

Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse Policy

The Company is committed to protecting the safety, health and wellbeing of its colleagues, customers and the public, and recognises that the misuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances is a significant threat to this goal. Therefore, the Company is committed to creating an environment that is free from this threat, by controlling drug and substance misuse and its effects on the Company.

The purpose of this policy is to increase awareness of the effects of alcohol and drug misuse and its likely symptoms and to ensure that:

- All colleagues are aware of their responsibilities regarding alcohol and drug misuse and related problems.
- Colleagues who have an alcohol or drug-related problem are encouraged to seek help, in confidence, at an early stage. There is also professional help available through our Employee Assist Programme.
- Colleagues who have an alcohol or drug-related problem affecting their work are dealt with sympathetically, fairly and consistently.

This policy is not intended to apply to “one-off” incidents or offences caused by alcohol or drug misuse at or outside work where there is no evidence of an ongoing problem, which may damage our reputation, and which are likely to be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

This policy covers all colleagues, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency workers.

This policy does not form part of any colleague’s contract of employment, and we may amend this policy at any time.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, drug and substance misuse is defined as the taking of drugs and/or other substances, not prescribed as medication, which adversely affects one or more of the following:

- Performance
- Social behaviour
- Attendance
- The health and safety of yourself or those around you

The drugs and substances referred to in this policy include:

- Illegally classed and non-prescribed drugs
- The misuse of alcohol
- The misuse of prescribed drugs
- The misuse of solvents
- The misuse of substances known as ‘legal highs’

Personnel Responsible for this Policy

All managers have a specific responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy, to ensure that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and to take action when behaviour falls below its requirements.

Company Rules

The nature of the Company's work environment dictates that we must have very clear rules on the possession of drugs and other substances, whilst also outlining the ramifications of being under their influence whilst at work.

Alcohol and drugs can lead to reduced levels of attendance, reduced efficiency and performance, impaired judgement and decision making and increased health and safety risks for colleagues and other people. Irresponsible behaviour or the commission of offences resulting from the use of alcohol or drugs may damage our reputation and, as a result, our business.

No colleague or other person under the Company's control shall, in connection with any work-related activity:

- report, or endeavour to report, for duty having consumed alcohol, drugs or substances likely to render them unfit and/or unsafe for work;
- consume or be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or substances while on duty unless, in the case of alcohol, with the agreement of line management for the purposes of official company entertaining;
- store drugs or alcohol in personal areas such as lockers and desk drawers; or
- attempt to sell or give drugs or alcohol to any other colleague or other person on the work premises.

Colleagues who are prescribed medication must seek advice from their GP or pharmacist about the possible effect on their ability to carry out their job and whether their duties should be modified, or they should be temporarily reassigned to a different role. Colleagues must inform their line manager regarding any prescribed medication that may have an effect on their ability to carry out their work safely and must follow any instructions subsequently given.

Colleagues should be aware that being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or substances could result in them being instructed to leave the workplace. Where it causes a health and safety hazard or a 'breach of trust' under the Company's disciplinary procedures, alcohol, drug or substance misuse will constitute an offence of gross misconduct and could render a colleague liable for summary dismissal.

If the colleague is suspected or found to be under the influence of alcohol, drug and/or other substance misuse whilst in use of a Company vehicle, it is deemed as a serious breach of the Company's health and safety procedures, putting the colleague and the public at risk, which will constitute an offence of gross misconduct and could render a colleague liable for summary dismissal.

The Company reserves the right to conduct searches for alcohol or drugs on its premises (as well as places of work such as client premises), including, but not limited to, searches of lockers, bags and vehicles. Any alcohol or drugs found as a result of a search will be confiscated and action may be taken under our Disciplinary Procedure as well as the relevant Company contractual obligations on a client premises.

It should also be pointed out that the possession, use, supply, sale or production of illicit substances without authorisation is a criminal offence (The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971). The Company strictly forbids the possession, production, supply or use of any illicit substance on any Company or Client Premises. Any such actions will be considered gross misconduct by the Company.

For the Company, the use of illegal drugs is not acceptable at any time and in any place. The terms of this policy and the responses of the Company to any colleague found to be in breach of this policy remain relevant whether the colleague is on Company or client premises, or outside the client boundaries should their actions damage the name and reputation of the Company or Client.

Colleagues must comply with drink-driving laws and drug-driving laws at all times. Conviction for drink-driving or drug-driving offences may harm our reputation and, if a colleague is required to drive as part of their job, they may be unable to continue to do their job. Committing a drink-driving or drug-driving offence while working for us may lead to action under our Disciplinary Procedure and could result in dismissal.

Alcohol Consumption

The Company prohibits the drinking of alcohol by colleagues before starting work, in the workplace or on Company business, other than reasonable drinking of alcohol in connection with approved social functions. The Company regards drinking to an 'unreasonable level' as any of the following situations:

- In the opinion of management, the individual's performance is impaired.
- In the opinion of management, the individual's behaviour may cause embarrassment, distress or offence to others.
- The individual smells of alcohol, whether or not it has been consumed, which may place the Company in disrepute.

Individuals should note that drinking to an 'unreasonable level' will result in disciplinary action and could be considered a gross misconduct offence.

Colleagues Suffering with Alcohol, Drug or Substance Dependency

Any colleague who believes they are suffering from alcohol, drug or substance dependency should declare such dependency to their line manager or a member of the People Team and should seek specialist advice and support as soon as possible. The Company will subsequently provide reasonable assistance through our Employee Assist Programme.

If a colleague notices a change in a colleague's pattern of behaviour, they should encourage them to seek assistance through their manager or the People Team. If they will not seek help themselves the colleague should draw the matter to the attention of their manager. Colleagues should not attempt to cover up for a colleague whose work or behaviour is suffering as a result of an alcohol or drug-related problem.



Where a manager considers that a deterioration in work performance and/or changes in patterns of behaviour may be due to alcohol or drug misuse they should seek advice and assistance from the People Team.

Where the Company has reason to believe a colleague's poor performance is due to alcohol, drug or other substance misuse, a private meeting will be arranged. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the reason for the investigation and seek the colleague's views on, for example, the deterioration of their work performance and/or behaviour and the colleague will be given the opportunity to discuss any health reasons that are affecting their performance. The Company may request that the colleague attends an Occupational Health consultation.

If the colleague agrees to be referred to an Occupational Health consultant, their manager will request an urgent appointment and prepare a letter of referral, a copy of which will be provided to the colleague.

The Occupational Health consultant may ask the colleague for their consent to approach their GP for advice. A report will be sent to the People Team and the colleague's manager who will then reassess the reasons for their investigatory meeting with you and decide on the way forward.

If, as a result of the meeting or investigation, the colleague's manager continues to believe that the colleague is suffering the effects of alcohol or drugs misuse and the colleague refuses an offer of referral to an Occupational Health consultant or appropriate treatment provider the matter may be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

The Company will allow the colleague to take time off for agreed treatment, (with certification from the Doctor), which will be paid in line with the colleague's company sickness entitlement.

If this treatment fails, or there is a relapse, the possibility of a colleague undergoing a further period of treatment will be discussed and the Company, after consideration of all the circumstances, will decide whether or not it will be paid time off in accordance with the colleague's sickness entitlement.

Failure to accept help or continue with treatment will render the colleague liable to normal disciplinary procedures.

Following absence for effective treatment, the colleague can, if practicable, return to the same job on the same terms and conditions.

Performance and Disciplinary Issues

If a colleague agrees to undertake appropriate treatment and/or rehabilitation for an acknowledged alcohol or drug-related problem, we may decide to suspend any ongoing disciplinary action against the colleague for related misconduct or poor performance, pending the outcome of the treatment.

The Company's intention is to support all colleagues with alcohol or drug-related problems to regain good health. Depending on the progress made on the course of treatment, any disciplinary action may be suspended for a specified period, discontinued, or restarted at any time as we see fit.

Confidentiality

The Company aims to ensure that the confidentiality of any colleague experiencing alcohol or drug-related problems is maintained appropriately. However, it needs to be recognised that, in supporting colleagues, some degree of information sharing is likely to be necessary.

If a colleague seeks help with an alcohol or drug-related problem directly from the People Team and they wish to keep matters confidential from their manager and colleagues, this will be respected unless there is reason to believe that this could put the colleague, their colleagues or anyone else at risk or carries some other material risk for the business. In those circumstances the People Team will encourage the colleague to inform their manager and will give the colleague sufficient time to do so before discussing the matter with them

Nelson Williams
Managing Director

(This policy will be reviewed again in November 2023)



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