# Norwich woman’s bus obsession case highlights flaws in Community Protection Notices for mental health



Georgina Alderson, a 28-year-old woman from Norwich, has garnered attention due to her peculiar and troubling obsession with riding buses, which has led to her being arrested nearly every day. Her actions have seen her repeatedly brought before the courts, charged with breaches of a Community Protection Notice (CPN), designed to limit behaviours deemed a public nuisance. The stipulations of the notice required her to vacate any bus at the request of the bus company’s employees, a requirement she has repeatedly failed to adhere to.

During a recent hearing at Norwich Magistrates’ Court, Alderson’s defence solicitor presented her case, arguing for the removal of the CPN on the grounds that her mental health challenges—particularly neurodiversity and autism—rendered her unable to comply effectively. This sentiment was echoed by Anne-Marie Sheridan, who claimed the police had not followed the proper protocols when imposing the notice on May 8. The court heard from Sergeant Samantha Barwick, who noted that Alderson first came to police attention for sleeping rough on the grounds of Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital before shifting her focus to riding the city’s bus services.

The complexities of Alderson’s case became clearer through the testimonies presented. A more recent psychiatric evaluation indicated that while she had mental health struggles, she was likely capable of understanding the obligations imposed by the CPN. Nonetheless, Deputy District Judge Jacqui Appleton labelled the breaches of the notice “umpteen” times and ultimately ruled that maintaining the notice was unreasonable given Alderson's mental health conditions. As a result, prosecutors dropped the charges against her, including theft allegations from local shops, bringing a cautious end to her recent troubles.

Alderson's case highlights a broader societal dilemma regarding the intersection of mental health and community enforcement measures. The use of Community Protection Notices has sparked significant debate. Critics argue that such measures can inadvertently exacerbate mental health struggles, making it harder for individuals like Alderson to find stability and support. Personal narratives shared in various discussions about CPNs illustrate that these notices often fail to accommodate the complexities of mental health issues, with individuals trapped in cycles of non-compliance and legal repercussions.

Moreover, Alderson’s situation comes against the backdrop of larger social issues in Norwich, where authorities continue to grapple with a persistent drug problem and its associated behaviours. Despite over 1,000 arrests in the past two years, the city struggles with issues stemming from drug addiction, anti-social behaviour, and violence. This broader context suggests that Alderson's case is not an isolated incident but rather part of the intricate web of challenges facing vulnerable populations in urban environments.

The stigma surrounding mental health and addiction remains a critical concern in addressing such cases. Research indicates that stigma often exacerbates the challenges individuals face, limiting their access to necessary support and heightening their risk of criminalisation. The societal narrative surrounding women, particularly those with mental health and addiction issues, can contribute to detrimental outcomes, making supportive interventions crucial in breaking this cycle of marginalisation.

As Alderson navigates the aftermath of her recent legal challenges, the need for more compassionate, tailored approaches to such cases becomes increasingly evident. Her story serves as a reminder of the importance of integrating mental health considerations into community enforcement policies, fostering an environment where individuals are not punished for their conditions but supported towards recovery and reintegration.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25187914.norwich-woman-addicted-riding-buses-arrested-every-day/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25187914.norwich-woman-addicted-riding-buses-arrested-every-day/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/crime/20784464.drugs-everywhere---police-admit-supply-city-unchanged-despite-1-000-arrests/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/21/1/63), [[4]](https://www.accordingtokristin.com/2020/06/mental-health-and-community-protection-notices.html), [[5]](https://www.accordingtokristin.com/2020/06/mental-health-and-community-protection-notices.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.accordingtokristin.com/2020/06/mental-health-and-community-protection-notices.html), [[7]](https://www.accordingtokristin.com/2020/06/mental-health-and-community-protection-notices.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25187914.norwich-woman-addicted-riding-buses-arrested-every-day/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/crime/20784464.drugs-everywhere---police-admit-supply-city-unchanged-despite-1-000-arrests/> - An article from the Eastern Daily Press reports that despite over 1,000 arrests in two years, the drug supply in Norwich remains unchanged. The piece highlights the persistence of drug-related issues in the city, including violence and anti-social behavior, and the challenges faced by authorities in curbing the trade.
3. <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/21/1/63> - A study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health examines the stigma associated with women, addictions, mental health, dishonesty, and crime. It discusses the social harms of stigma and proposes solutions to reduce these harms, emphasizing the need for supportive interventions.
4. <https://www.accordingtokristin.com/2020/06/mental-health-and-community-protection-notices.html> - A personal blog post by Kristin discusses the impact of Community Protection Notices (CPNs) on individuals with mental health issues. She shares her experience of being issued a CPNW (Community Protection Notice Warning) and the challenges it posed to her mental health and well-being.
5. <https://www.accordingtokristin.com/2020/06/mental-health-and-community-protection-notices.html> - A personal blog post by Kristin discusses the impact of Community Protection Notices (CPNs) on individuals with mental health issues. She shares her experience of being issued a CPNW (Community Protection Notice Warning) and the challenges it posed to her mental health and well-being.
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