Medications and driving
The Department of Transport brought out new rules on taking certain medications (‘controlled drugs’) and driving in March 2015.

It is YOUR responsibility to consider if your driving is, or might be, impaired on any given occasion.

Who does this affect?
The new rules now include ANYONE driving when taking certain prescribed medications.

What prescribed medications are included?
• Opioid painkillers: including morphine, methadone, oxycodone and fentanyl
• Benzodiazepines: diazepam, lorazepam, clonazepam, temazepam, oxazepam, flunitrazepam
• Ketamine
• Amphetamines such as methylphenidate

What do the new rules say?
Police will have new powers to test and prosecute drivers who are suspected of having certain medications in their body over a set limit.

This also applies to people who are attempting to drive or are in charge of a vehicle.

It will be classed as an offence to have amounts of these medications above a certain level in the body. If a roadside (saliva) test shows a person has taken one of the medications listed above, they may be required to provide a blood sample to see if the levels of medication are above the set limit. If found to be above this limit, the person may be prosecuted.
However, the new offence has a ‘medical defence’ to protect patients who are taking medications that have been prescribed for them. Police will not prosecute a patient who tests positive for these medications so long as:

- Their driving is not impaired and
- They can provide evidence that they are taking medication as directed by a healthcare professional or they are taking medication in accordance with the patient information leaflet accompanying the medicine.

For example, if you are taking morphine for pain the police will not prosecute you if:

- your driving is not impaired and
- you can provide evidence that you are taking the morphine as directed by your doctor.

**What is our advice?**

- Keep taking your medication as advised by your healthcare professionals (hospice doctor, GP and/or Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)).
- Check the leaflet that comes with your medication for information on how it might affect your driving ability.
- It is already (and remains) an offence to drive whilst impaired through drugs (either through medical or non-medical drug use).

**Do NOT drive if:**

- You feel that your driving is actually impaired e.g. if you experience sleepiness, dizziness, poor coordination, visual problems, slowed/impaired thinking or confusion.
• This is most likely when:
  - you have just started taking a medication listed above
  - the dose of that medication has recently changed
  - you are taking more of the medication for breakthrough pain or anxiety
  - you take any amount of alcohol (however small) in addition to these medications.

If you feel that you are safe to drive:
• Keep taking your medications as prescribed.

• You must take with you evidence that the medication was either
  - prescribed/supplied by a healthcare professional to treat a medical problem OR
  - taken in accordance with the leaflet accompanying the medicine (if bought over-the-counter)

• Suitable evidence could include:
  - a copy of the prescription for the medication
  - a copy of the specific advice given to you by your doctor/CNS showing what the medication is, how much you take (dose) and when
  - the patient information leaflet that came with the medicine (if bought ‘over the counter’).

If they wish to, your healthcare professional may record the advice they have given you in the table overleaf. If you have any questions please speak to a member of the St Helena Hospice Palliative Care Team on 01206 845566.
Record of advice given by healthcare professional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDICATION</th>
<th>DOSE (AMOUNT)</th>
<th>FREQUENCY (HOW OFTEN)</th>
<th>STARTED/ CHANGED ON</th>
<th>HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL (NAME &amp; DESIGNATION)</th>
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How do I comment or make a complaint about the service?

We welcome any feedback that you may have about our service. Any specific comments or complaints can be made verbally or in writing to:

Director of Patient and Family Services,
St Helena Hospice,
Myland Hall,
Barncroft Close,
Colchester,
CO4 9JU

t: 01206 845566