**Drugs and Alcohol Policy**

**Introduction**

We must ensure the health and safety of all our employees and others affected by our activities. We need to ensure that employees have in an appropriate, professional, and responsible manner at work and that alcohol or drug misuse does not create a health and safety risk.

At the same time, we genuinely care about the health and well-being of our workforce and are invested in creating an environment where everyone can thrive.

We recognise that alcohol or drug dependence is a medical condition. If you disclose, or we suspect, that you have an alcohol or drug problem, we will take a non-judgmental and supportive approach to ensure you get the help you need.

**What is alcohol or drug misuse?**

Alcohol and drug misuse is when an individual drinks alcohol, or takes illegal drugs, medicines, or substances such as solvents, in a harmful way.

Early warning signs of alcohol or drug misuse include:

* unexplained or frequent absences;
* a change in behaviour;
* behaving aggressively or recklessly;
* unexplained dips in productivity;
* accidents or near misses;
* performance or conduct issues;
* sudden changes of mood; or
* breakdown in relationships with colleagues.

If you notice obvious signs of alcohol or drug misuse in a colleague, you should report your observations and/or suspicions to [your line manager/the HR department/name of individual].

**Your conduct at work**

We must ensure a safe working environment and not expose you and others affected by our activities to any unnecessary risk.

For this reason, it is strictly prohibited to:

* drink alcohol or take drugs that are likely to render you unfit or unsafe for work during any period that you are working;
* work, or report for work, while under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
* supply others with alcohol or drugs during working hours or in the workplace;
* store alcohol or drugs at the workplace such as in lockers and desk drawers; or
* be over the legal drink-drive alcohol limit if you need to drive for work reasons.

If we suspect that you are unfit or unsafe to undertake your work because you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you may be suspended from your duties until the matter is investigated.

**Work-related social events**

You may drink alcohol if you are at a work-related social event or you are entertaining clients, provided that you are given permission by [your line manager/the HR department/name of individual] in advance.

You should remember that you are representing the company during any work-related social event or while entertaining clients and you should drink in moderation. The provision of any free alcoholic drinks by ourselves is not an excuse to drink excessively

You should always take steps to ensure that you are well within the legal drink-drive alcohol limit if you are driving home after an event or in the morning after an event.

**Illegal drugs**

If you are found in possession of illegal drugs during your working hours, or at a work-related event, we will have no option but to report the matter to the police.

**Side effects from prescribed medication**

If you are prescribed any medication that affects your ability to carry out your work safely, you must tell [your line manager/the HR department/name of individual].

This is particularly important if you work in a role where safety is critical.

**Breach of policy**

Any breach of this policy will be treated as a disciplinary offence. However, we will always consider the circumstances of any case, including whether you are receiving support for a drug or alcohol-related problem, before deciding on the appropriate penalty.

**Alcohol and drug testing**

We reserve the right to test for alcohol and drugs randomly or in specific circumstances.

**Requesting support**

We recognise that alcohol or drug dependence is a medical condition that can cause mental, physical, and social deterioration.

If you think that you may have an alcohol or drug problem, we urge you to speak to your line manager and be as open as possible so that they can help you get the help you need. You can speak to HR if you cannot approach your line manager.

We understand that asking for help can be difficult. Still, any health-related information you disclose during discussions with your line manager or HR will be treated sensitively, in confidence, and in a non-judgmental way.

**Occupational health**

If we suspect you have an alcohol or drug problem, we may refer you to occupational health so that they can advise on the appropriate support type. Occupational health may also signpost you to external sources of help and advice.

**External sources of help**

Various organisations provide help and support relating to alcohol or drug dependence, including:

* [Alcohol Change](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/), which is a national charity working to help reduce problems caused by alcohol;
* [Drinkaware](https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/), which is an independent charity, which works with others to help reduce alcohol-related harm by helping people make better choices about their drinking;
* [Drinkline](https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice/alcohol-support-services), which is a free confidential helpline for people who are concerned about their drinking;
* [FRANK (Talk to Frank)](https://www.talktofrank.com/), which offers confidential help and advice on drugs; and
* [The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/alcoholdrugs/) has provided guidance on managing drug and alcohol abuse at work and signposts the help and support available to those affected.

**Data protection**

We will process any personal data collected in accordance with our policy/policy. Data collected from the point at which we become aware of the issue is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only to provide the necessary support.