

RICHMOND DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICE

'Empowering Change Within You'

JANUARY 2025 BULLETIN

Spreading festive cheer: wreath-making workshop at Cedars Road



In the lead-up to Christmas, St Mungo's PDR team hosted a heartwarming wreath-making workshop at Cedars Road. The workshop provided an opportunity for RWCDAS clients to express their creativity and connect with one another in a festive and supportive environment. The session was made possible through the support of local florist Mary Jane Vaughan Designs, who delivered the workshop and donated a stunning Christmas tree.

For many clients, the workshop was a meaningful way to engage with others and learn new skills. A participant stated: "Since coming here, it has helped with my mental health and my alcohol abuse. The activities and wellbeing treatments here have been really helpful. For the last few weeks, I've been feeling down, but coming here today and participating in this workshop has brought out my inner creativity and the inner artist I forgot I had. Even though I was part of the workshop last year, I knew I wanted to be part of it again."

The workshop concluded with smiles all around, as participants admired their beautiful wreaths. The sense of accomplishment and connection was palpable and a testament to the value of such initiatives in fostering community and wellbeing.





Psychology at RWCDAS

There is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to overcoming addictions. Your recovery journey will depend on your personal circumstances which might involve attending key work sessions and/or groups, making changes to your social situation, expanding your social network, trying new activities and working towards improving your physical health. Additionally, psychological input can play a role in recovery and maintaining abstinence, as it can help with improving wellbeing and quality of life while supporting positive changes to your alcohol/substance use.

Psychological thinking is at the core of RWCDAS, as we are a psychologically informed service. The psychology team is involved in your support from the very beginning of your engagement with our service. Our psychologists provide consultation to the wider team so that our service maintains a psychosocial approach throughout your recovery journey. Our psychology team have input through joint assessments, reviews of your treatment (directly or indirectly), and liaison with other services in the NHS as well as third sector organisations that may be involved in your care. Our team endeavours to keep up with the latest mental health research and developments in order to implement the most effective evidence-based support that is tailored to your needs and circumstances.

During your recovery journey you may access psychological interventions through groups or individual psychological therapy. Our substance specific groups have been designed a facilitated by qualified psychologists integrating peer support with psychosocial interventions and evidence-based interventions such as motivational interviewing. All our group interventions aim to offer a supportive, non-judgemental and confidential space where you can explore a reflect on your personal recovery journey.

Our psychology team also offers short-term, solution focused and goal oriented individual psychological interventions that are informed by psychological theory and therapies such as CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy), EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), Compassion Focused Therapy and DBT (Dialectical Behavioural Therapy). These interventions at RWCDAS are delivered by trained psychologists and therapists, and use exploration of internal experiences (i.e. feelings and thoughts) and/or changes to behaviour to help people with their issues.

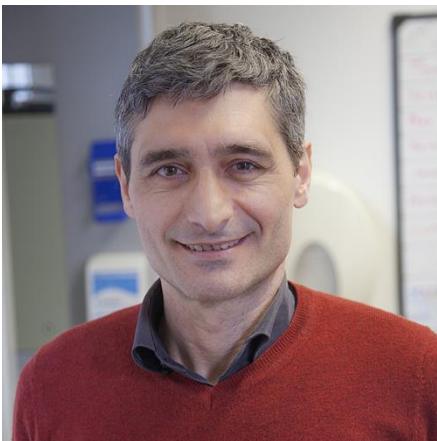
Meet RWCDAS Psychology Team



Dr Charlotte Lemaigre

Consultant Clinical Psychologist

Hi, I'm Charlotte. As the Consultant Psychologist for the service, my role is to primarily oversee the psychology team. Alongside other senior management colleagues, I support the delivery of a safe and effective service at RWCDAS. One of my biggest passions is helping colleagues to become more trauma aware and I am a strong advocate for self-care. You'll often hear me say that it's impossible to pour from an empty cup, so it's important to look after ourselves when working in this field. In my spare time, I play netball and I enjoy running.



Claudio Costanza

Senior Clinical Psychologist

I'm Claudio. I've worked in addiction services for over 30 years in different roles. My special interests are personality disorders and complex trauma. I'm a keen cyclist and you'll find me cycling to and from work every day, even in terrible weather!



Dr Elâ Örücü

Senior Clinical Psychologist

Hello, I'm Elâ. I am a Clinical Psychologist, and I work at the St John's site. I feel passionately about working with people who are experiencing multiple disadvantages. I am interested in working with people to understand how difficult life events impact our ability to feel safe with others and build and maintain trusting relationships. I also have often worked with people who might see or hear things that other people do not and know that these experiences are meaningful and important and that we can make sense of them. Outside of work I enjoy cooking, open water swimming and cycling.

**Emily Mitchell**

Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Hello, I'm Emily and I am a trainee clinical psychologist at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN), currently on placement at RWCDAS. I have a particular interest in the association between experiences of trauma and drug and alcohol use and look forward to re-introducing a trauma stabilisation group at the service.

**Gabriel Meszaros**

Assistant Psychologist

Hi, I'm Gabriel. My education background is in psychology, psychotherapy and philosophy. I am passionate about mental health and assisting individuals towards growth and greater self-fulfilment. I have interest in music, film, travelling, nature, and I am a keen hiker which helps me to feel more connected to nature as well as myself.

**Dr Maryam Omid**

Senior Clinical Psychologist

I'm Maryam, a clinical psychologist at Wandsworth Community Drug and Alcohol Service. I use a harm reduction framework to provide therapy to individuals who want to better understand and manage their substance use, and any co-occurring mental health conditions. My role also involves helping trainees to learn about addiction and to develop their identities as new therapists. My interests include cats, dancing, and cooking.

Meet RWCDAS Psychology Team



Lavinia Cramer
Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Hello, I'm Lavinia, a Trainee Clinical Psychologist currently completing a placement at WCDAS. I have experience supporting clients with long term health conditions, anxiety, depression and trauma symptoms. I enjoy the variety of work in addiction services and supporting clients from a wide range of backgrounds.



Dr Sophie Mulhall
Clinical Psychologist

My name is Sophie Mulhall. I am a clinical psychologist working in Richmond and Wandsworth. As part of my role, I offer talking therapies to people who are currently experiencing mental health difficulties alongside substance misuse. I also support with some of our groups in RWCDAS and value seeing how connecting with others is such an important part of recovery. Outside of work, I'm most likely to be found walking, playing or cuddling with my dog!

A CLIENT'S STORY

This is a brief case study that was written with the client. Their words are used as much as possible, though this is a summary of what they have said rather than a direct transcription. They have given permission for their story to be shared in this way.

“In July 2023 I was given a room through support from the organisation Spear. The room was in an HMO just outside of the area I had been rough sleeping in. Prior to 2023, I had spent roughly 25 years rough sleeping, sofa surfing and struggling to sustain accommodation. Sustaining accommodation was difficult, I struggle with impulse control and anxiety, I'd often spiral when I didn't know how to deal with a day-to-day difficulty such as paying a bill or dealing with debt. I always struggled to pay my rent whenever I was housed. I wasn't on the correct benefits and was often being penalised for not attending appointments and things like that. I never really had enough money to pay for everything that I needed to pay for- or enough impulse control to follow through with all the payments on time or even the knowledge to make the payments.

Though services were sometimes there to help me, I couldn't ever find someone I trusted. I need a lot of convincing that you're going to do what you say you will, and I need to see fast results too. I always found it difficult when people who were supporting me couldn't communicate in a way that I could follow and understand- too many words and I get lost. Being supported by organisations where the staff changed a lot also meant that I never got to build this trust. Even with Drug & Alcohol services, I used to just turn up to pick up my script. I didn't want to engage and do the groups or any of that.

Over the last 12 months or so things have changed for me. I have changed. During the first 6 months in my accommodation, I began to see the opportunities that were there for me. I thought enough is enough. I want to enjoy life. I thought a lot about what my family would think of me, and this motivated me to make changes.

When I moved in, in 2023, I got allocated a Spear support worker with my accommodation. This support began to feel different. She's consistent and follows through with that she says she will do. She helps me practically and the support is ongoing. Having one main keyworker to start with, and her being there consistently, really helped me to trust the support this time.

I think my age also played a factor in me being ready to make changes. I spent probably 10 years thinking about making changes, but I could never really see the opportunities that would come with making those changes before. Now I can.

For a long time in my life, I thought I'd always use drugs. I was 18 years old when I first tried heroin, it was there in my life throughout my whole adulthood. I started to think that it was who I was. Now I feel have I chances, I feel that I have people supporting me that actually care.

I always have an all or nothing approach to life, so when I decided to quit drugs, I knew I would stop both heroin and crack. It's been 10 months since I last used. It's been the first time in my adult life that I'm doing normal everyday things with a clear head. I guess I got sick of being different people [different versions of me depending on what I was using]. Now I can see that I can just be me. I'm getting to see that I can do things without drugs. I'm learning that my emotions that I've been numbing with substances for so long are there for a reason. I'm enjoying feeling my full range of emotions- even the fear and anxiety are exciting- they mean I'm doing something new. I'm learning that I can fill my day. Walking around is now something that I can enjoy- it's not just killing time, there's so much to see.

The support I have now, from RWCDAS and Spear feels different. I feel like I'm being heard and listened to. My support team are able to understand me.



Photograph by client

RECOVERY BASED GROUPS

RWCDAS offers a variety of recovery- based groups in a safe, non-judgemental environment. These groups provide opportunities for clients to share their experiences, gain insights, and support one another, enhancing the likelihood of long-term recovery.

Below is the list of available groups. **To attend, please request a referral from your keyworker.**

Monday

- **Therapeutic Recovery (Abstinent clients)**

11:00 -12.30 @117 Cedars Road

This group looks at theories of personality development within environments and connections, personal development, relationships and conflict resolution.

- **Harm Reduction (Non-abstinent clients).**

14:15 - 15:30 @ 117 Cedars Road

This group explores strategies to reduce harm from substances use and provide support for personal and family wellbeing.

Tuesday

- **Ketamine Group**

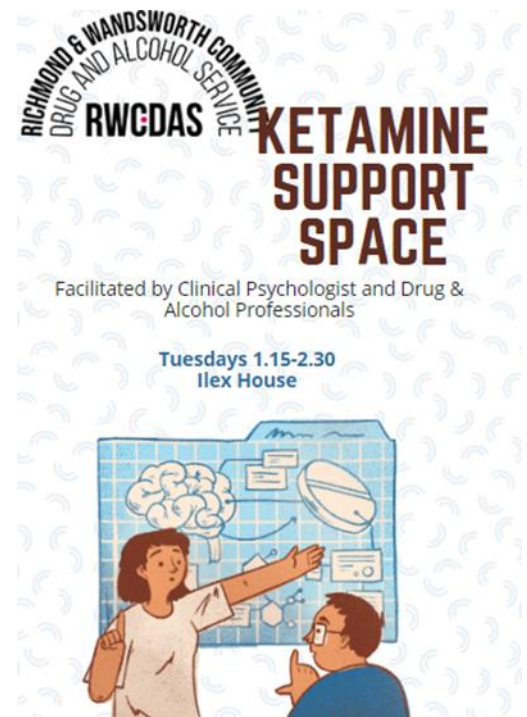
13:15- 14:30 @Ilex House

A 6-session programme covering ketamine' facts and legalities, physical and emotional impact, harm reduction, social re-engagement and recovery planning.

- **Moving Forward Group (Abstinent clients)**

18.15- 20:00 @ 117 Cedars Road.

The group looks at developing further strategies of resilience, coping and maintaining foundations of change post-treatment.



Wednesday

- **Alcohol Group (Abstinent and non-abstinent clients)**

14:00 – 15:30 @St John's

The group focuses on the impact of alcohol on physical and mental health, harm minimisation, relapse prevention advice, recovery goals setting.

Thursday

- **WCDAS Breakfast Club (Abstinent and non-abstinent clients)**

10:00 – 11:00 @ St John's

This group provide support for alcohol harm reduction, ambivalence and relapse prevention whilst providing a healthy breakfast

- **Women's group**

12:00-13:00 online

Safe space for women to discuss trauma, drugs, and alcohol use.

- **Stimulant group (for individuals who primarily use cocaine and/or crack cocaine)**

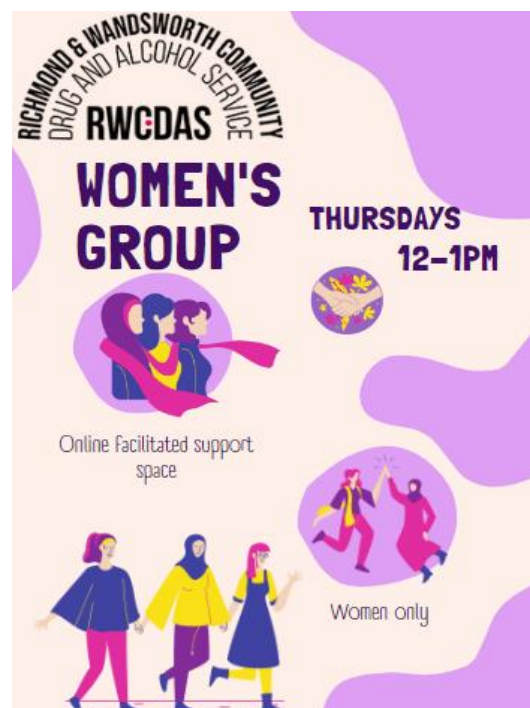
12:00-13:30, @ 117 Cedars Road

The group provides support for reducing stimulant use and setting and achieving recovery goals. It covers topics including the cycle of change, Johari window, triggers and cravings and preventing lapse and relapse.

- **Cannabis group**

13:30-14:30 @ Ilex house

The group explores relationship between cannabis use and mental health, goal setting, psychoeducation on sleep and anxiety, cannabis reduction and relapse prevention.



Thursday

- **Neurodiversity Group**
13.45-15.00 @ 117 Cedars Road.
CBT-based support for clients managing substance use and neurodiverse needs.
- **Evening Group (Abstinent and non-abstinent clients)**
19:00 - 20:30 Online.
Focus on motivation, goals and recovery support in the community

Friday

- **Relapse Prevention (Abstinent clients)**
12:00 – 14:00 @ 117 Cedars Road,
This group focuses on strategies for maintaining abstinence, overcoming barriers and achieving full potentials
- **RCDAS Alcohol Group (Abstinent and non-abstinent clients)**
13:30 pm– 14.30 @ Illex House.
The group focuses on the impact of alcohol on physical and mental health, harm minimisation, relapse prevention advice, recovery goals setting

Saturday

- **Saturday Morning Group (Abstinent and non-abstinent clients)**
11:00 - 13:00 @117 Cedars Road
The group is a forum where clients explore their relationship with substances in a nonjudgmental, empathic and organic way. It aims at empowering individuals and at building internal resilience.



NEW GROUP

Women's tree of life group

What is a tree of life group?

The idea of a Tree of Life group was created by Ncazelo Ncube-Mlilo, a Zimbabwean psychologist and narrative therapist. In a tree of life group, we draw our own unique 'trees' which capture our histories (in the "roots"), current lives (in the "ground"), strengths and skills (in the "trunk"), people who enrich our lives (in the "leaves"), and our hopes and dreams (in the "branches"). In doing this we tell our stories of who we are, explore what matters most to us, what empowers us, and can connect with each other.

Who is the group for?

This is an in-person group for women.

Where and when is the group?

The group will run for 6 weeks on Wednesdays 2.00-3.30. The group will take place at St John's Therapy Centre, and we will first meet on Wednesday 15th January 2025.



Do I have to come every week?

There is a commitment to coming to each session where possible.

Who can I speak to for more information?

Please speak to your key worker if you are interested in joining. You can also call or message Elâ (Psychologist) on 07736 458246. Elâ works at WCDAS on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

MINDFUL ART STUDIO

Come along and explore your creative side and let your creativity lead you in a safe and welcoming space that fosters healing and community

Speak to your key worker about being referred to this group.

Every Thursday from 1:30 - 3:00 PM
at The Exchange, 3rd floor studio 4.
75 London Road, Twickenham TW1 1BE

Starting Thursday 3rd October

For more information, please
contact Freddie on 07939291132

Himalahian Hatha Yoga for RWCDAS clients

When: Every Monday from 12:50 to 13:50

Where: Wellbeing Centre, 117 Cedars Road, SW4 0PY



No referral required. All abilities welcome. Mats and blocks provided.
For more info call 07702 561432 or 0781 3038284

Walk & Talk

Join our friendly walking group for a relaxing stroll along the riverside and Marble Hill park.

We then head to a local cafe for coffee and possibly take in a walk around the Stables Art Gallery.

It's a great activity to take in sights and sounds of nature.

Taking place every Wednesday,
leaving Ilex House, Twickenham at
1:30pm finishing at around 3pm.

Please speak to your RCDAS
keyworker if you'd like to be
referred.

Auricular Acupuncture

Ear acupuncture stimulates endorphins in the brain and assists with both detoxification and addiction.



Drop in takes place:

Every Wednesdays from 13:30 - 14:30 pm, Unit 2, Ilex House, 94 Holly Road, TW1 4HF.
Every Thursdays from 13:30 - 14:40 pm, Wellbeing Centre, 117 Cedars Road, SW4 0PY.

Call TC on 07874 874823 or Paul on 07872 871767 for more information

RICHMOND & WANDSWORTH COMMUNITY
DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICE
RWCDAS

ALLOTMENT WELL BEING DAYS

"To see things in the seed, that is genius." - Lao Tzu

When Tuesdays and Wednesdays
From 11:00 - 2:00 PM

Address Curiosity Gardens
Shackelgate lane Allotment
Teddington
TW11 8UJ

Please speak to you keyworker about referral into these sessions OR
TEXT Sue on 07769686539 to get address and access details

WANDSWORTH WEDNESDAYS

Connect with others, through food, workshops and other activities weekly.

Food , Chai , Chat and Chill - plus games and connection

Just come along on the day,
No referral needed!

Every Wednesday during September at 117 cedars Road , SW4 0PW



CDARS HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAMME

R.I.S.E. Financial Independence Hub

On the First Wednesday of Every Month
1pm-2:30pm

First Session: 3rd April

- ✓ Support
- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Financial Advice
- ✓ Help with Next Steps

Join us!

The hub supports a peer-led approach, skill-sharing, knowledge exchange, social connections and friendships, community building, centred around financial support.

For more information:
07393135503
mitchell.wesley@cdars.org.uk

Address
CDARS 117 Cedars Road
SW4 0PW



DEEN CITY FARM & RIDING SCHOOL

HEALTH & WELLBEING PROGRAMME WITH DEEN CITY FARM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CDARS

Every Thursday, Starting 5th October 10am-1pm

Anxious?
Struggling to connect?
Mental health getting in the way?

If so, come and get involved with activities at Deen City Farm.

Some of the activities will include:


Garden	Livestock	Riding School
Helping to maintain our community gardens and growing produce in the nearby allotment.	Assist in the day to day running of the farm, finding out about our animals and how to take care of them.	Learn to groom the horses and help with the day to day running of the stables.

Sessions will include an opportunity to meet and greet with the animals themselves!

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

withyou webchat


Our online chat service offers **free, confidential advice** to people facing challenges with drugs, alcohol or mental wellbeing.



Simply visit our website to connect with a trained advisor.

withyou wearewithyou.org.uk

We are With You, a registered charity in England (100967) and Scotland (SC246008) and a private company incorporated in England & Wales with company number 02662271. Registered office: First Lower Ground Floor, Gate House, 1-3 St. John's Square, London, England, EC3N 4JH.



We're open 364 days a year, closing only on Christmas Day.

Monday - Friday: 9am - 9pm
Saturday - Sunday: 10am - 4pm


We know that many people find the thought of attending an in-person service overwhelming, and that it's not always easy to find support outside of working hours.

Through our webchat service, you can speak to us about drugs, alcohol, or your mental wellbeing - whether you're looking for advice for yourself or for a loved one.

withyou wearewithyou.org.uk

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CHANGE PLEASE COFFEE





DRIVING FOR CHANGE RICHMOND

Come and see the services that we can provide for the homeless and vulnerable on board Driving for Change:

Oral Health Care | Nurse | Hairdresser | HSBC No Fixed Abode Bank Account Information | Drug and Alcohol Services | Pathway services for people experiencing homelessness and the vulnerable | Virgin Media O2 data bank

Civic Centre 44 York House Twickenham TW1 3BZ	22nd Aug	- 10am to 4pm
	26th Sept	- 10am to 4pm
	24th Oct	- 10am to 4pm
	21st Nov	- 10am to 4pm
	19th Dec	- 10am to 4pm
	23rd Jan	- 10am to 4pm

THE VINEYARD

Crisis Drop-In Richmond - Monday to Friday 09:00-11:00

Vineyard Community Centre, 2 The Vineyard Richmond TW10 6AQ

Open to all in need. An all-in-one hub supporting people facing homelessness, unemployment and food poverty. Support available: A safe warm space where you can access companionship, free hot breakfast, showering facilities, clean new clothing and access to computers.

There is a range of support available,

NEEDLE EXCHANGE



NEEDLE EXCHANGE

We have Needle Exchanges at both Wandsworth and Richmond Services

Open to all, both clients and drop ins/non clients.

Wandsworth:

Mon, Tues, Fri 9-4:30pm Weds 1-4:30pm Thurs 9-4:30pm-
(women's only until 1pm)

Richmond:

Mon and Fri 9am - 4.30pm Tues 9-4:30pm- (women's only until 1pm)
Weds 1.30pm-4.30pm Thurs 9-11:00am and 1:00-4.30pm

We stock:

- Safer Injecting Equipment
- Needle Bins
- Condoms
- Lube
- STI Kits

Please feel free to ask staff any questions that you may have!

SUBSTANCE USE ALERTS

Substance Alert

We have been alerted to overdoses of people who use non-opiate powders and liquids

01

Please be aware, if you use non-opiate powders/liquids/tablets (cocaine, crack cocaine, benzos, ketamine etc), we have seen a rise in overdoses, due to these substances being cut with opioids such as Nitazenes.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE HAS AN OVERDOSE, ADMINISTER NALOXONE AND CALL 999

02

These opioids are stronger than heroin and fentanyl.



PLEASE TAKE NALOXONE IF YOU USE ANY SUBSTANCES

Naloxone is available at WCDAS and RCDAS, so please talk to your keyworker. We have both Nasal and IM available and will provide training.

03

Signs of overdose

Loss of consciousness or unresponsiveness
Shallow, slow, or stopped breathing
Pinpoint pupils
Choking, gurgling, or snoring sounds
Vomiting
Limp body
Pale, blue, or cold skin
Faint heartbeat

04

If you believe your substance has been changed or you've had a different than normal reaction, please let us know, with as much detail as possible.

This alert has been produced and distributed by Merton Public Health on behalf of the Merton Local Drug Information System (LDIS) Panel

DRUG ALERT
(No' 130)
Vape containing THC used by Year 11 children in Sutton.

Merton Public Health has received information from Sutton Council relating to an incident which occurred in a school in Sutton on Friday 13th December 2024.

On the 13th December 2024, a Year 11 pupil brought a vape containing THC into the school. THC, (Tetrahydrocannabinol), is the main psychoactive constituent of cannabis. Four pupils are known to have used this vape; one was taken to St Helier Hospital via ambulance, and two were reported as 'looking green'.

The student who was taken to hospital experienced the following symptoms:

- Drowsiness
- Slurred Speech
- Breathing difficulties
- Unconsciousness
- High heart rate
- Dilated pupils

The student, who brought in the THC vape, has been asked to provide further details in relation to how they acquired the vape, initial indications suggest it was purchased on the internet.

Please share this information with the staff within your service or organisation and please take this as an opportunity to remind young people and their parents/carers that some vapes can contain substances, such as THC, which, when consumed, can produce negative physical and mental health outcomes.

Merton residents wishing to receive support or advice in relation to drug and alcohol use can access the services below:

- The Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Treatment service is Catch-22, Merton Civic Centre, SM4 5DX, 0203 701 8641
- The Merton Adult Drug and Alcohol Treatment service is Via, 7, Langdale Parade, Mitcham CR4 2PF, 0300 303 4610.

Please continue to report any intelligence on increased drug related risks to Merton Council using the following email addresses – drug.alerts@merton.gov.uk and to OHID london.drugalerts@dhsc.gov.uk

HOW TO ACCESS SUPPORT

'Empowering Change Within You'

Walk-in for an assessment

Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 9am

Opening times: 9am - 4.30pm Mon, Tue, Fri; Wed 1.30pm-4.30pm (closed am for staff training) and Thurs closed between 11:00am – 1:00pm for staff meeting.

Tuesday women only until 1pm.

Please note walk in assessments are not available for criminal justice clients who are seen by referral only. This includes Prison, Courts, Probation, Police, Approved Premises.

Address: Unit 2 Ilex House, 94 Holly Road, TW1 4HF

Tel: 020 3228 3020

Recovery Hub: Tel: 0207 501 2615

Day Programme: 0207 498 6149

Website: <https://www.rcdas.co.uk>

National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247

Webchat: <https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/help-and-advice/about-our-online-chat/>

'Making Every Contact Count'- Signposting to Better Health and Wellbeing - www.mecclink.co.uk

<https://richmond.drinkchecker.org.uk/>

'Empowering Change Within You'

