

**ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE**  
**POLICY**

**Produced By:** Elizabeth Webber

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**Ratified By:**

Remuneration and Human Resources committee on February 2003  
The PCT Board on March 2003  
The Joint Consultative Committee on March 2003

**CEO Signature:** .....

**Chair JCC Signature:** .....

**Policy last reviewed on:** March 2003

**Policy to be reviewed on:** March 2005

**Policy to be reviewed by:** Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

**Policy to be used in conjunction with:**

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSW)

## **Policy on Alcohol and Substance Misuse**

### **1. Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to encourage staff with alcohol, drug or substance related problems to seek and accept treatment and to inform them of the help and support that is available.

The scope of this policy is to apply the rules and guidelines, fairly and consistently in dealing with employees to encourage self-referral for those with Alcohol and Substance Misuse problems. They may do so through Occupational Health by participating in either the Hounslow PCT's confidential Alcohol and Substance Misuse Rehabilitation Programme or alternatively, are referred to neighbouring NHS organisations' Alcohol and Substance Misuse Rehabilitation Services.

At the same time it establishes standards of conduct and performance which must be observed.

It is also intended to inform managers of the procedures to be followed if they believe that if a member of staff is suffering from the effects of the misuse of alcohol, drugs or substances. (Appendix 3)

This policy and procedure applies to all staff employed by the Hounslow Primary Care Trust and other personnel who are working on the PCT's premises. This includes the PCT's Chair and Non-Executives.

### **2. Definitions**

**The misuse of alcohol** – is any drinking, either intermittent or continual, which interferes with a person's health and/or work performance so that safety, efficiency, productivity or work attendance is affected.

**The misuse of substances** – is the use of illegal drugs, solvents or other substance and the inappropriate taking of prescribed and non-prescribed drugs, which interferes with a person's health and/or work performance so that safety, efficiency, productivity or work attendance is affected.

### **3. Principles**

Hounslow PCT has a general duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSW) to ensure (as far as reasonably practicable), the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work. HPCT also has a duty under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992, to assess the risks to the health and safety of its employees. If HPCT knowingly allows an employee under the influence of drink or drugs to continue working and their behaviour places themselves or another at risk, the PCT could be prosecuted.

The PCT seeks to provide a safe and healthy environment and recognises that misuse of alcohol or drugs and other substances may threaten the health and safety of the individual, his/her colleagues and patients or clients with whom he/she works.

**Drinking on site is strictly prohibited.**

Staff should be aware that:

- Attending work whilst their performance is impaired by alcohol, drugs or substance misuse will not be tolerated
- The smell of alcoholic drink on the breath is unacceptable and may lead to doubts concerning the adequacy of their performance
- They should refrain from drinking alcohol throughout the working day except on special occasions, where they are not required to return to work or, with the agreement of the Chief Executive
- Alcohol, drugs or substances taken before the commencement of duty may impair performance
- Complaints from colleagues, patients and the public will be investigated thoroughly

Staff will be encouraged to seek confidential help and advice as soon as a problem is identified. (Appendix 2)

Staff may have the support of their trade union representative who may be involved at all stages of the proceedings.

An employee whose problems have been diagnosed as being alcohol or drug/substance related will be treated in the same way as staff with other health related problems and in accordance with the PCT's Sickness Absence procedure.

Should an employee refuse diagnosis or assistance, or discontinue a recovery programme, this will not in itself be grounds for disciplinary

action. However, should this result in unacceptable behaviour and standards of work this may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Should an employee relapse and alcohol or drug-related problems reappear at work, advice and help having previously been received, the case will be sympathetically considered. Medical opinion will again be sought and in the light of this the opportunity for further treatment may be provided.

Details of treatment provided to an employee who has, or has had, a drink or drug/substance problem would remain strictly confidential.

Alternatively the problem may be recognised during the Disciplinary Procedure/hearing at which time the employee may raise the issue as a mitigating factor in his/her defence. In which case the Disciplinary Procedure will immediately be suspended and the Alcohol & Substance misuse Policy followed.

It is recognised that a continuing programme of education for managers and staff will be required including the involvement of the Occupational Health service.

#### **4. Procedure**

A list of warning signs are listed in Appendix 1 which is not exhaustive. If an alcohol, drugs or substance related problem is suspected the employee should be interviewed by his/her manager as soon as possible.

Alternatively the problem may be recognised as a result of a disciplinary hearing at which time the employee may raise the issue as a mitigating factor in his/her defence.

Appendix 3 details a flow diagram of Management steps. Where it is considered that a problem exists the employee should be referred to Occupational Health and this will be arranged by the manager in liaison with the Human Resources Department. Where referral is as a result of disciplinary action being taken the manager will receive a report from the Occupational Health service.

If an employee refuses treatment or does not complete the treatment and fails to produce an acceptable level of attendance and/or efficiency at work the Sickness Absence and Capability procedures or Disciplinary procedure will be applied following an investigation.

Where an act of misconduct is alleged which may involve the misuse of alcohol, drugs or substances, the matter will be dealt with using the Disciplinary procedure. However, before a disciplinary decision is taken the employee should be offered a medical assessment and support by Occupational Health. The Occupational Health report and the employee's willingness to undertake the course of action recommended will be taken into account when reaching a disciplinary decision.

If, having taken into account that a drink or drug/substance related problem has been identified, the misconduct is so severe that it warrants dismissal the employee will be dismissed in accordance with the Disciplinary procedure. If deemed appropriate, the employee would be referred to the State Registering Body. However help and support should be offered at his/her request in respect of his/her health problem.

Medical retirement on grounds of ill-health will be considered in cases where the employee shows irreversible damage to health in accordance with the PCT's Sickness Absence procedure.

## **5. Role of the Employee**

All employees are responsible for ensuring that they:

- Safeguard his/her own health and safety and that of his/her colleague.
- Attend work fit for duty, that their performance is not impaired by the effects of alcohol, drugs or substance misuse.
- Seek help and/or advice from management, Human Resources, Occupational Health or any outside agency if they have an alcohol, drug or substance related problem
- Attend any training/briefing sessions provided by management/Occupational Health on the effects of alcohol, drugs or substance misuse. (Appendix 2)

## **6. Role of the Representative**

Employee representatives should:

- encourage employees to seek help and advice when they are suffering from alcohol, drugs or substance misuse.
- support employees throughout this procedure.

## **7. Role of the Manager**

Managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- They are familiar with the policy and procedures
- They monitor work performance and conduct through supervision/appraisals, and are alert to changes.
- That where they suspect an individual has an alcohol, drugs or substance related problem that they deal with it promptly and offer advice and support
- Document work patterns over a period of time e.g. lateness for work, absenteeism, short-term sickness, short-term leave requests via telephone, performance issues, repeated absence from workstation, behaviour problems, mood swings and smell of alcohol/drugs, etc.
- They do not confront employee directly about substance misuse problems unless credible evidence is available.
- Only non-alcoholic beverages are served at social functions that take place within the PCT except in circumstances described above.

## **8. The Role of the Human Resources Department**

The Human Resources Department is responsible for ensuring that it:

- Provides advice and assistance on the implementation of this policy
- Liaises with the Occupational Health service in raising the awareness of employees and managers on the effects of alcohol, drugs and substances
- Refers employees to the Occupational Health service for assistance where appropriate

## **9. The Role of the Occupational Health Service**

The Occupational Health Service is responsible for ensuring that it:

- Provides confidential advice and counselling, assessment and referral to other agencies as appropriate, to any employee who seeks assistance
- Provide assessment of staff who refer themselves.
- Liaises with the HR Department to raise awareness of managers and employees on the effects of alcohol, drugs and substance misuse
- Responds to referrals by managers and the Human Resources Department
- Alert the PCT to emerging trends.

## **10. Review**

This policy will be reviewed two years following agreement and thereafter every two years to ensure that it is operating fairly and effectively.

## Appendix 1

### **A person under the influence of alcohol and drug may show the following warning signs (note this list is not exhaustive)**

- Absenteeism or poor time keeping;
- Excessive sick leave including uncertified and self-certificated leave;
- Frequent injuries/accidents at work (may include, careless handling of equipment, using unsafe equipment and being a safety threat to other employees, etc)
- Poor work performance (may include, mistakes and errors in judgement, spasmodic work patterns or continual disappearance from work stations, inability to concentrate to complete a task, unexpected poor work quality, improbable excuses for poor performance, unreliability and unpredictability, fatigue and poor co-ordination, poor memory, complaints and problems from other employees, patients and other visitors)
- Personality changes (may include, fluctuations in mood, irritability, possible violence and loss of energy; deterioration in relationships with colleagues, over-sensitivity, and tendency to blame others, reluctance to accept responsibility and sudden change in behaviour patterns etc)
- Other signs may include deteriorating physical appearance, smelling of alcohol/cannabis, theft/borrowing of money to support addiction, hand tremor and blurry eyes;
- Employees who have consumed alcohol or used drugs and are viewed to be intoxicated or incapable of performing their normal duties must not be allowed to continue working and must be suspended and referred to Occupational Health or A&E, if OH is not open, and then sent home. The designated Human Resources Manager should be contacted immediately to assist with the neutral act of suspension. As suspension is a neutral act, the employee will continue to receive their average salary while suspended pending the outcome of the investigatory meeting as per Hounslow PCT's Disciplinary Policy and procedure.

**RESOURCE LIST/USEFUL ADDRESSES**

**Users of services are completely free to choose whichever agency they feel is appropriate to their needs.**

LOCAL SERVICES

ASCA – Addiction Support and Care Agency	Advice and counselling	233 Lower Mortlake Rd, Richmond 020 8940 1160
EACH Ethnic Alcohol Counselling	Advise and counselling	65-73 Staines Road Hounslow, Middlesex 020 8577 6059
Southall Alcohol Advisory Services	Advise and counselling	3-4 Featherstone Terrace Southall, Middlesex 020 8574 5244
Hillingdon Drug Service	Advice and counselling	Fountain Mill, 81 High Street, Uxbridge, Middlesex 01895 207730
Richmond detached drug awareness project	Advice	121a Mortlake High Street, Richmond. 020 8878 9108

LOCAL SERVICES IN SURREY

Agency	Service	Location
Drug and Alcohol Team	Counselling and treatment for people with alcohol/drug related problems. Training and consultancy.	A.C.U. Ottershaw (01932) 872 010 ext 3309
Stretton Lodge	Drop-in Centre	Portmore Park Road Weybridge (01932) 850 970

Samaritans	Counselling and advice telephone service	Weybridge (01932) 844 444
Surrey Alcohol and Drugs Advisory Service (S.A.D.A.S.)	Confidential counselling and advice service	14 Jenner Road, Guilford (0483) 590 150
Drug and Alcohol helpline	Advice and counselling	Thames Street, Staines 0800 776 600

#### NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Alcohol Concern	Advice and counselling	Waterbridge House 32-36 Loman Street London SE1 0EE 0207 928 7377
Alcoholics Anonymous	Telephone advice	P.O.Box 1 Stonebow House Stonebow, York 01904 644 026
Al-Anon	For Family members	0207 403 0888

**Appendix 3**

**THE PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH EMPLOYEES WITH AN ALCOHOL OR SUBSTANCE MISUSE PROBLEM**

