

# ALCOHOL, DRUGS & SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

University of Suffolk is committed to providing a safe and productive work environment and to promoting the health, safety and well-being of its employees in line with the University of Suffolk Health and Safety Policy. This policy is designed to ensure that employees are aware of the support available, expected standards of behaviour and of the risks associated with alcohol/drug misuse and the consequences of their actions.

## 2. AIMS

This policy aims to:

- Clarify the University's position on alcohol, drugs and substance abuse at work in order to minimise problems at work arising from alcohol, drugs and substance abuse.
- Help those affected with alcohol, drugs and substance related problems by encouraging treatment where possible.
- Support staff in dealing with alcohol, drugs and substance abuse problems by providing a clear procedure.
- To ensure the health and safety of our staff, students and others at work.

### **3. SCOPE**

This policy is concerned with the effects of alcohol, drugs and substance abuse in the workplace and applies to all employees of the University of Suffolk. Individuals working within the University, but not employed by the University, e.g. contractors, volunteers, visitors, customers, are required to adhere to the Policy guidelines even though not covered by procedural details. Failure to do so is likely to result in the working arrangements being terminated.

### **4. DEFINITION**

Alcohol, drugs and substance abuse is defined as "the intermittent or continual use of alcohol or substances which causes detriment to the member of staff's health, social functioning or work performance, and which affects efficiency, productivity, safety, attendance, timekeeping or conduct in the workplace".

Drugs and substances are defined as illegal drugs, prescribed and non-prescribed medication, and solvents. Substances covered in this document are those that come under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

### **5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The policy and procedures incorporate the following principles:

- This policy and its procedures will be applied to members of staff in a fair, sensitive, and confidential manner without discrimination.
- Information relating to alcohol, drugs and substance abuse should not be divulged to a third party not involved in the process, other than appropriate others.
- Should a more formal approach be required to deal with misuse, a member of staff will be entitled to be accompanied by an officer of a trade union or by a fellow worker of the University.
- The general provisions within this policy, relates to staff with ongoing dependency problems not isolated incidences of attendance at work under the influence of alcohol, drugs or substances, and unauthorised absences resulting from the same. These are issues of conduct that fall within the scope of the University's Disciplinary Procedures.

### **6. CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL DURING WORK-RELATED SOCIAL EVENTS**

It is recognised that alcohol may be available at some university-related events (whether held on the premises or not), such as parties, entertaining visitors, or other work-related events such as training courses.

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 could harm the reputation of the university. Any such complaints will be fully investigated and may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

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

## 7. DEFINING DRUGS, ALCOHOL OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Alcohol, drugs or substance related issues with members of staff fall into one of two categories:

**Conduct related issue:** an over-indulgence in alcohol, or misuse of drugs or substances, which results in socially unacceptable or even dangerous behaviour, but which is not related to a physical or psychological dependence. If it is established that a member of staff's misconduct in the form of alcohol, drugs or substance abuse is not due to a dependency, recourse to the disciplinary procedures may be appropriate.

**On-going health related issue:** where a person's physical or psychological dependency on alcohol, drugs or substances continually or repeatedly interferes with his/her work. It should be seen initially as an ill-health issue and thus treated as such. Employees should be strongly encouraged to seek help and discuss it with their Manager, who will keep the discussion in strictest confidence.

Your Manager will discuss this with you and agree on options available for help. Support will be provided by People and Organisational Development (POD) team as required.

## 8. INTERVENTION

The University will offer support to individuals who recognise they have an alcohol or drug problem.

Action by individuals who know or suspect that they have an alcohol or drug problem are encouraged to seek help voluntarily. Their first contact may be their G.P., or one of the local voluntary services listed in Appendix 1. Within the University, help should be sought from the Dean/Associate Dean, or a member of the People and Organisational Development team.

The University will provide support to enable rehabilitation, employees are expected to actively engage with any support and assistance offered, whether provided by their doctor or the organisation to address an alcohol, drug and/or substance misuse problem. However, if they fail to undergo treatment it may lead to disciplinary action.

If a relapse in the drug misuse problem occurs after counselling or treatment, then the resulting management action will be decided on the merits of the case.

Every effort will be made to ensure that an employee undergoing counselling or treatment for alcohol, drug and/or substance misuse problems is retained in their original job with no prejudice to promotional opportunities or other benefits, provided that work performance and attendance record return to, or remain at, a normally acceptable level.

### Equality Impact Assessment

## Appendix 1

### Health Guidelines to Alcohol Consumption

Guidelines have been set out by the Health Education Authority as to how much alcohol it is safe for a healthy adult to drink. The NHS website also provides a range of helpful fact sheets including advice on how to lower individual alcohol consumption.

For further information please refer to the NHS website [www.nhs.uk/alcohol](http://www.nhs.uk/alcohol).

### Useful Contacts

- Action on Addiction: call 0845 126 4130 or visit [www.actiononaddiction.org.uk](http://www.actiononaddiction.org.uk)
- Addaction: [www.addaction.org.uk](http://www.addaction.org.uk)
- ADFAM: call **020 7553 7640** or visit [www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)
- **Alcoholics Anonymous**: the helpline number is **0845 769 7555** or visit [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)
- Al-Anon: Confidential helpline **0207 40 30 888** 10am – 10pm or visit [www.al-anonuk.org.uk](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk)
- Down your Drink: a confidential, free 24 hour self-help programme for anyone worried about their drinking [www.downyourdrink.org.uk](http://www.downyourdrink.org.uk)
- Drinkaware: [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)
- Drinkline: a confidential, free 24 hour helpline call **0300 123 1110**
- University of Suffolk Confidential Counselling line: **011 7934 2121**

Some of these sites are interactive and provide self-help tool kits which may be helpful in identifying and managing alcohol or drug misuse.