



ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

Version 1.1	
Last reviewed	9/6/21
To be reviewed by	June 2023 TBA
Specific changes	New Policy introduced future review is planned to consider random and compulsory testing

ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

South Lakeland District Council is committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees and those affected by its activities.

The Council recognises that issues relating to alcohol or substance misuse do not, typically, happen quickly. Personal trauma, circumstances or events may lead an individual to form a relationship with alcohol or substances which is difficult to break. This policy is designed to help protect workers from the dangers of alcohol and substance misuse and to encourage those misusing alcohol and / or substances to seek help.

The Council will take all reasonable steps to reduce, and wherever possible eliminate, the risk of injuries or incidents occurring due to individuals affected by alcohol or substance misuse.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This Policy applies to all permanent and temporary employees of South Lakeland District Council, whether employed on a full time or part time basis.

3.0 AIM

The aim of this policy is to:

- Provide employees and managers with information on the effects of alcohol and substances and an understanding of the likely symptoms of misuse.
- Highlight to employees the risks associated with alcohol and substance misuse and to promote a positive attitude towards the responsible use of alcohol and prescribed drugs.
- Encourage employees to seek help at an early stage in order to improve the chances of a successful change in behaviour
- Encourage employees and managers to intervene at an early stage should there be any concerns about an employee's potential addiction to alcohol or substances.
- Support to employees with an addiction through any treatment plans.

4.0 PRINCIPLES

This Policy embodies the following principles:

- The Council cannot condone illegal acts and therefore anyone found possessing, trafficking, taking or selling substances or alcohol on Council premises or whilst undertaking Council business may be subject to disciplinary action, and the Police may be informed.
- All employees must ensure they are not under the influence of alcohol or drugs/ substances during working hours and in other situations when engaged on behalf of the Council.
- All employees must ensure that any prescribed drugs or over the counter medications could not impact their ability to perform their role. Therefore, they should make enquiries about the side effects of the medication and discuss these with their manager.
- The Council wishes to support employees who are showing signs of alcohol and substance misuse through access to confidential counselling, occupational health, signposting to other agencies (Appendix A) and offering support around managing and coping with change.
- The Council recognises that when employees are first identified as suffering from alcohol and substance misuse supportive measures will be followed. If, following support the employee's condition does not improve it may be necessary to proceed using the Capability Policy, Sickness Absence Management Policy and / or the Disciplinary Policy.
- The term "misuse" may take the form of occasional, regular or continued use of alcohol or substances, which may temporarily impair judgement, behaviour or work performance.
- There will be times when it is suspected an employee or the employee confides that they are misusing alcohol and / or substances following issues of conduct or performance being raised, such as attending work and/or carrying out duties whilst under the influence of alcohol or some other substance. If the issues are related to alcohol or substance misuse and for as long as the employee complies with any Occupational Health recommendations, specialist treatments and support plans, the procedures that would normally apply, under the Disciplinary Policy, Capability Policy and / or Sickness Absence Management Policy, may be postponed.
- Employees who are abusing alcohol and / or substances are not covered by the Equality Act 2010 unless the employee is addicted to drugs which were originally prescribed for medical reasons. In these circumstances the Council will comply with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. Further advice from Human Resources should be sought in this instance.

5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Employees

Employees have the responsibility to:

- Familiarise themselves with the policy and be aware that failure to comply with recommendations made under this policy could result in them being subject to the Capability Policy, Disciplinary Policy and / or Sickness Absence Management Policy. This could ultimately lead to their dismissal from the Council.
- Be aware of their legal duty to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others whilst at work.
- Present themselves for work free of any impairment due to alcohol or substance misuse.
- Seek help if they believe they have an alcohol or substance misuse problem and inform their manager accordingly.
- Seek advice from their doctor or pharmacist where prescribed drugs or those bought over the counter have clear side effects which may impair their performance at work, and then inform their manager accordingly.
- Raise concerns about fellow employees in total confidence with either their manager or Human Resources. However, this may result in managers acting upon this information.

5.2 Managers

Managers have the responsibility to:

- Ensure they are familiar with the contents of this policy.
- Be aware of the signs / effects of alcohol or substance misuse and to monitor changes in performance, conduct and attendance.
- Raise concerns about any employee they suspect is misusing alcohol or substance with the employee as soon as possible and offer support.
- Sympathetically support any employee who admits to having a problem and provide them with every opportunity to receive help.
- Inform Human Resources as soon as possible so that appropriate advice and support can be provided.

- Refer the employee to Occupational Health for advice and support as soon as possible.
- To undertake a risk assessment to ascertain whether they are able to carry on out their role, and that control measures are adopted to protect the employee and others.
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times during the process.
- Maintain detailed records of the meetings and interventions that take place.
- To implement, where applicable, the Disciplinary Policy, Sickness Absence Policy or Capability Policy when an employee admits to having an alcohol or substance misuse problem or where medical evidence indicates there is an alcohol and substance misuse problem but the employee refuses help.

5.3 Human Resources

Human Resources will be responsible for:

- Supporting managers who suspect one of their employees has a substances and/or alcohol problem or an employee has admitted to having an alcohol and or substance problem.
- Supporting the referral to Occupational Health and ensuring any recommendations are implemented.

6.0 ALCOHOL OR SUBSTANCE MISUSE

The health, attendance, conduct and / or performance of an employee who is showing signs of alcohol and / or substance misuse is likely to be negatively impacted.

Below are some of the signs and symptoms that can indicate someone is either currently under the influence of alcohol and / or substances or may be misusing alcohol or substances.

Signs of current intoxication:

- Unsteadiness
- Smell of alcohol / solvents
- Aggression
- Incoherence
- Slurred speech
- Blood-shot eyes
- Appearing to be detached from reality
- Making inappropriate comments
- Giggling / Giddiness

- Drowsiness
- Inappropriate giggling
- Flushed Cheeks
- Other uncharacteristic behaviour

Signs of a possible long-term problem:

- Poor attendance
- Late to work / returning from lunch
- Many self-certified absences
- Poor performance – quality & quantity
- Accidents e.g. slips, trips & falls
- Deterioration in appearance
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Low concentration
- Mood swings
- Aggressive – picks arguments
- Concern expressed by colleagues
- Regular Headaches
- Weight Loss

However, it should be noted that these characteristics are not confined to alcohol and substance misuse so caution should be exercised in the interpretation. If you have any doubts or need further advice please contact Human Resources.

7.0 SELF-REFERRAL

The Council encourages any employee misusing alcohol and / or substances to come forward and seek help. Early identification and treatment is essential to avoid problems for the employee and Council at a later date. Any employee who does come forward with a problem will be treated with sensitivity and dignity and will have the opportunity to seek help from Occupational Health.

All information relating to the individual's medical condition will be kept confidential and all absences for treatment and rehabilitation will be regarded as normal sickness and dealt with within the scope of the Sickness Absence Management Policy.

Any employee who wishes to self-report that they believe that they have an alcohol and / or substance misuse problem should speak to their line manager.

The following steps will be taken:

- Contact Human Resources for advice and support.

- Referral to Occupational Health for advice and support.
- Signposting to other agencies (appendix A).
- A risk assessment to be completed immediately to review working activities, put in place control measures and remove the employee from any safety critical operations.
- On-going weekly meetings with their line manager to offer support and any appropriate actions including supporting managing change or difficult situations.

The employee must commit to any support plan recommended by Occupational Health. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary or capability proceedings being implemented.

If an employee is already within the Capability Procedure, Sickness Absence Management Policy or Disciplinary Policy and the manager believes that alcohol/substance misuse has contributed towards the poor performance or conduct issues then the formal procedures may be postponed. However, the formal procedures will be recommenced if the support that has been put in place has not resulted in any improvement.

8.0 MANAGEMENT REFERRAL

A manager who has any concerns about an employee who might have an alcohol or substance misuse problem should arrange to discuss this with the employee at the earliest opportunity. The purpose of the discussion is to:

- Inform the employee of their concerns which may include an identified deteriorating pattern in work performance or conduct
- Ask the employee for their view on the problems, their nature and the reasons behind them
- Explain the consequences of continued lowered work performance or conduct
- Remind the employee of this policy and the support that is available to them.

If an employee accepts that they do have a problem (or if following the discussion the manager still has concerns), the employee should be referred to Occupational Health.

If the employee does not accept they have a problem, any concerns about their performance or conduct should be dealt with through either the Sickness Absence Management Policy, Capability Policy or the Disciplinary Policy. Human Resource will be able to provide further advice.

If an employee presents themselves for work and their manager suspects that they are under the influence of substances and / or alcohol to the extent that they are a hazard to themselves and others and / or their work is impaired, the manager should suspend the employee having first arranged a time and place to meet with them the following morning, or as soon as is reasonably possible. Although a Human Resources representative would not normally attend these meetings, the manager may contact Human Resources for advice. If the manager suspects that the employee is likely to attempt to drive their vehicle and believes they are not in a fit state to do so, the manager may order the employee a taxi (the taxi will be paid for by the employee). However, it must be stressed that the responsibility is on the **employee** (and not the manager) to get themselves home in a safe and legal manner.

9.0 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND REHABILITATION

Occupational Health will offer help, advice and support for any employee who is suffering from alcohol or substance misuse. They will also make the employee aware of further sources of help outside work.

To assist with the employee's rehabilitation, the employee may be given, with careful consideration and agreement from their manager, the following options:

- remaining in work
- taking sick leave, if medical opinion i.e. Occupational Health supports this
- having their hours of work, or type of work temporarily changed

These options will be considered within the scope of what is considered to be reasonable to the Council and the employee.

Occupational Health will continue to support the employee until their health has improved and they are fit to return to their normal work. Any employee who refuses to accept help or who discontinues an approved course of treatment without good cause may be subject to disciplinary action.

10.0 REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in the light of operating experience and/or changes in legislation.

Sources of Help and Advice

Addaction	www.addaction.org.uk
Al-Alon Family Groups	www.al-anonuk.org.uk 020 7403 0888
Alcohol concern	www.alcoholconcern.org.uk
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)	Tel: 0800 9177 650 www.alcoholics-anonymous.co.uk
CADAS Kendal	Stricklandgate House 92 Stricklandgate Kendal Cumbria LA9 4PU Tel: 01539 742615
CRI Inspire Lancaster	24 Great Johns Street Lancaster Lancashire LA1 1NG Tel: 08458 941 745 This is a premium number which will be charged at a higher rate. The service provider has not yet provided details about the service charge
Drugscope	32-36 Loman Street London SE1 0EE Tel: 020 7928 1211 www.drugscope.org.uk
National Drugs Helpline	Tel: 0800 776600 www.ndh.org.uk
National Alcohol Helpline	Tel: 0300 123 1110
NHS Website	www.nhs.uk/livewell
Occupational Health via referral from Human Resources	Choose Occupational Health Suite 3 Telford House Riverside Warwick Road Carlisle CA1 2BT Tel: 01228 513687 Email: office@chooseOH.co.uk

Unity drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (Monday, Wednesday and Friday)	39 Stricklandgate Kendal Cumbria LA9 4LT Tel: 01539 742 780
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