendations in the area.

## **More knowledge and counselling**

### **Psykiatriguiden – overview for patients and relatives**

In Psykiatriguiden, we have gathered all relevant information about mental illnesses, types of treatment and treatment programmes offered by the mental health services of the Capital Region of Denmark. You can also read about being a relative of a person with a mental illness..

[Find Psykiatriguiden \(in Danish\) at www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/psykiatriguiden](http://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/psykiatriguiden) or by scanning the QR code with your phone.



### **Living with mental illness**

You can find specific tools designed to help you in your everyday life at [www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/hverdagen](http://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/hverdagen) (in Danish) or by scanning the QR code with your phone.



### **Counselling from PsykInfo**

At PsykInfo in the Capital Region of Denmark, nurses with experience from the mental health services offer telephone or personal counselling to both patients and their relatives. [You can read more at www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/Psykinfo](http://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/Psykinfo) (in Danish) or call 38 64 13 00. You can also scan the QR code with your phone.

