



Essential Reference Paper "B"

East Herts Council

Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse Policy

Policy Statement

**Policy Statement No 29 (Issue No 2) March
2016**

Policy owner: Human Resources

Date of last review: September 2007

Date of next review: March 2019

Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Aims and scope of the policy	3
3.0	Possible signs of alcohol, drug or substance misuse	4
4.0	Responsibility of employees	5
5.0	Responsibility of managers	6
6.0	Responsibility of Human Resources	6
7.0	Alcohol/Drug Testing	7
8.0	Sources of information and advice	7
9.0	Policy review and amendment	8

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The council is committed to ensuring the health and safety of its employees at work. It also owes a duty of care to third parties (e.g. contractors, members of the public, guests and visitors) to take reasonable care to ensure that they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety because of alcohol, drug or substance misuse.
- 1.2 Alcohol, drug and substance misuse can damage the health and wellbeing of employees and have detrimental effects on personal and working lives.
- 1.3 Alcohol, drug and substance misuse becomes a matter of concern to the council when misuse interferes with an employees' work capacity, conduct, health, attendance, safety or the safety of others.

2.0 Aims and Scope of the Policy

- 2.1 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that:
 - All employees are aware of their responsibilities regarding alcohol, drug and substances at work;
 - All employees understand the dangers and harmful effects of alcohol, drugs and substance misuse;
 - The council complies with any health and safety or other legislation;
 - The council provides reasonable support and encourages employees to seek professional help and support;
 - All employees are aware that certain standards of behaviour and conduct are expected during work-related social occasions;

- Employees are reminded that being under the influence of alcohol or banned or misused substances at work is considered gross misconduct and as such will be subject to disciplinary action.

3.0 Possible signs of alcohol, drug, or substance misuse

3.1 It is very important for managers to be aware of ways of identifying employees who may have an alcohol, drug or substance dependency problem and discuss their concerns with HR.

3.2 The following are examples of the kind of symptoms which may manifest in an employee with an alcohol, drug or substance related problem. These symptoms may arise but be wholly unconnected with alcohol, drugs or substance misuse. Behaviour which gives cause for concern should be referred to the manager or HR.

- Inadequate, poor and failing performance;
- Deterioration in outward appearance and/or health e.g. lack of hygiene, unkempt appearance;
- Changes in behaviour, responses and reactions to people and situations e.g. irritability, unreasonable resentment, avoidance of manager or colleagues;
- Heightened emotional state e.g. over-reaction to real or imagined criticism;
- Increased absenteeism or patterns of absence e.g. frequent Monday or Friday absences;
- Excessive lateness at the start of the day or returning from lunch;
- Increased accidents;
- Physical symptoms such as smelling of alcohol, shaking, unable to concentrate or communicate clearly.

3.3 The above list is not exhaustive and the employee may be showing other signs that there is a problem.

4.0 Responsibility of Employees

- 4.1 Employees should ensure they are fit and safe to carry out their council duties when they are required to, including when they are on call/standby duty. This includes driving a vehicle or operating machinery;
- 4.2 Employees are required to inform their manager if they are taking any prescribed medication that may have an effect on their ability to carry out their duties safely;
- 4.3 Employees should inform their manager if they are suffering from alcohol, drug or substance misuse. All such matters will be treated in the strictest confidence and all reasonable help and support will be given;
- 4.4 It is very important that all employees do not break the law away from work which could damage public confidence in them or the council, or make them unsuitable for the work they do. Any employee charged with a drinking and driving related offence or a drug or substance misuse related offence, must inform their manager upon receipt of a court summons. Any employee cautioned or convicted of a drink, drug and/or substance misuse related offence must inform their manager immediately. Should the council discover a failure to disclose any of the above offences they will be subject to disciplinary action;
- 4.5 Employees must maintain an acceptable standard of behaviour where alcohol is available at work-related social events;
- 4.6 Where a colleague suspects an employee is suffering from an alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem, they should discuss the concern in confidence with their manager;
- 4.7 Where colleagues believe that the law has been broken at work or that serious harm may result to the employee and/or others, they should inform their manager immediately.

5.0 Responsibility of Managers

- 5.1 Managers have the responsibility to deal with potential issues of alcohol, drug or substance misuse by employees at work as a priority; treating employees sensitively. Advice should be sought from HR;
- 5.2 Managers should discuss with the employee their concerns offering support and help which may include a referral to Occupational Health. Advice should be gained from the Head of Service and HR on the type of support that is available;
- 5.3 Managers are required to discourage drink related unacceptable behaviour at work-related social events;
- 5.4 If managers believe that the law has been broken at work or that serious harm may result to the employee or others, they should seek immediate advice from HR or the Health and Safety Officer;
- 5.5 Managers are required to inform HR and their Head of Service of any employees that are suspected or have issues with alcohol, drug or substance misuse.

6.0 Responsibility of Human Resources

- 6.1 HR are available to provide support and guidance with developing options for best resolution approaches to assisting with the management of employee cases;
- 6.2 All information will be treated in strictest confidence, unless criminal acts have taken place or health and safety has been, or is likely to be, put seriously at risk. If it is judged that such information cannot remain in confidence, then the employee who disclosed the information shall be advised accordingly.

7.0 Alcohol, drug or substance testing

- 7.1 An alcohol/drugs/substance test will be carried out where the employee is suspected of alcohol, drug or substance misuse and has had any involvement in a workplace accident or in any incident that has caused or could have caused a danger to health or safety.
- 7.2 Testing may also be carried out where management has grounds to believe or suspect that an employee is or may be under the influence of alcohol, drug or substance misuse while at work.
- 7.3 Testing will be carried out by a trained nurse from Occupational Health.
- 7.4 Written permission will be required from the employee before each test is carried out.
- 7.5 Failure or refusal to complete the test will be viewed as a positive test result and the appropriate disciplinary proceeding will be implemented.
- 7.6 Any positive alcohol or drug/substance test results will be dealt with in accordance with the council's disciplinary procedure.

8.0 Sources of Information and Advice

- 8.1 Organisations offering information and advice on alcohol and drug misuse can be contacted by employees or managers in confidence. Some organisations are listed below:
 - **Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)**
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a free self-help group.
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
 - **Drinkline**
Drinkline is the national alcohol helpline.
Telephone: 0800 917 8282

- **Alcohol Concern**
Alcohol Concern is a small independent charity that is committed to reducing harm from alcohol-related problems. www.alcoholconcern.org.uk
- **Talk to Frank**
Frank is a government-run organisation providing straight-talking information about drugs and advice for parents and carers. www.talktofrank.com
- **Adfam**
Adfam is a national organisation working with and for families affected by alcohol, drugs and substance misuse. www.adfam.org.uk
- **Employee Assistance Programme**
The council's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available to all employees and their families and is confidential. Please view the intranet pages for EAP.
- **Alcohol and drug limits for drivers**
For information on alcohol, drug and substance limits for drivers visit: www.gov.uk/drink-drive-limit or www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law

9.0 Policy Review and Amendment

This Policy shall be reviewed after three years or sooner in line with legislation or best practice.