

LIPA

Policy on Alcohol and Drug Use - Staff

Introduction

Alcohol and drug misuse affects performance, behaviour and relationships at work and at home. There is overwhelming evidence of links between alcohol misuse and social, psychological and medical problems, accidents and violence. We have a duty and a desire to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all our staff and we view the promotion of good health as an integral part of our employment policy.

This policy is designed primarily to:-

- Explain our approach to alcohol and drug consumption and attendant problems at work;
- Raise awareness of the risks;
- Safeguard you from the hazards of such abuse;
- Promote the early identification of problems;
- Provide advice and support to staff in overcoming their problems.

These procedures cover actions we will take in one-off situations of staff being under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst at work, as well as the action to be taken when a member of staff has an underlying drug or alcohol related problem which affects their performance at work.

Our premises remain a drug-free zone and anyone found in possession of illegal drugs on the premises will be immediately asked to leave the site by our Security staff. If you are one of our staff, you will be suspended pending a full investigation in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure.

The policy applies to all staff employed by and working for us (e.g. freelancers).

Our Aims

Our aims are to:

- Aim 1: Provide a healthy and safe working environment for you, our students and visitors;
- Aim 2: Help you if you have an alcohol or drug problem to be restored to health quickly to the benefit of yourself and your colleagues, and to return to an acceptable pattern of working.

Definitions

Substance Misuse - drinking alcohol, taking drugs or a controlled substance, either intermittent or continuous which interferes with an individual's health, work capabilities or conduct, or which affects the work performance and/or safety of themselves and others.

Drug – means and includes any substance (other than alcohol) that produces physical, mental, emotional or behavioural change in the user, the sale, possession or consumption of which is illegal.

This term includes prescription drugs where such prescription drugs have not been prescribed for the person possessing or using such drugs and/or such prescription drugs are not taken in accordance with a physician's direction.

Controlled Substance - means and includes all chemical substances or drugs listed in any controlled substances acts or regulations applicable under the law.

Identification

Misuse of alcohol and drug misuse can cause a number of problems at work. These can also act as signs or symptoms of the underlying cause:

- Accident and injury:
- Deterioration in general health:
- Absence from work or poor time-keeping:
- Effects on performance, such as poor judgement or decision-making; loss of concentration or of memory:
- Erratic or unacceptable behaviour:
- Deterioration of working relations.

Some of these may be particularly obvious at certain points of the week, such as after lunchtime or Monday mornings. Other signs that can indicate substance misuse are the onset of financial difficulties, domestic difficulties, or a change in appearance.

Alcohol Concern identifies certain contributory factors that make some environments "high-risk". These include:

- Availability of alcohol at work;
- Social pressures to drink;
- Stress;
- Freedom from supervision.

People who are developing or already have a dependence on alcohol or drugs frequently hide the evidence and deny the existence of a problem. Concealment may stem partly from concern as to how the issue will be treated and its possible effect upon job security, future career or relationships with other staff. Identifying the symptoms in people and getting them to acknowledge their problem is the first step towards recovery. Staff who suspect that a colleague or member of their staff has a problem therefore should encourage them to seek help.

Our Approach - underlying drug or alcohol related problems

- We will adopt a supportive and sympathetic approach if you develop problems as a result of alcohol or drug use. Similarly, all staff with line management responsibility are encouraged to be alert to possible problems and to take a constructive approach if problems do emerge;
- We recognise that addiction to alcohol and drugs may in some cases be considered a medical condition and should be treated as such. If you believe you may have a problem, you are encouraged to seek advice from our Personnel Department at an early stage;

- Any advice will be offered in the strictest confidence. Confidential details will normally only be shared by Personnel with your own doctor, occupational health adviser, or manager with your prior agreement;
- Whilst alcohol or drug abuse does not excuse poor work performance or misconduct, it may be treated as a mitigating factor, and disciplinary procedures may be suspended whilst the opportunity is taken to identify potential alcohol or drug-related problems and, if necessary, to seek treatment;
- Risk assessments will be used to identify any activities or work environments where for safety critical reasons you are not permitted to consume alcohol immediately before or at any time during the working day, including during unpaid breaks, and should at no time report for work with a blood alcohol level exceeding the current UK limit for safe driving. Examples of such areas of work may include:
 - using dangerous machinery or equipment (e.g. in our performance spaces or theatre workshop);
 - working in locations or environments where an unimpaired sense of balance is essential (ladders, work on roofs, working at height);
 - driving a vehicle of any description

Our Approach - random instances of drug-taking or excessive drinking

Random instances of misuse of alcohol or of drugs, which do not involve addiction, will be handled through the normal disciplinary processes.

Impact on Colleagues

Members of staff are not obliged to work with someone who has consumed alcohol or drugs if they consider that by doing so they put themselves or others at risk; anyone in this position should immediately report their concerns to their line manager.

Individuals considered incapable of performing duties safely or competently due to consumption of alcohol or drugs should immediately be removed from duty and the Personnel Department informed.

Disciplinary Action

The misuse of alcohol or drugs does not exonerate anyone from the results of their actions or omissions or from disciplinary action, which may be related to conduct or to performance.

Each case will be considered on its merits; as a general guide, disciplinary action is likely to be taken if the member of staff:

- refuses to seek treatment recommended;
- fails to complete a course of treatment;
- fails to respond to a course of treatment;
- endangers the health or safety of others;
- where performance does not improve despite intervention;

- in certain cases of relapse. In some cases, medical retirement may be an option.

Your Responsibilities

You have a personal responsibility to:

- Be fit for work when conducting duties on our behalf and notify management immediately if use of an aforementioned substance may cause any impairment of work performance;
- Not consume alcohol during work time, other than at work events where alcohol may be provided or with the prior knowledge/agreement of management;
- Not bring or use illegal substances on our premises under any circumstances;
- Seek professional help if you have a substance abuse problem;
- Undertake and complete a substance abuse rehabilitation programme as recommended by a professional body;
- Report to management if you suspect that another employee in the workplace is under the influence of an aforementioned substance;
- Notify management if you are taking medication that could affect your ability to work safely.

Managers' Responsibilities

If you are a manager, you must:

- Make this Policy on Alcohol and Drug Abuse available to your staff;
- Ensure risk assessments are carried out for work under your control;
- Talk to your staff as soon as possible if their behaviour, performance or absence indicates a problem with substance misuse;
- Refer to Personnel any staff who declare or who you suspect may have a substance abuse problem;
- Provide support to staff who undertake a treatment programme
- Remove from the workplace employees who you suspect are under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances;
- Refer staff to Personnel for advice on health and safety at work if they are taking medication that could affect their ability to work safely.

Personnel Responsibilities

- Provide advice to management and staff consistent with this policy and employment legislation;
- Provide education to staff on the harmful effects associated with alcohol/substance abuse and their effects on health and safety;
- Provide managers with advice on the early detection, recognition and management of employees with substance addiction;
- Arrange confidential health advice and facilitate referral for treatment;
- Monitor progress and provide support to employees;
- Advise managers if there is a concern about a member of staff's ability to perform their duties.

Time off will be granted to allow appointments for assessment to be kept and for appointments with a treatment provider if this is subsequently recommended and constitutes part of the agreement between the employee, the provider and LIPA.

We will normally require information in the form of regular confidential written reports from the treatment provider which will include the treatment goals and timescales agreed and an individual's compliance with a treatment programme.

The need for this information will be explained to the employee prior to their referral to a treatment provider and their consent for this will be sought.

Any relapse during or after any intervention will be viewed sympathetically and due consideration given to further assessment and support.

Conduct when alcohol is available at in-house events

We recognise that alcohol may be available at some in-house events (whether held on the premises or not), such as parties, entertaining visitors or other work-related events such as Graduation.

However, employees must be fit for work when conducting duties and are always expected to maintain and be responsible for their own standards of behaviour, with the emphasis on avoiding any actions that could lead to a complaint of misconduct or that could harm our reputation.

Such complaints will be fully investigated and may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

Non-alcoholic beverages will always be available as an alternative.