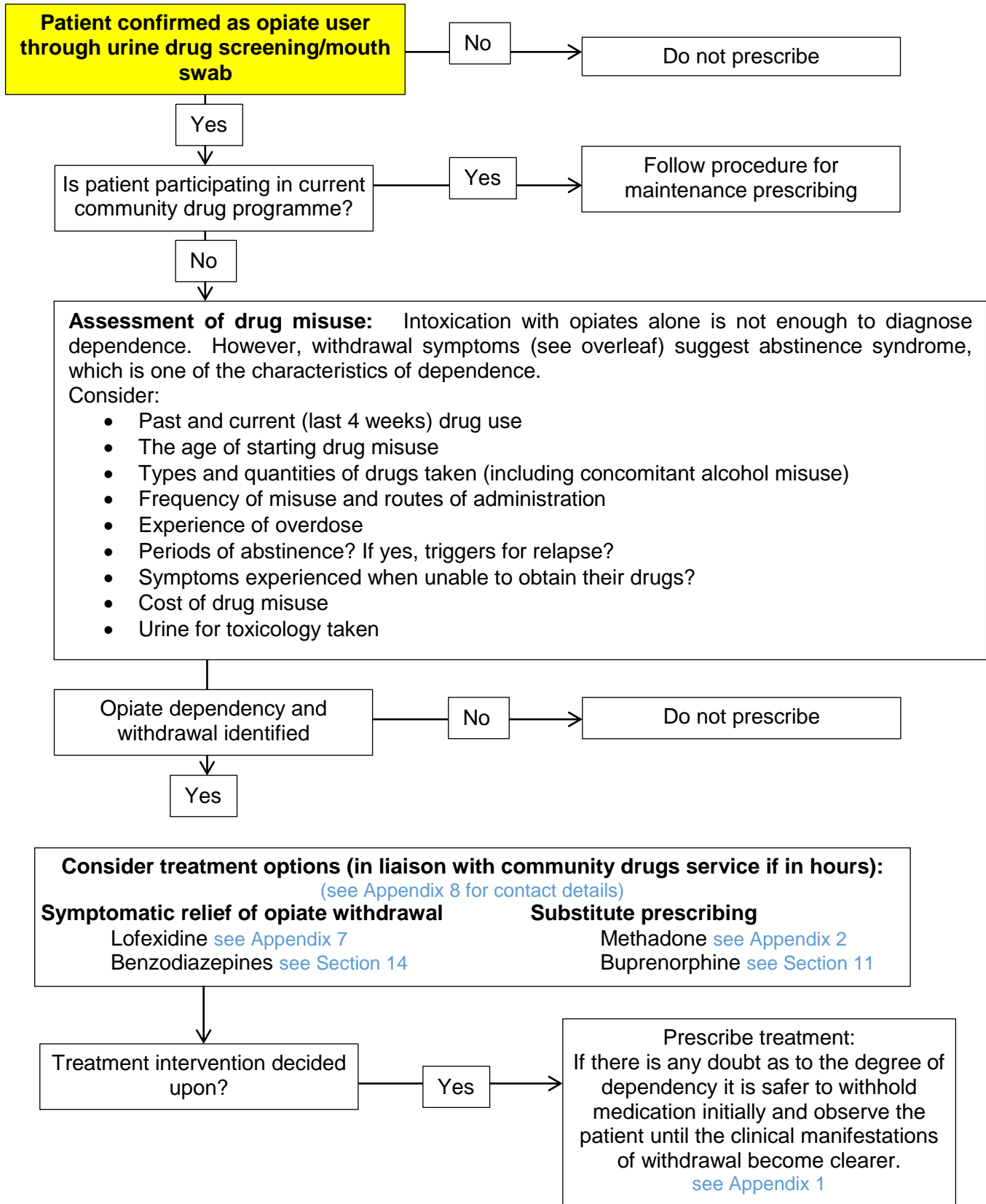


## Appendix 1: Assessment of Opiate Dependency and Withdrawal Syndrome and Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale (COWS)



**See overleaf for Opiate Withdrawal Syndrome & Assessment Scale**

## Opiate Withdrawal Syndrome<sup>13</sup>

Signs and Symptoms	Heroin	Methadone
Drug craving, anxiety, drug – seeking	6 hours	
Yawning, sweating, running nose, lacrimation	8 hours	34-48 hours
<i>Increase in above signs and:</i> Dilated pupils, goose-flesh, tremors, hot/cold flushes, aching bones/muscles, loss of appetite, abdominal cramps and irritability	12 hours	48-72 hours
<i>Increase in intensity of above and</i> Insomnia, increased blood pressure, low grade fever, increased respiration, increased pulse rate, restlessness, nausea and vomiting	18-24 hours	24-36 hours
Increase in intensity of above and Weight loss, diarrhoea, weakness, febrile, foetal position (curled up on a surface), increased blood sugar	36 hours - 4days	36 hours-4days

Objective signs of opiate withdrawal <sup>2</sup>	Subjective signs of withdrawal <sup>2</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yawning</li> <li>● Coughing</li> <li>● Sneezing</li> <li>● Runny nose</li> <li>● Lacrimation</li> <li>● Raised blood pressure</li> <li>● Increased pulse</li> <li>● Dilated pupils</li> <li>● Cool, clammy skin</li> <li>● Diarrhoea</li> <li>● Nausea</li> <li>● Fine muscle tremor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Restlessness</li> <li>● Irritability</li> <li>● Anxiety</li> </ul> <p>[The signs above may also be useful objective signs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sleep disorders/depression</li> <li>● Drug craving</li> <li>● Abdominal cramps</li> </ul>

**A patient's subjective assessment of severe withdrawal symptoms may be comparatively low when compared to objective assessment. Therefore withdrawal should be assessed using the Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Score (COWS) as detailed below:**

### COWS Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale

For each criterion, document the number that best describes the patient's signs or symptoms at the time of each assessment.

Ensure scoring is based ONLY on the apparent relationship to opiate withdrawal e.g. if the patient is tachycardic because of sepsis, the increased pulse rate should NOT be added to the total COWS score.

Patient Name:						
PiD/Hospital No:						
Enter scores at time zero, then every 4 -6 hour below.						
Date/ / /	Time:	:	:	:	:	:
<b>Resting Heart Rate</b> (beats per minute) measured after patient has been sitting or lying for 1 minute:						
Heart rate 80 or below	<b>0</b>					
Heart rate 81 – 100	<b>1</b>					
Heart rate 101 – 120	<b>2</b>					
Heart rate greater than 120	<b>4</b>					
<b>Sweating</b> over the last 30 minutes, not accounted for by room temperature or patient activity:						
No report of chills or flushing	<b>0</b>					
Subjective report of chills or flushing	<b>1</b>					
Flushed or observable moistness on face	<b>2</b>					
Beads of sweat on brow or face	<b>3</b>					
Sweat streaming off face	<b>4</b>					

<b>Restlessness</b> observation during assessment:							
Able to sit still	<b>0</b>						
Reports difficulty sitting still, but is still able to do so	<b>1</b>						
Frequent shifting or movements of legs/arms	<b>3</b>						
Unable to sit still for more than a few seconds	<b>5</b>						
<b>Pupil Size:</b>							
Pupils pinned or normal size for room light	<b>0</b>						
Pupils possibly larger than normal for room light	<b>1</b>						
Pupils moderately dilated	<b>2</b>						
Pupils so dilated that only the rim of iris visible	<b>5</b>						
<b>Bone or Joint Aches</b> if patient was in pain previously, only the additional component attributed to opiate withdrawal is scored:							
Not present	<b>0</b>						
Mild diffuse discomfort	<b>1</b>						
Patients reports severe diffuse aching of joints/muscles	<b>2</b>						
Patient is rubbing joints or muscles and is unable to sit still because of discomfort.	<b>4</b>						
<b>Runny nose or tearing</b> not accounted for by cold symptoms or allergies:							
Not present	<b>0</b>						
Nasal stuffiness or unusually moist eyes	<b>1</b>						
Nose running or tearing	<b>2</b>						
Nose constantly running/tears streaming down cheeks	<b>4</b>						
<b>GI Upset</b> over last 30 minutes:							
No GI symptoms	<b>0</b>						
Stomach cramps	<b>1</b>						
Nausea or loose stool	<b>2</b>						
Vomiting or diarrhoea	<b>3</b>						
Multiple episodes of diarrhoea or vomiting	<b>5</b>						
<b>Tremor</b> observation of outstretched hands:							
No tremor	<b>0</b>						
Tremor can be felt, but not observed	<b>1</b>						
Slight tremor observable	<b>2</b>						
Gross tremor or muscle twitching	<b>4</b>						
<b>Yawning</b> during observation							
No yawning	<b>0</b>						
Yawning once or twice during assessment	<b>1</b>						
Yawning three or more times during assessment	<b>2</b>						
Yawning several times/minute	<b>4</b>						
<b>Anxiety or irritability</b>							
None	<b>0</b>						
Patient reports increasing irritability or anxiousness	<b>1</b>						
Patient obviously irritable or anxious	<b>2</b>						
Patient so irritable or anxious that participation in the assessment is difficult.	<b>4</b>						
<b>Goosebumps:</b>							
Skin is smooth	<b>0</b>						
Piloerection can be felt or hairs standing up on arms	<b>3</b>						
Prominent piloerection	<b>5</b>						
Total COWS Score: With observer's initials							

**Total COWS Score:**      **5 – 12 = Mild withdrawal**                      **13 – 24 = Moderate withdrawal**  
   **25 – 36 = Moderately severe withdrawal**              **>36 = Severe withdrawal**