

Children's Aid Society drivers suspended

Society bars two workers after drug, gun arrests

By DAN ARSENAULT Crime Reporter

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Two women have been suspended from working with the Children's Aid Society of Halifax after being arrested on gun and drug charges Monday.

Shannon Johnson, 28, and Melody Husbands, 25, were arrested with two men at an Ardwell Avenue address in Spryfield early Monday morning and were told Tuesday they won't be working for Children's Aid at least until their legal issue is resolved.

"We heard about it late Monday and responded immediately in terms of letting the service providers know that they were off our list," Barbara Williams, the acting co-ordinator of family and adolescent services with the society, said Thursday.

She wouldn't say how long the two independent contractors had been doing work for the society. Their duties involved ferrying children who had been removed from their parents' home to and from visits with them.

According to a society release issued Thursday, service contractors are screened annually through a police check, a scan of the child abuse registry, references and other steps.

At their arraignment in Halifax provincial court Monday, Ms. Johnson and Ms. Husbands told the court of their work and were granted an amendment to their release conditions to allow them out of their houses to do occasional work between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. As well, they were given permission for the same reason to have incidental contact with each other.

The women were arrested at about 2 a.m. at an address Ms. Johnson shares with co-accused Trevor Miller, 26, court records show. Ms. Husbands' address is listed as Tamarack Drive in Cowie Hill. Harold Patton, 27, of Connor Lane in Halifax was also arrested. All four were charged with possessing a weapon and drugs.

Halifax Regional Police say they seized a sawed-off shotgun, a large amount of marijuana, smaller quantities of morphine and cocaine, hundreds of ecstasy pills and thousands of dollars in cash.

Mr. Miller was remanded and the other three are free with conditions until all four return to court May 15 to plead to the charges.