

# Alcohol and Substance Misuse Toolkit for Managers

Employee Wellbeing

2020 - 2023

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This document should be used in conjunction with the [Corporate Health and Safety Policy](#)

## **Purpose**

This toolkit complements existing policies and guidance and should be read in conjunction with the Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy. Its purpose is to assist in managing the potential risks in relation to alcohol and substance misuse in the workplace.

## **Scope**

The scope of this toolkit applies to all Carmarthenshire County Council employees including School staff and Elected Members of the Authority.

## **How to use this toolkit**

Managers should utilise this toolkit to assist them in managing the potential risks in relation to alcohol and substance misuse in the workplace.

The toolkit has been divided into relevant sections to enable managers to select the most appropriate information to provide them with relevant guidance and information in order to assist with specific scenarios.

If you have any questions or would like any further advice on any part of this toolkit then contact the Health and Safety Centre.

## **Procedures**

### **When an employee presents at work under the influence of Alcohol and/or Substance Misuse**

1. Take the employee to a private and confidential area to discuss your concerns and to provide the employee with an opportunity to explain the background to the situation.
2. Inform the employee that they cannot continue with their substantive duties on that day and that they will be suspended from duty, pending medical assessment and consultation with Human Resources.
3. Log relevant details of the incident in the employee's personnel file i.e. date, time, signs, symptoms, behaviour, outcome and action taken.
4. Ensure that the employee has access to an appropriate form of transport in order to travel home safely, e.g. manager takes them home, and there is a family member or friend at home to observe them.
5. Follow up in writing regarding the suspension and explain a formal meeting must be carried out in relation to the incident.

6. This meeting should help to identify whether the employee may have a dependency issue and requires further support via referral to the Occupational Health Centre or through external support agencies or whether disciplinary action should be taken.
7. Relevant actions are implemented following a medical assessment and the outcome of the investigation.
8. Monitor and review at regular intervals.

## **Supporting employees who declare Alcohol and/or Substance Misuse problems**

1. Take the employee to a private and confidential area to discuss concerns and to provide the employee with an opportunity to explain the background to the situation.
2. Establish whether the employee will need time away from the workplace or is able to continue with their duties on that day.
3. Offer support where relevant via external support services (e.g. Dyfed Drug and Alcohol Service, DAN 24/7) and advise employee to seek advice from their GP. A referral to Occupational Health must be made with regards fitness to work and if there are any work performance issues. Confidentiality will be maintained by all parties concerned.
4. Log relevant details of incident in employee's personnel file i.e. date, time, signs, symptoms, behaviour, outcome and action taken.
5. Where treatment is accepted, time off for external treatment is to be arranged as per the requirements of the [Time off Policy](#).
6. If there are any further concerns, contact Occupational Health and HR for further advice.

## **Disciplinary Action in relation to Alcohol and Substance Misuse**

- Employees should be made aware of the likely consequences if they do not accept the offer of support under the policy.
- Encourage employees to seek assistance and support if experiencing problems from alcohol and substance misuse.
- Immediate disciplinary action for misuse or abuse would not normally be taken against employees who accept help from their employer, unless other matters of discipline are involved.
- Where the use or misuse of alcohol and/or substances by an employee contributes to poor work performance or attendance, despite any support provided by the Occupational Health Centre or external agencies, the employee will be dealt with in accordance with our appropriate [Policies/Procedures](#) with advice from HR Officers (e.g. sickness absence, capability procedures etc.).
- Employment may be terminated in cases of alcohol or substance misuse where the subsequent action taken leads to loss of qualification required to carry out the job e.g. professional registration, driving licence.

- The HR Policies should be referred to in conjunction with this Policy. In all cases where the Authority's disciplinary/sickness or capability procedure is used in relation with alcohol and substance misuse, the person concerned will be offered appropriate help at each stage.

## **Example where Disciplinary Action applies**

Disciplinary action may arise as a direct or indirect consequence of alcohol and substance use for employees who:

- Report for work under the influence of alcohol or substances.
- Possess, use or sell alcohol or substances at work.
- Misuse prescribed medicines at work.
- Have consumed alcohol or taken substances whilst in a safety critical role (e.g. being in charge of a vehicle, operating hazardous machinery or mobile plant, handling or using, including disposal, of any substance hazardous to health, working in, on or near water, supervising children and vulnerable adults).
- Have been abusive to members of the public/service users because of alcohol or substance misuse.
- Have deliberately flouted legitimate instructions not to consume alcohol or substances at work.
- Have issues of conduct arising from isolated incidences of alcoholic indulgence or substance use.

The above are some examples but this is not intended as an exhaustive list.

If an employee is believed to be buying and selling substances, or in possession of unlawful substances during working time, the police will be notified by the Head of Service or delegated Officer.

## Scenarios

***All case studies are based on fictional characters.***

### Example 1

#### Details

You are concerned about a co-worker (Pricha) who has been difficult to work with lately. On a few occasions over the past month he has called in sick, when he seemed okay the afternoon before. He is usually at the centre of the very active office social life and regularly leaves from happy hours having had a few too many. No one ever minds, as it is all part of the fun of working here. But lately he has been morose and quiet at the bar after work. He just sits there, downing drink after drink. You are getting worried because you and Pricha have a joint deadline to meet and he is constantly complaining about criticism of his efforts, his mistakes here and there, and your constant nagging about deadlines. You feel that you normally have a good working relationship and that his outbursts are unjustified. One day when he calls in sick, he unexpectedly says that he just can't cope with the pressure and he is thinking of resigning.

#### Management action

Arrange to meet with Pricha in a confidential setting to discuss what has occurred and your concerns for his wellbeing. Try and find out if there are any reasons for his sudden change in behaviour with regards his drinking habits and decision to resign from work, e.g. home life problems or work-related issues. Ask if Pricha needs to attend GP appointments or any other meetings based on what he has confided in you (e.g. financial issues, family illness). Signpost Pricha to the appropriate external support services and offer a referral to Occupational Health for wellbeing support. Arrange another date and time to discuss outcomes from your meeting with Pricha once he has spoken to his GP or the external support service.

### Example 2

#### Details

Mei a 25-year-old single mail clerk complains that her stomach has been giving her trouble. She has recently cut back on her alcohol consumption and has been experiencing an extremely upset stomach accompanied by trembling and sweating. Her reduced alcohol intake at present is in response to an ultimatum from the senior manager to either cut down on her drinking or lose her job. This, in turn, was prompted by her third arrest in two years for drunk driving.

### Management action

Meet with Mei in a confidential setting to discuss her health concerns; discuss whether she has seen her GP about the physical symptoms and offer a referral to Occupational Health for further advice with regards her health and wellbeing, and signpost her to appropriate external support services regarding her alcohol dependency. Discuss with Mei if she requires time off work to undergo any treatment and support.

### Example 3

#### Details

Callum is in his mid-forties, married with no children and has seven years of experience as a Roadworker. You find him sitting in a darkened room two hours after his shift started and notice that he hasn't shaved for several days and you can smell alcohol on his breath. He says he got little sleep last night because he was drinking with friends until around 3am and is not happy with work.

### Management action

Take Callum to a private and confidential area to discuss his concerns and to provide him with an opportunity to explain the background to the situation – Callum tells you that his wife has left him and left him in severe debt. Offer Callum support via Occupational Health and external support services. Inform Callum that he cannot continue with his substantive duties on that day and that he will be suspended from duty, pending medical assessment and consultation with Human Resources.

Make notes during the meeting with regards details of the incident to place in Callum's employee file. Arrange another meeting with Callum and explain that this will be a formal meeting to identify whether he may have a dependency issue and whether he will require further support or whether disciplinary action should be taken. Ensure Callum gets home safely, and a family member or friend is at home to meet him and stay with him. Tell Callum you will arrange for his car to be brought home to him.

### Example 4

#### Details

Patricia is a 21-year-old domiciliary support worker and work colleagues are concerned that she has been acting strangely over the past few months. During a supervision session she discloses to you that she has been drinking and taking "party" drugs regularly. You notice that she seems very sad and you discuss this with her. Patricia discloses that things at home have been really bad and even though she knows that the drinking and drugs are bad for her, it is the only time that she feels good and happy.

### Management action

As you have given Patricia the opportunity to explain the background to the situation, establish whether she will need time away from the workplace or is able to continue with her duties on that day. Offer support via external support services (e.g. Dyfed Drug and Alcohol Service, DAN 24/7) and advise Patricia to seek advice from her GP. Explain to Patricia a referral to Occupational Health will need to be made with regards to her fitness to work and to establish if there are any work performance issues and emphasise that confidentiality will be maintained by all parties concerned. Log relevant details of incident in Patricia's personnel file i.e. date, time, signs, symptoms, behaviour, outcome and action taken.



## Further Support

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

The importance of employee confidentiality throughout the process of managing this policy cannot be over emphasized. Employees with a misuse or abuse problem should have no fears about seeking advice and help to affect a recovery. The manager should give them assistance willingly and in complete confidence. Both Occupational Health and managers can signpost an employee to the substance misuse services below for advice and guidance.

The confidential nature of any records or correspondence is subject to the statutory protection of the General Data Protection Regulations, the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988, the Access to Medical Records Act 1990 and the Access to Health Records Act 1990.

*Click here to access the [Occupational Health e-referral](#)*

### EQUALITY ACT 2010

Addiction to, or dependency on, alcohol or any other substance is specifically excluded from the scope of the Act unless the addiction was originally the result of the administration of medically prescribed substances or other medical treatment. Nevertheless, employees with impairments that are the result of an addiction, for example, liver damage caused by alcohol, will still be covered by the Act.

Therefore, employees who have a recognised alcohol or other related disease may be considered to be disabled under the Act. If that is the case the Council's policy on disability will apply and managers should seek advice from their equal opportunities or Human Resources officer before proceeding with any reasonable adjustments.

### OTHER SOURCES OF HELP:

#### **Substance Misuse Team**

##### **Over 18's:**

Call the Substance Misuse Team on: **01554 744343 or 01554 705710**

##### **Under 18's:**

Please call Choices on: **03303 639997**

They will be able to offer you confidential advice on the telephone and an appointment with a worker if you wish to discuss your problems and get you the help you need.

There are lots of online resources which give advice and information about alcohol, including some self-help resources. Here are some useful places to look:

- [NHS Direct Alcohol Information](#)
- [Alcohol Change UK](#)
- [Dan 24/7](#)

### **Advice for parents**

Please call Choices on: **03303 639997**

They will be able to offer you confidential advice on the telephone and an appointment with a worker if you wish to discuss your problems and get you the help you need. Or refer to online help links above.

### **OUT OF HOURS**

### **DAN 24/7 – Wales Drug and Alcohol Helpline**

The Wales Substance & Alcohol Helpline, also known as DAN 24/7 is available to people who live in **Wales**. Our helpline is open 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Outside of office hours call the all Wales Drug & Alcohol Helpline free on: **0808 808 2234**

### **Dyfed Drug and Alcohol Service (DDAS)**

Dyfed Drug and Alcohol Service provides a substance and alcohol advisory service across mid and west Wales, covering Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire.

Contact Number: **03303 639997**

### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

AA is concerned solely with the personal recovery and continued sobriety of individual alcoholics who turn to the Fellowship for help.

National Helpline no: **0800 917 7650**

### **Employees who do not reside in Carmarthenshire**

Contact the Substance Misuse Team on **01554 744343** and you will be pointed in the right direction for support services in your area.