Alcohol and drugs policy

# Alcohol and drugs

To keep our working environment as safe, productive and positive as possible, it is necessary to have a policy to prevent alcohol and drug misuse. While the organisation does not wish to police employees on their own time, it is necessary to prevent substance misuse from becoming a problem for our organisation and staff.

For the purpose of this policy, “drugs” is defined as “illegal substances that have a significant effect on a person’s mental and/or physical state, as well as legal substances that produce a similar effect”. We will also deal with

prescribed medication, which may be permitted to take on its own but must not be misused.

The organisation requires all employees to comply with the alcohol and drugs policy, and any failures to do so will result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee(s) in question.

# Policy

Employees must not attend work - or perform work duties - while under the influence of drugs or alcohol in any way. Employees drinking alcohol or

taking drugs outside of working time must not be under the influence of these substances by the time they begin their next shift at work.

For the purpose of this policy, “working time” is defined as “any time between when an employee reports for work and when they finish work, including any breaks”. This also includes any overtime or periods of time when an employee is on call or standby duty and applies whether or not the employee is on work premises.

Drinking alcohol is forbidden during working time. In addition, the use, possession, storage, transportation, promotion and/or sale of drugs and/or drug equipment is forbidden during working time.

Under certain circumstances, employees may be required to undergo testing for alcohol and/or drugs. This will be outlined in the supporting "Alcohol & Drugs Testing Policy".

# Prescribed medication

Employees are within their rights to use prescribed and over-the-counter medication, as well as herbal remedies. However, some of these substances (including but not limited to sleeping pills, tranquillisers, decongestants and

antihistamines) have the potential to affect work performance and employee safety by causing drowsiness or diminished reflexes.

An employee taking any medication should check the list of possible side-effects and inform their line manager in confidence. If necessary, their line manager will then ensure arrangements are made to make sure the

employee’s job is not affected.

# Assistance

While the irresponsible use of alcohol and/or drugs will not be tolerated, the organisation understands these substances have the potential to be addictive.

Any employee who voluntarily comes forward to seek help for a drug and/or alcohol addiction will be given the organisation’s full support. This could include a reassignment of duties, direction to an addiction or rehabilitation specialist or another form of help, customised depending on the employee’s needs.

If external help or time off is needed, any absence from work will be treated as normal sickness absence and paid accordingly.

Any employee that comes forward in this way will be treated with dignity and full confidentiality. This applies no matter how many times an employee comes forward, as the organisation understands that individuals can continue to struggle with addiction even after receiving assistance.

While the organisation will support employees who are struggling with dependence on alcohol and/or drugs, a disciplinary or capability procedure

may still need to be implemented. If performance or conduct has been

impacted by alcohol and/or drug use at work, this will be treated the same as any other breach of the alcohol and drugs policy.

In any case where criminal activity has taken place in the workplace

involving alcohol and/drugs - such as the sale of an illegal substance - the Organisation will be forced to alert the police.

[*Optional - PLEASE SELECT THE CHECK BOXES IF THEY APPLY*]

# Testing

In order to objectively prove whether or not an employee has been working under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, employees may be required to submit to testing.

If the organisation has reasonable grounds to believe that an employee has breached this policy and/or is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, they may be required to submit to testing.

The testing will be carried out by an independent organisation, and the utmost effort will be taken to ensure the results are fair, accurate and objective. The strictest confidentiality will be maintained throughout, and testers will be treated with dignity and respect.

Any employee required to submit to testing may request a colleague or trade union representative to witness the test. The organisation will attempt to arrange this wherever possible, as long as it is practical to do so.

Any attempt by an employee to falsify a test result, or a refusal to be tested, will result in disciplinary action being taken, which may include dismissal if necessary.

Employees will be required to leave the premises after a test. Until the results are available, the employee will remain on paid suspension from duty on or be re-allocated to risk-free work depending on the circumstances.

All personal data collected for this purpose will be processed in line with the current Data Protection Act 2018.

[*Optional*]

# Work events

While drinking alcohol is forbidden during working time, there may be some occasions where employees will attend events with clients for the purpose of relationship building. During these events, alcohol might be available, either freely or for purchase. At these events, employees are permitted to drink alcohol as long as they do not overindulge and become intoxicated.

A manager at any point can ask an employee to stop drinking alcohol if they believe said employee is at risk of causing harm to themself, to others, or to the reputation of the company by behaving unprofessionally. In these situations, failure to comply will count as a breach of the alcohol and drugs policy.

[*Optional*]

# Employee assistance programme

If needed, the organisation can provide employees with access to a confidential counselling service that can be accessed over the telephone. This can provide help, advice and support to employees struggling with alcohol and/or drug abuse. Details of this service can be found:

Responsibility

is responsible for the implementation of this policy. Signed

Date

Date of Review (recommended 3 years)

**This document is for your guidance only. Professional advice should be sought before use.**