

Hull Teaching Primary Care Trust

ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE AT WORK POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 It is essential that all employees of the PCT carry out their duties effectively, efficiently and in a manner that is safe both for themselves and others. There is an expectation that whilst on duty, members of staff present themselves in such a way which will instil in our patients and others the confidence that we are providing the quality of service which they need and deserve.
- 1.2 This policy is concerned with all forms of problems associated with substance misuse and includes alcohol, controlled drugs, prescribed and self-prescribed drugs, glues, gases and solvents. The policy forms part of the PCT's health and safety arrangements designed to provide a safe, healthy workplace for all staff, clients and members of the public.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all PCT employees irrespective of age, race, colour, religion, disability, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or marital status, domestic circumstances, social and employment status, HIV status, gender reassignment, political affiliation or trade union membership. All employees will be treated in a fair and equitable manner and reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate (e.g. interpreter or signing provision, access arrangements, induction loop, etc.).

3. AIMS OF THE POLICY

- 3.1 Whilst the PCT is concerned in ensuring a safe environment is provided, it recognises that this can be put at risk by employees who misuse alcohol or - substances to such an extent that it affects their health, work performance, conduct and relationships at work. This policy has been developed in order to provide early practical support, time and sympathetic consideration for staff experiencing misuse problems whilst also providing a safe environment for clients and other staff. It applies to all employees and aims to:

- Identify and support employees whose misuse of alcohol or other substances may pose a risk to themselves, clients or colleagues and facilitate their rehabilitation.
- Offer encouragement and assistance to employees who suspect or know that they have alcohol or substance related problems to seek help at an early stage from the appropriate agencies.
- Not allow individuals to work where substances are affecting their performance.
- Forbid the use, possession or sale of illicit drugs on PCT premises and if this situation occurs, take disciplinary action which may lead to summary dismissal and notification to the police.
- Not allow staff to consume alcohol whilst on duty.
- Safeguard any medicine or drug being used for working purposes within the PCT.

- To encourage staff to report potential problems associated with alcohol and substance misuse by providing safe and confidential reporting arrangements.
- Resolve any problems associated with an employee whose performance is impaired through alcohol or substance misuse.
- Take formal action as appropriate if abuse affects work
- Take an approach which supports managers in excluding unsafe work practices which is consistent and fair to employees.

4. WHAT IS SUBSTANCE MISUSE?

4.1 In this policy, misuse refers to the use of illegal drugs and the misuse, intentional or unintentional, of other substances including alcohol and solvents. Substance misuse can harm the user both physically and mentally and possibly other people and the environment, through their actions.

4.2 Misuse covers three main areas:

- Inappropriate use, where use may aggravate an existing condition or situation, or is done in potentially dangerous or inappropriate circumstances.
- Habitual use, where the individual becomes dependent upon the effects of the substance to the extent that the desire for these effects becomes a dominant concern in their lives, to the detriment of other aspects of their lives and work.
- Excessive use, which can lead to mental and physical illness or antisocial behaviour.

5. SIGNS OF ALCOHOL OR SUBSTANCE MISUSE

5.1 The workplace can provide many opportunities for 'misuse' to be detected if the symptoms are made known to all staff. It may be a symptom or a cause of a variety of problems at work or home. Clearly, the earlier difficulties are identified, the greater the likely success of any offered assistance.

5.2 Some or all of the following may be indicators or signs of alcohol/substance misuse.

- **Absenteeism** – multiple unauthorised absences, large amounts of sick leave, absence on particular days (i.e. near the weekend or after pay day), lateness to work, both in the morning and after lunch, leaving early, frequent absences from post, frequent occurrences of certain types of illness etc.
- **High level of increasing incidents or accidents** – both in and out of work. Studies of accidents where alcohol is involved have been estimated around 20%.

- **Low performance standards** – including missed deadlines, slow working, poor judgement and lack of attention to detail, unreliability and forgetfulness.
- **Lack of concern** – for appearance, personal hygiene, general physical incapacity and in the case of alcohol misuse, tremors, and the smell of alcohol may be evident.
- **Paranoia** – unpredictable reaction to criticism, unreliability, avoiding colleagues, borrowing money, theft, physical or verbal abuse of colleagues.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 6.1 The policy invokes strict confidentiality on the employee, the Occupational Health Department and, if they are involved, the Manager and the Treatment Agency. Normal rules of confidentiality will govern all personal records.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Chief Executive

Has overall responsibility for consistent application of the policy.

7.2 Managers

- To be familiar with the policy and ensure that employees are aware of its existence and their responsibilities under it.
- To be alert to changes in work performance, attendance or sickness and accident patterns.
- To take an objective and non-judgemental approach when counselling or interviewing employees and to refer them for further assistance where appropriate.
- To identify and change, where possible, any aspects of the working environment which could lead to problems e.g. harassment, constant workload pressure.
- To intervene as early as practicable where there are signs of problems and to take formal action if abuse affects the employee's work.
- To seek HR advice, particularly where substance/alcohol misuse may undermine the service in which the employee is working and may bring the service or the PCT into disrepute.
- Refer employee to Occupational Health, with their consent.

7.3 Occupational Health Department

- To assess accurately an individual's health in relation to alcohol/substance misuse, either as managerial or self referrals.
- To provide advice and guidance on how best to help an employee who has a problem which may be related to alcohol or substance misuse.
- To provide advice as to the impact of the health of the individual on work and consider health and work arrangements to support safe working without detriment to the individual's health.
- To help initiate and support appropriate access to care, when required.
- To monitor recovery, assist the employee in maintaining recovery and

- ensure the employee's health is safely compatible with their work.
- To help identify and assist in any educational initiative to promote knowledge of alcohol and drugs.

7.4 Human Resource Directorate

- To ensure employees are aware of the existence and operation of the Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy.
- To advise on the appropriateness or otherwise of the Disciplinary Procedure, Capability, Special Leave and Managing Sickness Absence as appropriate.
- Ensure that statistics on absence and sickness levels are analysed periodically and communicated to appropriate managers.

7.5 Employee Representatives

- To work in partnership to promote the Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy.
- To advise members of their rights and responsibilities under the policy and encourage them to seek help voluntarily if appropriate.
- To represent members, if requested, in any problem or dispute about the application of the policy.

7.6 Individual Employees

- To be aware of the Policy regarding the use of alcohol and drugs and the social, health and employment implications of misuse.
- To urge colleagues to seek help if they have problems arising from either alcohol or substance misuse.
- To seek help if they themselves have a problem with alcohol or substance misuse.
- To use alcohol responsibly so that work performance is not affected.
- To be aware that failure to seek help may lead to formal action being taken.
- To seek advice and highlight concerns to an appropriate manager which may be about the employee, the patients and/or the service being provided.

8. REVIEW

- 8.1 This Policy will be reviewed with the PCT's recognised Trade Union Partners within 2 years of the date of implementation.

Author: HR Advisor

Date: 23rd February, 2007

Approved by:

Date:

Reviewed by:

Date: