

POLICY ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL IN THE WORKPLACE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Eastbourne Borough Council is committed to providing a safe, healthy and effective working environment which it is recognised will not only help our staff, but also increase our ability to offer high standards of service.
- 1.2 Eastbourne Borough Council has a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its employees and recognises that their wellbeing is important. The aim is for all employees to be aware of the risks associated with drug and alcohol misuse and to ensure that those served by Eastbourne Borough Council are not put at risk by the inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs by its employees.
- 1.3 This Policy should be read in conjunction with Eastbourne Borough Council's approach to Dignity at Work, Section 13 of the Use of Private and Council Vehicles policy and, where applicable, alongside the Disciplinary or Grievance Procedures.
- 1.4 The Policy has been drawn up after consultation with Corporate Management Team, managers and Trade Unions and in compliance with relevant legislation. Eastbourne Borough Council is a member of the East Sussex Drug and Alcohol Action team (DAAT) and this Policy also reflects the DAAT Statement of Intent which is incorporated at Appendix 1.
- 1.5 The Council is committed to ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination and bias in the application of its procedures.

2. GENERAL AIMS

- 2.1 We work to ensure that those who may be experiencing problems through the misuse of drugs and/or alcohol, are treated with care and concern and are provided with the appropriate support.
- 2.2 We will ensure that our managers are equipped to recognise the signs of potential drug and alcohol misuse at work and to provide appropriate support and guidance to employees experiencing problems.
- 2.3 It is acknowledged that individuals are able to decide for themselves whether it is appropriate to drink alcohol or take drugs. However any such use must not adversely impact on their workplace, driving or work performance, or compromise service provision to our service users.

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Neither must it be in contravention of our Code of Conduct or the law of the land. Employees should take account of the impact their behaviour might have on the public's perception of Eastbourne Borough Council.

- 2.4 Therefore, Eastbourne Borough Council believes that employees must carry a responsibility for their own health, safety and welfare. This is the case, not only during normal working hours, but also where inappropriate use of drugs and alcohol outside normal working hours may subsequently affect behaviour and performance at work, and constitute a safety risk.
- 2.5 The consumption of alcohol while actually at work is normally prohibited, with the exception of officially sanctioned work events where alcohol is provided. The same expectations on staff and consequences set out below in paragraph 2.6 apply in respect of alcohol consumption at such events.
- 2.6 Consumption of alcohol during lunch/break periods and immediately prior to commencing work is discouraged. If its consumption resulted in an unacceptable effect on an employee's behaviour or work performance, this will be addressed by his/her manager and may lead to formal action under the disciplinary procedure.
- 2.7 The consumption of alcohol is prohibited when an officer's duties necessitate driving during working hours. If this is not complied with, the disciplinary procedure will be invoked and the police may be notified.
- 2.8 Eastbourne Borough Council does not condone illegal activities in association with the use of drugs. We will take immediate action under the Misuse of Drugs Act should an employee be found to be using or supplying illegal drugs at work. This means invoking the disciplinary procedure and referring matters to the Police.
- 2.9 Employees should be aware that the effects of some drugs, including prescribed and proprietary medications, taken prior to or during working hours can remain in the system for lengthy periods of time. They can impact on driving, work performance and behaviour. If in doubt, employees should seek medical advice and discuss the situation with their manager.
- 2.10 The prolonged use of tranquillisers/anti-depressants can lead to dependence. Employees wishing to reduce their use of these prescribed medicines should do so with medical supervision. Failure to do so may result in a medical emergency. There are many agencies able to assist employees and their GP or a specialist GP can support them to reduce their usage in a manageable and safe way.
- 2.11 There are many possible indicators of inappropriate drug or alcohol use; such as lateness, absenteeism, poor work and output, poor appearance and unreliability, bad relations with colleagues, impaired concentration, co-ordination, memory or judgement and, potentially, accidents. *However, on a cautionary note, managers should bear in mind that these indicators may be unrelated to drug and alcohol consumption.*
- 2.12 Where such indicators, after having been assessed by a medical practitioner are found to be due to drug or alcohol misuse, the problem

will be regarded initially as a health matter and will be dealt with under our Attendance Management provisions. Support will be given and appropriate referrals can be made either by the employee, or on their behalf, to the Occupational Health service.

- 2.13 However, in instances where
- this Policy and relevant procedures are not adhered to,
 - or where employees are reluctant or refuse to accept referral to an appropriate helping agency,
 - or where a particular incident of misconduct occurs,
- use of the Disciplinary procedure may be considered. If any treatment is not completed or fails after fair and reasonable efforts have been made to overcome the problem, consideration will be given to other courses of action in accordance with our attendance management procedures.
- 2.14 Inappropriate drinking which adversely affects performance during work is likely to result in the use of the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 2.15 Drug and alcohol problems can be dramatically reduced or eliminated through employees making positive and responsible decisions about their drug and alcohol use and through managers and colleagues being supportive and encouraging to those who are experiencing problems.

3. DRUG AND ALCOHOL AWARENESS

3.1 Legal background

- 3.1.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act etc 1974 places a duty on employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees, so that they do not injure themselves or endanger the public or colleagues. This has particular relevance to alcohol, drugs and the use of machinery. Employees also have legal obligations to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions at work. This includes members of the public.
- 3.1.2 The Road Traffic Act 1988 stipulates that any person driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle whilst unfit to drive through use of a substance may be prosecuted. This includes driving on Council business.
- 3.1.3 The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 states that it is illegal to produce, supply or be in possession of drugs covered by this Act unless prescribed by a doctor. Drugs are classified into three categories – Classes A, B and C – according to their potential for harm. Class A drugs are regarded as the most dangerous and so carry the heaviest penalties for misuse. Supply of drugs is punished more severely than possession. Allowing premises to be used for supplying or producing drugs is an offence and carries severe penalties. If this should happen in the workplace, the Council could be found liable with attendant consequences for both managers and staff.

3.1.4 Not all drugs or substances that can be misused are illegal or obtained illegally. Many ordinary office or household substances can intoxicate e.g. glue, solvents. This Policy covers all intoxicating substances, not just those which are illegal.

3.2 Health Issues

3.2.1 The use of mood enhancing drugs such as alcohol, illegal drugs, prescribed and over-the-counter drugs and chemicals such as solvents can be physically and psychologically harmful, even in small quantities.

3.2.2 When a substance is used regularly, a tolerance can develop when the body becomes accustomed to it. This means that the user may find that increasing amounts of the substance are needed to create the same effect.

3.2.3 When alcohol or drugs become an individual's main concern, the individual is considered to be *dependent*. Dependency has two aspects, psychological and physical. Specialist help, such as counselling, may be needed to help individuals end their dependence.

3.2.4 There are three main categories of drugs according to their effect. These are:

- Depressants – for example, alcohol, tranquillisers, heroin and methadone
- Stimulants – for example, amphetamines, ecstasy, cocaine and tobacco
- Hallucinogens – for example, cannabis, LSD, magic mushrooms

3.2.5 The effects experienced by someone when they use a drug can be difficult to predict and will depend on factors that include the amount and method used, the tolerance of that individual and their mood and surroundings at the time.

3.2.6 Even though alcohol is widely used and accepted, employees should be aware that it is absorbed into the bloodstream from the stomach within five minutes and the effect can last for several hours, depending on a combination of factors. Alcohol is a depressant and its effect is to slow down reaction times, impair judgement and co-ordination.

3.2.7 Mixing different types of alcohol and drugs is particularly dangerous as it can magnify the effects of individual substances and increase the risk of overdose.

3.2.8 Alcohol increases its depressant effect when mixed with other depressants and can result in sedation, drowsiness, confusion or even coma. An overdose created by depressants can lead to cardiac and respiratory failure.

3.2.9 The combination of alcohol and stimulants can put a strain on the heart, create unexpected behavioural changes and feelings of anxiety, paranoia or aggression.

3.2.10 Alcohol and illicit drugs will also interact with prescribed medication leading to behavioural changes, strain on the body and confusion. All of which can have serious health consequences.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 CMT will ensure that arrangements are in place for implementing and monitoring this policy.

4.2 Managers will:

4.2.1 raise awareness of the policy and its aims with their staff;

4.2.2 ensure that their staff are aware of the risks associated with the use of drugs and alcohol and their potential adverse impact on work performance and safety, and that it does not compromise service provision to service users;

4.2.3 not permit the consumption of alcohol by their staff whilst they are actually at work with the exception of officially sanctioned work events where alcohol is provided;

4.2.4 attempt to identify problems at an early stage and provide appropriate help and support;

4.2.5 be able to recognise the signs of potential drug or alcohol misuse at work and intervene at an early stage, adopting a sensitive approach in raising concerns with staff;

4.2.6 take legitimate management action if they consider that an employee's unacceptable behaviour at work is due to their inappropriate consumption of alcohol during lunch/break periods, or immediately prior to work. This may include requiring an employee to refrain from work and/or instigating disciplinary action;

4.2.7 maintain confidentiality is maintained when dealing with drug and alcohol issues in the workplace;

4.2.8 ensure that other employees, service users, members of the public and those in their charge are not put at risk or adversely affected as a result of the use of drugs or alcohol by Council employees;

4.2.9 ensure that, as representatives of Eastbourne Borough Council, employees behave in a professional manner at all times and that this is not undermined by drug or alcohol use;

4.2.10 encourage employees with drug or alcohol problems to seek help and advise them of the sources of help available, as outlined in Section 5 below;

4.2.11 offer support to other staff, including, if appropriate, service users whose wellbeing and work performance may be affected by drug or alcohol problems.

4.3 Employees will:

4.3.1 familiarise themselves with the Policy, its aims and their responsibilities in relation to drug and alcohol misuse at work;

4.3.2 maintain a professional approach at all times whilst at work and on Council business, including interactions with service users, contractors and members of the public;

4.3.3 be aware that the consumption of alcohol whilst actually at work is prohibited, with the exception of officially sanctioned work events where alcohol is provided. The same expectations on staff and consequences set out below in paragraph 4.3.4 apply in respect of alcohol consumption at such events;

4.3.4 appreciate that if alcohol is consumed during lunch/break periods or immediately prior to work, and this impacts negatively on their behaviour or work performance, this will lead to legitimate management action;

4.3.5 understand the information provided in this document about drug and alcohol use and its effects on work and health, and manage their behaviour accordingly;

4.3.6 encourage colleagues who may have a drug or alcohol problem to seek help. If this approach is not effective, the matter may be raised in confidence with the line manager;

4.3.7 avoid covering up or colluding with colleagues where a drug or alcohol problem is affecting work;

4.3.8 seek out appropriate support and help for drug or alcohol misuse as outlined in Section 5 below, particularly where this may be affecting behaviour or work performance;

4.3.9 ensure that no alcohol is consumed prior to driving, the operation of hazardous machinery or where work in a hazardous environment is likely.;

4.3.10 Employees who are 'on call' must ensure they are not under the influence of alcohol during the 'on-call' period as they may be required to attend work. If unexpected circumstances arise where an individual is requested to perform unscheduled duties while under the influence of alcohol or medications, it is the responsibility of that individual to advise his/her manager and decline the call-out.

5 ADVICE AND SUPPORT

- 5.1 If employees are concerned about a drug or alcohol problem within their workplace, whether their own situation or someone else's, they are strongly advised to seek help and advice through the appropriate channels to enable advice, counselling and practical support to be arranged. This could include contacting their GP.
- 5.2 The problem should also be discussed with their manager/ supervisor, who will treat the matter in strict confidence, and may recommend the involvement of the occupational health adviser and/or an external specialist agency.
- 5.3 Contact can be made directly and in confidence with Human Resources (01323 415110), or with Occupational Health (01323 414913) or with the Specialist Adviser (Health & Safety) (01323 415363) for advice and support.
- 5.4 Additionally, help and advice may be sought from your GP and relevant specialist agencies (see Appendix 2 which gives contact details for some specialist agencies). Relevant information can also be accessed at main libraries. Trade Unions may also be able to offer confidential support and advice.
- 5.5 Eastbourne Borough Council is committed to helping staff overcome problems with alcohol and/or drugs in a sympathetic and confidential manner wherever possible. However, confidentiality cannot be maintained where there is a clear danger to the individual or to others. This may also apply where a criminal act is involved or suspected.

Related policies or sources of information

General Health and Safety Policy Statement
Use of Private and Council Vehicles Policy
Attendance Management policy and Procedures
Capability Procedure
Code of Conduct
Disciplinary Procedure

Drugs and Alcohol Awareness course on OLLIE

Drug and Alcohol Policy

APPENDIX 1 Core Statement of Intent for all Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) Member Organisations

1. As a Drug and Alcohol Action Team member organisation, we are committed to providing a safe, healthy and effective working environment. In doing so, we recognise that not only will we help our staff, but also increase our ability to offer high standards of service.
2. It is acknowledged that individuals are able to decide for themselves whether it is appropriate to drink alcohol or take drugs. However, this use should not adversely impact on the workplace and/or individual and collective work performance.
3. Use affecting work performance may lead to reduced efficiency, increased risk of accidents, sickness absence and even incidents of misconduct. These may have serious consequences for individuals, their families and employers.
4. We are committed to helping staff overcome problems with alcohol and/or drugs. Individuals and their managers should refer concerns through the appropriate channels to enable advice, counselling and practical support to be available. This support will also be available to others who may also be involved.
5. All such individuals will be dealt with sympathetically and in confidence. However, confidentiality cannot be maintained where there is a clear danger either to the individual or to others. This may also apply where a criminal act is involved or suspected.
6. All member organisations are committed to informing and educating their workforce about the issues surrounding the use of alcohol and/or drugs; their commitment to helping staff with problems; and the possible consequences for such individuals who cannot overcome their problems. The emphasis will be on help and support.
7. All member organisations will need to have their own policies on incapacity and disciplinary procedures may need to be applied should the problems persist. Individuals should be reminded of this possibility at the appropriate stage.
8. All member organisations will maintain their own drug and alcohol policies. All will adopt this Statement of Intent and comply with the relevant legislation, particularly that covering health, safety and welfare issues and

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with the Human Rights Act. We are also committed to sharing our experiences and best practice for the benefit of our staff and those with whom we have contact.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Specialist Agencies

Agency	Address	Tel Number
Action For Change	www.action-for-change.org	0300 1112470
Addaction www.addaction.org.uk	www.addaction.org.uk	
Aftercare Services Co-ordination (ASC)	85 Mount Pleasant Road Hastings, TN34 3SL	01424 729022 07880 506560
Alcoholics Anonymous	www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk	0845 769 7555
Al-Anon Family Groups provide support and understanding to anyone whose life is, or has been affected by someone else's drinking.	www.al-anonuk.org.uk	For details of local groups: 020 7403 0888
Alcohol Concern	www.alcoholconcern.org.uk	0207 566 9800
Brighton Oasis Project	11 Richmond Place Brighton www.oasisproject.org.uk	01273 696970
Carers Support Action for Change provide advice and support for anyone caring for a family member or friend with drug or alcohol issues.		0300 111 2470
Cocaine Anonymous	www.cauk.org.uk	0800 612 0225
Drinkline		0800 917 8282

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Agency	Address	Tel Number
Drugscope www.drugscope.org.uk	www.drugscope.org.uk	020 7234 9730
East Sussex Drug and Alcohol Action Team	www.safeineastsussex.org.uk	01323 466549
Eastbourne Community Drugs Team	Avenida Lodge 3 Upper Avenue Eastbourne, BN21 3UY	01323 749567
East Sussex Recovery Alliance Peer led Recovery Community Organisation (RCO) which has been created by people in recovery to encourage the recovery of others in East Sussex.	ESRA Eastbourne Minster House, York Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 4ST esra.eastbourne@gmail.com	01323 418122 07505771839
East Sussex Recovery Alliance	ESRA Hastings Jackson Hall, Room 17, Portland Place, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1QN esrahastings1066@gmail.com	01424 435318 07505 771814
FRANK Helpline	www.talktofrank.com	0800 77 66 00
Hastings & Rother Substance Misuse Service	www.escis.org.uk	01424 452580
Narcotics Anonymous	www.ukna.org	0300 999 1212
NHS For a range of tips and advice on how to lead a better and healthier life	Visit the NHS Change4Life Alcohol help and advice page	
Open Door	67 Susans Road Eastbourne	01323 725115
CRI	www.cri.org.uk	01273 677 019
Phoenix House	Colwall Court Bexhill on Sea, TN39 3AP	01424 732171
Substance Misuse Service	26 Ditchling Road, Brighton	01273 242172
Sussex Alcohol & Substance Use Service (SASS)	100a Blatchington Road, Hove, BN3 3YE	01273 727888

Agency	Address	Tel Number
The Seaside Drug Advice Centre	95 Seaside Road Eastbourne, BN21 3PL	01323 412412
Turning-point	www.turning-point.co.uk	0207 481 7600