



Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy

1.5

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1. INTRODUCTION

For most people drinking alcoholic beverages is enjoyable and causes a minimum of harm, but for some it becomes a serious threat to health, general well-being and eventually to livelihood.

In regard to the use of drugs and other substances, employers can sometimes feel out of their depth. However, there are organisations providing drugs education, so improving the availability of information, and enabling employers to be better prepared to understand and deal with a problem should it arise.

The misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances by an employee during the course of employment is detrimental to the image of SHPCA and likely to heighten the potential for patient complaints and reduced patient care/satisfaction. Employees work performance and efficiency may be reduced, work absence may increase, and the potential to have, or cause, an accident at work is increased. However, much depends on the individual misusing drugs, their state of mind at the time, the drugs themselves, the amount taken, and the surroundings in which the drugs are taken. What can be said with certainty is that all drugs are potentially dangerous in one way or another and most are illegal.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide additional support to managers to prevent and reduce the incidences of alcohol, drug or other substance-related problems in the workplace. The aim of this document is also to encourage the development of a climate which will remove the tendency of staff to conceal or deny alcohol, drug or other substance-related problems, and give the managers and employee representatives the confidence to deal with them constructively.

2. SHPCA'S POSITION

SHPCA has a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to ensure a safe and healthy working environment for all employees. This means that SHPCA cannot allow an employee under the influence of alcohol or drugs/other substances to endanger their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and third parties.

SHPCA aims to:

- Promote the health and wellbeing of employees and to minimise problems at work arising from misuse of alcohol, drug and other substances
- Make known to employees the harmful effects of excessive consumption of alcohol and drug/substance dependency
- Make employees aware of safe and sensible drinking habits and a drug/substance - free lifestyle
- Identify any employee with possible problems relating to alcohol, drug or other substance abuse at an early stage, offer guidance and actively encourage them to seek help

- Direct any employee known to have alcohol, drug/substance related problems affecting their work to an appropriate source of help.
- Provide specific training for managers/supervisors who have responsibilities for people management

Alcohol consumption whilst in work time is no longer considered reasonable and acceptable and has no place in the prevailing culture of SHPCA. Employees are also reminded that the laws relating to drink driving are paramount.

Employees must not work for SHPCA whilst under the influence of drink or drugs – this applies equally to driving as any other kind of work (please see Health & Safety Policy).

Employees who suspect they may have a problem should be encouraged to seek help; leave to undergo treatment is dealt with under SHPCA's Absence Management Policy.

Confidentiality will be maintained on a need-to-know basis, particularly in respect of written records or correspondence both internally and externally.

Cases of wilful and/or negligent misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances, where an employee refuses to seek help, need to be dealt with through SHPCA's Disciplinary Policy.

3. SUPPORT

The Occupational Health Service will respond to referrals from managers, or self-referrals from employees, and provide ongoing support and guidance for both the employee and manager in managing any problems identified. This may include liaison with external agencies, such as the employee's GP or other medical practitioner providing care to the affected employee.

SCW HR will provide advice and guidance on the application of this guidance and will provide ongoing support to both managers and employees where any problems are identified.

Managers are encouraged to discuss alcohol or substance related problems with SCW HR, in order to ensure issues are dealt with consistently and appropriately.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF AN ISSUE

The misuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances by employees may come to light in various ways. The following characteristics, especially when arising in various combinations, may indicate the presence of a problem:

- a) **Absenteeism** may take the form of:
 - i. instances of unauthorised leave
 - ii. leaving work early
 - iii. lateness (especially returning from lunch)
 - iv. excessive level of sickness absence

- v. suspicious reasons for absence
- vi. unusually high level of sickness for colds, flu etc
- vii. unscheduled short-term absences, with or without explanation.

b) High Accident Levels:

- i. at work
- ii. elsewhere, i.e. driving, at home.

c) Work performance affected, particularly:

- i. difficulty in concentrating
- ii. work requires increased effort
- iii. individual tasks take more time
- iv. problems remembering instructions or making mistakes.

d) Mood Swings, such as:

- i. irritability
- ii. depression
- iii. general confusion
- iv. Misconduct

It is important when considering this list of 'symptoms', that any, or all, of these can also indicate stress or physical illness

It should be borne in mind that most employees have occasional work performance and attendance problems. It is a pattern of problems over a period of time that should be noted.

Equally, no one employee will exhibit the entire range of problems listed above.

An employee's alcohol, drug or substance problem may come to light during a formal interview to deal with issues such as discipline or performance. Should this situation arise, support from an HR manager should be sought.

In some instances, employees may seek help and advice themselves.

5. HELPING THE EMPLOYEE

Where an employee acknowledges a dependency problem and is offered and given help and treatment, this will be on the basis that:

- SHPCA will not be liable for any costs incurred for medical help and treatment
- Whilst undergoing treatment, the staff member will be on sick leave and will be paid in accordance with SHPCA sick pay rules.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that on completion of the employee's recovery they will return to the same job.

Following absence for treatment, a discussion with the employee and up to date medical evidence from the employee's general practitioner and/or Occupational Health indicating that the employee is fit for return to normal duties is required. A return to work plan must be drawn up in conjunction with the Occupational Health Service and taking into account advice from any external agencies who may have been involved in the care and treatment of the affected employee. Flexible return to work options should be considered, such as an initial period of reduced hours or part time working or phased return, to allow the returning employee time to settle back into their work responsibilities and to avoid stressful environments which could cause a relapse.

As part of the return to work, the manager will hold regular meetings with the employee to monitor their work performance, behaviour and progress. This will be done in conjunction with regular appointments with the Occupational Health Service, to ensure the employee is fully supported in their role

Where a return to work would jeopardise either a satisfactory level of job performance or the employee's recovery, the head of service or associate director, in conjunction with the HR business partner will review the full circumstances surrounding the case and agree a course of action.

6. TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

To ensure that the Probationary Period is highlighted to new employees when issuing the employment contract. The chief officer, directors, associate directors, managers and supervisors will be given support to assist in the recognition of symptoms which may be indicative of misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances. Effective interviewing and coaching skills will be developed so that employees can be dealt with promptly, tactfully and firmly.

All employees will be made aware of the effects of alcohol, drug and substance abuse. They will be encouraged not to cover up for employees suspected of having a drink or drug problem but to recognise that collusion represents a false sense of loyalty and will in the longer-term damage those employees.

7. SOURCES OF HELP

If employees' drinking, drug or other substance use is a matter of concern, they should be encouraged to seek help from their GP or a specialist alcohol or drugs agency, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Alcohol Concern, Release or the National Drugs Helpline. They can also access the help available from their Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) service. Please see Appendix 1 for further resources.

8. APPENDIX 1

DRUG AND ALCOHOL SUPPORT SERVICES

Support Services can be accessed through your GP or by self-referral

Health Assured, our EAP, can offer support on 0800 783 2808

Other services are listed below. Some of these services are provided by the NHS, and some are specialist drug facilities run by charities and private organisations.

Frank, a national drugs helpline on 0300 123 6600

Support for alcohol and / or drug addiction in Hampshire and Portsmouth areas:

- **Inclusion Hampshire** have local hubs Website: <http://www.inclusion.org>
 - **Gosport** The Precinct, South Street, Gosport, PO12 1AH Tel: 0300 124 0103 - Option 9
 - **Fareham** Avalon Centre, Fareham Health Centre, Civic Way, Fareham, Hampshire, PO16 7ER Tel: 0300 124 0103 - Option 4
 - **Havant** The Orion Centre, Dunsbury Way, Leigh Park, Havant, Hampshire, PO9 5BG Tel: 0300 124 0103 - Option 5
- **Safer Portsmouth Partnership – Portsmouth** Recovery Hub Campion Place, Elm Grove, Portsmouth Tel: 023 9229 4573 for access to drugs and alcohol services and support.
- **Counselling for drug addiction: The Priory** Hospital Southampton,
Contact Telephone Number: 023 8084 0044
Address: Hythe Road, Marchwood, Hampshire, SO40 4WU
Website: www.priorygroup.com
Contact email address: southampton@priorygroup.com

Drinkline is the national alcohol helpline. If you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, you can call this free helpline, in complete confidence. Call 0300 123 1110 (weekdays 9am – 8pm, weekends 11am – 4pm).

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a free self-help group. Its "12-step" programme involves getting sober with the help of regular support groups. Free National Helpline 0800 9177 650. E-mail help@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk.