

Alcohol and Substance Misuse policy guidance

This guidance applies to standard 6- Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Misuse

Alcohol and substance misuse problems are very common and can impact on both employers and employees through sickness absence, reduced work performance and presentism.

Alcohol and substance misuse in employees also impacts on health and safety at work since these substances can impair co-ordination, judgement and decision making which can lead to workplace accidents.

In order to support a healthy and engaged workforce and ensure a legally safe work place, it is important for businesses to manage this issue effectively through policies, procedures and the provision of support for individuals who develop dependency problems.

Employers should

- Have clear policies and procedures regarding both alcohol and substance misuse in the workplace to ensure a fair and consistent approach to all employees
- Ensure other disciplinary and grievance policies have been considered
- Communicate the policies to the workforce
- Ensure managers are equipped to support employees who are experiencing problems
- Ensure that substance misuse includes both consideration of illegal substances and addictions which have developed from the use of prescribed medication.

What to include in the policy

- What is expected of employees, including consideration of any work related functions/events/travel where alcohol may be available
- Whether testing is carried out routinely (required for certain jobs), how it is done and how the results are used.
- How information and support will be provided to employees, taking into account where and how they work and what internal and external support is available in the company. Further information about local and national support can be found here: http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20325/health_and_wellbeing
- The procedures that will be followed if an employee is found to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances and how managers and/or the Human Resources team have been trained in these procedures.
- What is expected of employees who are experiencing side effects from over the counter or prescribed medication
- The date that the policy is produced and when it will be reviewed

Example policy and further information

Your policy/ plan will be unique to your company based on your agreed procedures; however there is an **example policy from ACAS** in the *Health Work and Wellbeing booklet here* <https://archive.acas.org.uk/media/854/Advisory-booklet---Health-Work-and-Wellbeing/pdf/Health-work-and-wellbeing-accessible-version.pdf> (page 26-28)

Note: This sample policy is an example that an employer can adapt or develop to meet its needs. Policies should be tailored for your organisation and there are many other example templates available should you wish to use them.

The Business in the Community drugs, alcohol and tobacco toolkit for employers contains guidance on developing an alcohol and substance misuse policy <https://www.bitc.org.uk/toolkit/drugs-alcohol-and-tobacco-a-toolkit-for-employers/> (page 20-24)

ACAS webpages contain information about alcohol and drugs policies <https://archive.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1986>

HSE webpages contain useful information on managing drugs and alcohol misuse at work <https://www.hse.gov.uk/alcoholdrugs/develop-policy.htm>

CIPD have created a guide on managing drugs and alcohol misuse at work [http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/WorkplaceHealthDocs.nsf/\(\\$all\)/C1F6AF500CBEE30E80257D8500556815/\\$file/Managing%20alcohol%20%26%20drug%20misuse%5B1%5D.pdf?OpenElement](http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/WorkplaceHealthDocs.nsf/($all)/C1F6AF500CBEE30E80257D8500556815/$file/Managing%20alcohol%20%26%20drug%20misuse%5B1%5D.pdf?OpenElement)

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