

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy

Introduction

The Alcohol and Drug Abuse policy supports the Agency's commitment to the health and well being of staff and its aim of ensuring staff are guided by realistic and helpful policies to promote healthier lifestyles.

The Agency also recognises that alcohol and drug abuse problems can have a detrimental effect on work performance and behaviour, and the Agency has a health and safety responsibility to its staff and customers to ensure that this risk is minimised.

Policy Statement

The Agency's policy involves two approaches:

- providing reasonable assistance to a member of staff with an alcohol or drug abuse problem who is willing to co-operate in treatment for that problem; and
- to balance a disciplinary approach to instances of misconduct with a more understanding attitude of cases of dependency but to take disciplinary action against those who allow their alcohol or drug-related problems to persist with detrimental effects on their own and colleagues' work.

The Agency will seek to assist a member of staff in obtaining specialist help and the policy will provide guidance on how to proceed when tackling instances of alcohol or drug abuse.

Where someone is addicted to drugs originally medically prescribed, the Agency will comply with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005.

The specific objectives of the policy are to:

- provide information on the effects of alcohol and drugs and an understanding of the likely symptoms of abuse;

- encourage and support self-referral or intervention at an early stage of dependency;
- provide support during a period of treatment to help staff to recover and to make an effective contribution at work;
- create a climate which encourages honesty and gives staff and management confidence to deal with an individual's alcohol or drug abuse problems by following a clear procedure.

Adopting a Sensible Approach

Other than the special circumstances set out in the following paragraph, you are not permitted to drink alcohol on Agency premises. All of us - whatever our jobs – also need to be particularly careful about alcohol consumption when not on Agency premises if we are going to be working or, of course, if we are driving. Drinking alcohol can cause drowsiness and impaired judgement which can have a negative impact on performance and affect how colleagues and other people view not only the Agency, but also you and the way you work.

Special Circumstances

There are special circumstances organised by the Agency where alcohol may be consumed on Agency premises e.g. special events to mark important milestones or achievements of staff. At such events the quantity of alcohol supplied will be reasonable for the numbers attending and soft drinks will also be available.

Assistance for a member of staff

The Agency will offer help to a member of staff who has an alcohol or drug abuse problem although that help will depend upon the following:

- that our Occupational Health providers diagnose an alcohol or drug abuse problem; and
- that the member of staff recognises that he/she is suffering from an alcohol or drug related problem and is prepared to co-operate fully in referral and treatment.

We must all recognise that such help will be limited in certain circumstances. This will be:

- where a member of staff fails to co-operate in referral or treatment arrangements, no special assistance will be given and any failure in work performance and/or behaviour will be dealt with through the inefficiency or disciplinary procedures as appropriate.
- if the process of referral and treatment is completed but is not successful, and failure in work performance and/or behaviour occurs, this will be dealt with through the inefficiency or disciplinary procedures as appropriate.
- a member of staff's continuation in his/her post or an alternative post during or after treatment may depend upon the business needs of the Agency at that time.

Everyone has a part to play

The policy reminds everybody that we all have responsibilities for identifying and dealing with alcohol or drug abuse.

Managers

Managers have a key role to play in identifying staff who may have alcohol or drug-related problems. As a Manager you should adopt a businesslike but sensitive approach. The over-riding intention in intervening should be to provide assistance to the person concerned.

As a manager you should:

- make yourself familiar with the policy and ensure that your staff are aware of and understand it;
- be alert to possible alcohol or drug abuse in your section;
- take an objective and non-judgmental approach when investigating or taking action on any potential or actual case of alcohol or drug abuse.

If you are concerned about the performance, attendance or conduct of a member of your staff and know or suspect that the cause is in any way alcohol or drug-related you should discuss the matter with the individual at a private and confidential interview as soon as

possible.

At the interview the possible existence of an alcohol or drug abuse problem should be explored. You are not required to diagnose the existence of an alcohol or drug abuse problem, merely to assess whether such abuse is a possible factor.

Should the interview lead to the conclusion that an alcohol or drug abuse problem might exist, and the member of staff accepts referral, you should refer the matter to a Personnel Adviser who will arrange for an Occupational Health referral. This referral will establish whether or not a diagnosis of alcoholism or drug dependence can be made. However, if the person does not wish to be referred to Occupational Health you should arrange an interview with the Welfare Officer. The Welfare Officer will be able to advise on any specialist confidential help available. [Information about the Agency's welfare service can be found on the Intranet.](#)

Any disciplinary procedures that might otherwise apply will normally be suspended until the outcome of the Occupation Health referral or Welfare interview is known.

If your interview does not lead to the conclusion that an alcohol or drug abuse problem exists, or the member of staff rejects, or fails to co-operate in Occupational Health referral, or help from Welfare, disciplinary action should be continued, where and as the situation justifies.

Staff

Staff should:

- be familiar with the policy and ensure your performance is not impaired as a consequence of alcohol or drug abuse;
- advise your manager if you are using medicines, which may have the potential to affect work performance;
- avoid covering up for or colluding with any colleague who has an alcohol or drug abuse problem;
- urge colleagues with an alcohol or drug abuse problem to seek help;
- seek help yourself if you have problems related to alcohol or drug abuse (see [Sources of help below](#));
- advise management if you consider that a colleague's or contractor's alcohol or drug abuse may be endangering the safety of other staff, contractors or the public.

Personnel Advisers

Personnel Advisers are likely to have to deal both with staff and managers if a problem arises. Personnel Advisers must, therefore:

- offer support and guidance when required;
- provide details of external agencies when required;
- refer staff for assistance in appropriate cases and advise on the appropriateness or otherwise of recourse to the disciplinary procedure;
- ensure fairness and consistency of treatment across the organisation;
- monitor and maintain the policy.

Union officials

Union Officials have a responsibility to:

- encourage members to seek help where appropriate;
- remind members of their rights and responsibilities under the policy;

Providing guidance to managers

Clearly, managers have a key role to play in dealing with instances of alcohol or drug abuse problems. In order to help managers deal effectively with such issues the Agency will provide the opportunity for all managers to attend workshops on the application of this policy. This will provide the opportunity to talk about the policy and to raise any issues of concern.

Facts about Alcohol and Drugs

The Health Education Board for Scotland has issued helpful information and guidance on alcohol ([Healthy Eating](#)) and drugs ([Do you know the facts of Drugs?](#)) which is available on the Intranet. You are encouraged to make yourself familiar with it.

Identifying Alcohol and Drug misuse

We should all be alert to the possible early signs of substance misuse to allow individuals every opportunity to overcome their difficulties. Possible symptoms that could indicate a substance misuse problem can be found on the Health and Well-being page. See [Alcohol and Drug Abuse](#) and [Welfare Guidance Notes for Managers](#).

Staff encouraged to come forward

Staff who think they may have an alcohol or drug abuse problem are encouraged and expected to seek confidential advice, help or treatment. Alcohol or drug-related problems can have serious health and social consequences and therefore the Agency will provide support for anyone who seeks and accepts assistance. You can seek help through your GP, your Manager, Personnel or Welfare or the Agency's confidential Employee Assistance Programme.

[A quick guide to the procedures for dealing with alcohol and drug abuse.](#)

Disciplinary Action

In line with the Agency's disciplinary policy, the following will be regarded as serious misconduct:

- attending work and/or carrying out duties under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- consumption of alcohol or drugs whilst at work (other than where prescribed or approval has been given).

Where a breach of these rules occurs, but it is established that an alcohol or drug abuse problem exists, and the member of staff is willing to co-operate in referral for specialist help and subsequent treatment, the Agency will suspend any disciplinary procedures and provide assistance. Staff who do not comply with the treatment suggested or continue to abuse alcohol or drugs will be subject to the application of the disciplinary policy.

Should a member of staff take up the opportunity of assistance on this basis there need be no further formal involvement of the manager in terms of action. Human Resources will, however, keep the manager aware in broad terms of progress with treatment. It may be, however, that the member of staff would wish, or agree to, further involvement of their manager as a means of assisting

progress with treatment.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is an integral part of the Agency's health and well being programme and will be subject to review from time to time. HR Division primarily, will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy. This will be done in liaison with Managers, Welfare and the Trade Union to ensure that the policy is clearly understood by all and that the procedures for tackling instances of alcohol or drug abuse are helping to address the Agency's commitment to the health and well-being of all staff.

Sources of help

- Your Manager
- Your Personnel Adviser
- The Welfare Officer
- Your Trade Union Representative
- Your Doctor
- The Agency's Employee Assistance Programme (ICAS) through the confidential Freephone helpline number - 0800 072 7 072
- Alcohol Focus Scotland 0141 572 6700 (for information) Subsidiary – Glasgow Council on Alcohol (counselling 0141 226 3883)
- National Drugs Helpline 0800 776600

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August 2006**