Drug and Alcohol Policy

Applies to	All employees, workers, volunteers, apprentices and consultants
Policy owner	HR Manager
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This policy sets out Anstey Horne's policy and procedure for dealing with problems at work which arise as a result of the misuse of alcohol or drugs.

The objectives of the policy are:

- To ensure employees are aware of our expectations regarding the consumption of alcohol whilst they are at work.
- To prevent alcohol or drug misuse problems arising by promoting awareness of health information on alcohol and drugs to employees.
- To help motivate those employees whose drinking habits or use of drugs affect their work performance, to seek and accept appropriate counselling or treatment.
- To reduce nationally identified alcohol or drug related problems at work such as increased absenteeism, poor time keeping, high sickness levels, accidents at work, impaired work performance.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment. We reserve the right to amend it.

1. Purpose

We recognise that the misuse of alcohol or drugs may place the health of employees at risk and may affect the capability of employees to perform their duties.

Employees who have alcohol or drug related problems will be regarded for employment purposes as suffering from an illness and will be encouraged to seek help and treatment voluntarily. However, the use of our disciplinary procedure is not precluded where an employee, while under the influence of alcohol or other substances, behaves in a manner contrary to the standards of safety and behaviour required by us of our employees.

It is recognised that rules on the consumption of alcohol and use of drugs are necessary to set out clearly our expectation of the behaviour of employees.

2. Confidentiality

Alcohol or drug related work problems which are identified will be dealt with sensitively. Any personal or medical information, which is divulged by an employee with an alcohol/drug problem to their line manager, will be confidential. Employees who have concerns that alcohol or drug related problems may exist in the workplace will be able to raise such concerns in confidence and without fear of victimisation.

3. Communication of the policy

All employees will be advised of the alcohol and drugs at work policy and its implications for their behaviour at work. The availability of assistance and advice on alcohol/drug related issues will be highlighted.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Role of employees

All employees have a responsibility to make the policy work. Employees are required to familiarise themselves with and abide by the standards required at work in relation to the consumption of alcohol and use of drugs.

Employees with alcohol or drug problems will be required to seek help and assistance and will have a responsibility for their own wellbeing and safety, and that of colleagues.

Employees who are concerned that alcohol/drug related problems exist in the workplace are encouraged to raise these concerns with their manager or appropriate alternative person.

Role of managers

Managers have a responsibility to ensure that employees are aware of general and specific rules, standards and procedures relating to the use of alcohol/drugs in the context of their employment. They should be aware that their normal behaviour in relation to the use of alcohol/drugs may influence members of employees for whom they are responsible. As part of the normal management process, Managers should be alert to and monitor changes in work performance, attendance, sickness and accident patterns. Managers should intervene at an early stage where there are signs of problems and refer employees for assistance where appropriate.

5. Expectations of employees

The following section sets out our expectation of our employees' behaviour at work in relation to the consumption of alcohol/use of drugs.

Employees should be aware of their responsibilities under the Health and Safety Legislation (Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 Section 8).

Rules relating to the consumption of alcohol and to the use of drugs:

- Employees have a responsibility to ensure they are fit for work, and their capability to perform their duties should be unimpaired by the misuse of alcohol or drugs. Employees should be aware that misuse outside work might affect their capability at work.
- In addition to the question of capability, employees should be aware that if they smell of alcohol, it can create an unsatisfactory impression and could undermine confidence.
- The misuse of alcohol by employees in the course of their duties is unacceptable.
- Possession of alcohol on work premises in circumstances which may reasonably be regarded as giving rise to misuse is not acceptable. Careful investigations will take place prior to any action being taken.
- On occasions when alcoholic drinks are available to employees on work premises e.g. social occasions, employees should be aware of our general requirement regarding the sensible approach to the use of alcohol and the more specific requirement to comply with drink driving legislation.
- The misuse of prescribed drugs and substances such as solvents by employees on duty is unacceptable.
- The possession or use of illegal drugs by employees on any of our premises is totally unacceptable. It may lead to a criminal prosecution and will lead to disciplinary action.

These standards are designed to define good practice and breaches of such practice will be dealt with under this procedure or the disciplinary procedure, as appropriate, depending on the circumstances of the case.

6. Testing

Given the nature of our work and the serious safety risks associated with impairment, it is crucial all employees are operating at their best. We may therefore request random drug and alcohol screening.

Random testing

Testing is carried out by an external provider. You will be informed at the time of testing what substances are being screened for. Withdrawal of consent to testing without reasonable cause will be treated as a potential disciplinary matter under our Disciplinary Policy.

Testing with cause

Where we have reasonable grounds to believe that you may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol at work - for example, based on your appearance, behaviour or smell - we may ask you to submit to an immediate test. Refusal in these circumstances will also be treated as a potential disciplinary matter.

Positive results

A positive test result will be treated as a potential disciplinary matter under our Disciplinary Policy, which may result in dismissal. However, before formal action is taken we will consider all the circumstances, including whether there is an underlying dependency issue for which support should be offered.

7. Searches

We may conduct searches of workplace areas where we have reason to believe that alcohol or drugs may have been brought onto our premises or a client site. We may also ask to search your bags or clothing.

If you refuse a search request, we will treat this as potential misconduct under our Disciplinary Policy.

If a search reveals alcohol or drugs, we will investigate and may take disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

8. Procedure

Identification of an alcohol/drugs related problem at work.

Indications that an employee is suffering from problems at work which may be associated with their misuse of alcohol/drugs may be identified by a number of key indicators outlined in Appendix A. Such indications of concern may first be identified by work colleagues. In order to deal effectively with such problems, to ensure that they do not escalate and that the employee can be given appropriate help and advice, it is important to intervene at an early stage.

Colleagues are required to advise their line manager, the HR Manager or a Senior Director of any concerns they have over an employee's potential misuse of alcohol or drugs. This is the most appropriate way to support a colleague. The conversation will be held in the strictest confidence. Any breaches of confidentiality will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. Where an employee has a potential problem related to their own use of alcohol/drugs, they can, if they wish, raise the problem with their line manager or the HR Manager who will advise them in line with the principles set out in this policy.

Alternatively, they may approach a medical professional for help and advice. This will be confidential.

Informal action

Where concerns have been raised in connection with an employee's potential misuse of alcohol/drugs, their line manager will, as part of the normal management process, arrange to discuss their concerns with the employee, promptly and confidentially on an informal basis.

This meeting should cover the following points only:

- The employee should be asked an open question as to whether there are any issues/problems they would like to discuss.
- The manager should make a statement such as: 'It has been brought to my attention that you may have a substance or alcohol misuse problem. As such, I am obliged to give you this information relating to names and addresses of possible sources of help.' This is not an accusation or challenge, merely an invitation for the employee's response.
- The manager should then listen to any response that the employee wishes to give.
- A review meeting should be set for between 2-4 weeks (no longer). In the interim period the manager will monitor the employee against the indicators in Appendix A. This will provide the employee with space and time to reflect on their situation and give the manager time to assess the scale of the problem.

The employee is entitled to have an impartial representative or other colleague or friend (not acting in a legal capacity) present at the review meeting.

If the manager has not observed any of the indicators during the given period, there will be a discussion about the situation and further assessment if necessary.

If the manager has observed problems in behaviour, the employee will be referred to an appropriate medical professional for assessment (see formal action).

The manager will support the employee in overcoming any problems identified. However, the manager will also make clear the nature and extent of the improvement required and the timescale for the improvement. The manager has a responsibility not to tolerate any breach of safe working practice that could endanger the employee or others. Arrangements will be made to monitor and review the situation.

Formal action

If it is necessary to consider formal action it will be appropriate to use the Disciplinary Procedure as described below and contained within our Disciplinary Policy.

Any breach of the disciplinary rules in relation to the consumption of alcohol or use of drugs at work will be dealt with under the disciplinary policy. Any health problems that an employee may volunteer in mitigation will be taken into account prior to deciding on any disciplinary action.

Conclusion

It is recognised that despite efforts to help and support employees with alcohol/drug related problems at work, if such problems are not resolved, ultimately dismissal on the grounds of lack of capability, or misconduct, or ill health could be an outcome. However, each case will be dealt with on its merits and it is the intention of this procedure that by identifying and dealing with problems at an early stage such serious action can be avoided.

9. Questions and administration

The HR Manager is responsible for administering this policy. If you have any questions, please speak to your line manager in the first instance or contact suebailey@ansteyhorne.co.uk.

Related policies: Disciplinary Policy – Absence Policy

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment.

Appendix A

1. Key indicators of problems relating to drug or alcohol misuse

Note the presence and frequency of any of the following indicators of long term, excessive amounts of alcohol consumed on a more or less daily basis or in 'bouts', or of regular substance misuse.

It should be noted that the presence of one or two of these indicators may be indicative of a number of other illnesses/problems and is not necessarily a sign of alcohol or drug misuse.

Physical problems • Frequent hangovers. • Blackouts (difficulty in remembering the night before). • Bleary eyes. • Anemia. • Frequent minor illnesses and accidents. • Hospital admissions for substance withdrawal.	**Social problems** • Family and job problems. • Isolation. • Lateness and leaving early. • Missing appointments. • Neglecting details. • Forgetfulness. • Decline in appearance or gaining weight. • Avoidance of friends.
Psychological problems • Drinking to avoid problems. • Downplaying the amounts used, minimising the potential harm being done. • Guilt feelings. • Embarrassment at actions while drinking. • Nervousness and irritability. • Anxiety and depression. • Sudden mood changes. • Euphoria. • Inability to sleep.	**Financial problems** • Frequent sick leave from work. • Concern about spending on drink. • Borrowing money and unpaid bills.

2. Consumption of alcohol

One in 25 people in Britain are dependent on alcohol causing severe problems for their families and colleagues as well as themselves. Approximately one in five patients admitted to general hospitals has an alcohol related problem. Recent studies show that:

- Men drinking over 21 units per week take twice as much sickness absence as men drinking less than 21 units.
- Up to 25% of accidents at work involve intoxicated workers.
- 8-14 million working days are lost each year as a result of alcohol-related problems.

Alcohol is measured by the unit system

One unit of alcohol	=	one-half pint of beer
or	=	one glass of wine (normal strength)
or	=	one glass of sherry
or	=	one single whiskey.

Note: The strength of alcohol of beer and wine will affect the number of units it contains. Extra strong beer, for example, contains up to three times as much alcohol as ordinary beer.

		Units per week	
		Women	**Men**
1.	Low	0 – 14	0 - 21
2.	Increasing potential for harm	14 – 35	21 – 50
3.	Harmful	35+	50+

On average, women are affected faster and by less alcohol than men. This is related to their body size and also to a higher proportion of body fat to fluid. It has been shown that women are at risk of developing alcohol related illnesses earlier at lower levels of consumption than men.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has suggested that the recommendations for safe levels of consumption should advise no more than three units a day for a man and no more than two units a day for a woman.

Drugs and the workplace

Most people do not think there is a problem of drugs in the workplace. However, the 1995 White Paper *'Tackling Drugs Together'* estimated that three million people i.e. 6% of the population, take illegal drugs and a MORI survey showed that a significant number of people aged 20–24 had experimented with at least one drug (e.g. cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines). While evidence is still being gathered, it is reasonable to assume that any workplace may encounter employees who use drugs.

Research has shown that employees who use drugs are:

- 2.5 times more likely to have absences of eight days or more.
- 5 times more likely to be involved in an accident off the job.
- 3.6 times more likely to injure themselves or another in the workplace.

The Health & Safety Executive found in 1994 that illness and accidents at work cost an employer 10% of trading profits or £360 per employee. Added to this is the personal and family stress and hardship caused.

Sources of help and guidance

Alcoholics Anonymous
0800 917 7650
https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/
help@aamail.org

Narcotics Anonymous
0300 999 1212
https://ukna.org/
meetings@ukna.org

Or visit a GP or Practice Nurse