

Alcohol and Substance Abuse Policy

Introduction

The definition of alcohol and/or drug abuse is to use to such an extent they damage the health, attendance, performance or conduct at work. This policy is not concerned with the social use of alcohol but the Company encourages sensible drinking habits and a drug free lifestyle.

Policy

The Company will help employees who acknowledge their addiction by offering advice and guidance and encouragement to help them overcome it. To heighten awareness, managers and employees will be made aware of courses and meetings and keep up-to-date on the subject.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse Procedure

Guidance Notes for Line Managers

Recognition of an alcohol or drug problem

The following signs or symptoms may provide an indication of an alcohol or drug abuse problem:

- unexplained absences, repeated short term sickness absence;
- mood swings, depression, irritability, aggression;
- persistent lateness;
- irresponsibility or reluctance to accept responsibility;
- poor work performance;
- deterioration of general appearance;
- deterioration in relationships with colleagues;
- personal difficulties including marital and debt problems;
- unsafe working, proneness to accidents.

Procedure

The line manager will determine whether at any time an employee, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, is capable of carrying out their duties. If the line manager believes the employee is incapable of performing their duties (e.g. use of tools, vehicles, care of clients, etc.) without risk of endangering themselves or others then they will be sent home immediately. The absence will be recorded as sickness.

On return to duty, the employee will report to the line manager in accordance with the Company's absence policy.

Self referral

- Employees are encouraged to seek voluntary help, e.g. talking to their supervisor, GP or other agency.
- Line managers have the responsibility to act if attendance or work performance are affected and will be aware of employees experiencing difficulties. Line managers will initially raise the matter informally with the person concerned, thus giving the person opportunity to consider what they wish to do. An agreed timescale will allow the employee to decide on how to respond to concerns.
- If the line manager considers necessary further action, the employee will be referred to a counsellor for confidential discussion. A colleague or friend may be present.
- Alternatively, call the Confidential Counselling Helpline on: 0117 934 2121 (quoting policy number TS53598042). This free facility is available to all employees and their immediate families.

The counsellor will discuss options for dealing with alcohol and drug abuse.

Period of treatment

The length of a course of treatment may vary considerably between cases. It is unlikely to be less than two weeks and in some cases could involve a period of absence of six weeks or more.

Further action

1. If the employee declines help, the line manager will restate their concerns and monitor the situation with a further period of grace, say, two weeks.
2. If the employee agrees that some concern is justified they may elect to resolve it through their own arrangements. A further period will then be agreed with a further meeting planned around 2 months later.
3. The employee may agree that the line manager's concerns are serious enough to threaten their or others safety at work. The employee will then be required to see their GP for an opinion on their fitness for work and approval of appropriate treatment.
4. Following a course of treatment approved by their GP, the employee will be allowed normal sickness absence.
5. If the employee does not acknowledge the problem, the line manager may invoke the normal disciplinary procedure.

