



Drugs and Alcohol Policy Statement

Dover District Council is committed to the health, safety and well-being of all employees and encourages its staff to be fit and healthy and therefore promotes behaviours and activities that enhance health in the long term.

In pursuance of this aim:

1. Dover District Council does not condone, nor otherwise approve of the excessive and inappropriate use of alcohol, or the misuse of drugs whether illicit or prescribed.
2. The Council recognises its responsibility to provide a safe and healthy working environment and that this can be put at risk by employees who use illegal drugs, misuse other drugs or misuse alcohol to such an extent that it affects their health, work performance, conduct and relationships at work.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees' use of either drugs or alcohol does not impair the safe and efficient running of the organisation, or result in risks to the health and safety of the general public, customers or employees. The policy will assist the Council to support and to protect employees from the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse and to encourage those with a problem to seek help.

The aim of this policy is to provide a statement of the Council's approach to alcohol, drugs and substance misuse and set out procedures to be followed for ensuring its effective implementation.

Responsibilities

All employees are responsible for ensuring adherence to the Policy and for reporting breaches of the Policy. Managers should seek to identify the signs of drugs or alcohol abuse and take action where appropriate. They are also responsible for ensuring that contractors are made aware of the terms of the Policy.

The Human Resources Section is responsible for administering and monitoring the operation of the Policy.

Implementation

The following constitutes expected standards of behaviour for all employees whilst at work or representing the Council. The Council will treat any member of staff with an alcohol or drug problem as having medical and work performance problems, rather than a disciplinary problem, unless the circumstances are so serious that they demand immediate disciplinary action.

1. Alcohol

If an employee drinks alcohol during or just before work, this must not render them unfit to effectively, efficiently and safely carry out their normal role.

The current legal driving limit for driving in the UK is 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood. There is no failsafe guide as to how much you can drink and stay under the current limit. The amount and type of alcoholic drink and your weight, sex, age and metabolism will all play their part. Therefore, the Council recommends that no alcohol is consumed before driving.

Employees who are in safety critical jobs, for example those who are required to drive are responsible for ensuring they remain under the legal driving limit.

2. Drugs

No employee must possess, consume, sell or give to another, any illegal drugs or substances whilst at work. Breaches of this rule will be classed as gross misconduct and may be reported to the police.

Employees in safety critical jobs who are found to be under the influence of drugs will be liable to dismissal, regardless of the circumstance.

Any employee on prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to perform their duties, must notify their line manager who will seek advice from the Human Resources, who will seek professional advice, to determine whether reasonable adjustments can be made, to allow the employee to continue in their role whilst on the prescribed medication.

Referrals

1. Self Referral

Any member of staff who is aware of having a drug or alcohol problem should, in the interests of themselves, their family and their job, discuss the matter, in confidence, with their line manager, their own doctor, or one of the independent advice centres, such as those run by the Kent Council for Addiction (UK).

Employees may, at any time, discuss with their supervisor or with Human Resources, the possibility of a referral to the Occupational Health Advisor. If a problem is identified and the employee is referred to an outside agency for treatment, reasonable amounts of time off work will be given under the Council's Occupational Sick Pay Scheme. Where possible, the employee should aim to arrange appointments using the Council's Flexible Working Hours Scheme.

Referred employees will be regularly reviewed by the Occupational Health Advisor, and updates on progress and, at the appropriate time, advice on their fitness to return to work will be provided.

2. Management Referral

Dover District Council reserves the right to refer employees to the Occupational Health Advisor if there is a concern or suspicion of an alcohol or drug abuse problem. Managers

and Human Resources will meet with the employee to discuss the reason for the referral. The referral could result from either a single incident or from repeated incidents at home or at work or from the concerns of colleagues. As part of the referral, the Occupational Health Advisor will request a medical report from the employee's GP in order to ascertain any underlying medical health problems.

If, following an assessment by the Council's Occupational Health Advisor, a member of staff is assessed as not having a dependency, or is assessed as having a dependency but refuses to accept this, or refuses treatment, or fails to respond to treatment, the appropriate disciplinary or capability procedures will be progressed, as appropriate to the circumstances.

Treatment and Help

The Council recognises that a drug or alcohol problem may be an illness and will be treated in the same way as other illnesses. Employees who believe that they may have a problem with drug or alcohol abuse should seek assistance from their line manager, their doctor, an independent advice centre, or the HR Section.

The Council's Occupational Health and Counselling services can provide confidential, professional and timely advice, assistance and referral services for appropriate diagnosis and treatment.

Help will be given to all those who need it. In circumstances where an employee declares a problem with drugs and/or alcohol but refuses to commit to treatment, the HR section or the Occupational Health Advisor will not be able to deal with that employee in confidence and will report the matter to the employee's line manager.

Staff Who Appear Unfit for Duty

When a manager is of the opinion that an employee is unfit for duty, apparently due to the effects of alcohol or drug misuse, the member of staff should be interviewed in the presence of Human Resources where possible and informed that he/she must go off duty as they are unfit for work. The manager must ensure that a safe method of travel home is available, including arranging a taxi where necessary. A written record of this interview will be kept. A management referral to the Occupational Health Advisor will be arranged, and a medical report requested from the employee's GP by the Occupational Health.

As soon as possible following the incident, the manager should conduct a full investigation and to that end it may be helpful to take the names of any witnesses at the time of the incident.

If the employee is unwilling to go off duty, the manager should refer him/her to the Council's Disciplinary Policy and suspend the employee from duty on full pay. Advice should be sought from the Human Resources section.

Being unfit for duty as a result of alcohol, drug or substance misuse is regarded as gross misconduct as referred to in the Dover District Council Disciplinary Policy, and if proven following an investigation and disciplinary hearing, may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Confidentiality

Any information provided about an employee with a possible alcohol or drugs problem, or any personal problem raised with a line manager will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Any record of treatment will remain strictly confidential between the provider of the service and the individual member of staff, unless otherwise agreed by the individual.

In respect of any other information an agreement will be reached between the Council, the employee and the treatment agency as to what information will be shared. This will generally involve the number of appointments, whether appointments have been kept and the likely period of treatment and outcomes.

Disability Discrimination Act

Alcohol or drug dependency does not qualify as a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act. However, illnesses or diseases suffered as a consequence of such dependency e.g. liver cirrhosis are covered and will be treated the same as any other illness.

Possible Signs of Drug or Alcohol Misuse

In order for this policy to be effectively communicated and implemented, Managers will need to recognise the early signs of drug and alcohol misuse, how to address such problems and how to access treatment services.

Further advice on such matters can be obtained from the Human Resources section.

The following may indicate drug or alcohol misuse. It is important that other causes are always considered, i.e. illness, stress, domestic problems, financial worries:

1. Work performance – evidence of deterioration;
2. Levels, types and trends of reported sickness;
3. Accident record – liability to cause accidents;
4. Lateness and casual absenteeism;
5. Slower in completing tasks – not meeting deadlines;
6. Making regular mistakes;
7. Previously unnoticed unreliability;
8. Irritability with colleagues or customers;
9. Slurred speech;
10. Tremors;
11. Impaired concentration and memory;
12. Deterioration in personal hygiene;
13. Deterioration in physical appearance;
14. Anxiety;
15. Depression;
16. Asking for loans of money from colleagues;
17. Asking for short term small loans from the employers;
18. Tiredness;
19. Significant changes between high and low activity;
20. Comments from work colleagues or customers;
21. Smelling of alcohol.
22. Possessing drugs paraphernalia.

Information/Advice

The Dover Counselling Service
9 St James's Street
Dover
Kent
CT16 1QD
Telephone: 01304 204123
Website: www.dovercc.org.uk

Kent Council for Addiction
22-24 Castle Street
Dover
Kent
CT16 1PW
Telephone: 01304 211999
E-mail: dover@kca.org.uk
Website: www.kca.org.uk

Alcoholics Anonymous UK
National Helpline: 0845 769 7555
Website: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Narcotics Anonymous
National Helpline: 0845 3733366
Website: www.ukna.org

Reviewing the policy

The policy will be reviewed as and when required.

Whilst the Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Drugs and Alcohol Policy, the Human Resources section will be responsible for monitoring and ensuring the policy is reviewed at appropriate times.

Definitions

1. **Drugs**

Any substance which affects the way in which the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally and includes alcohol, solvents, over the counter and prescribed medicines as well as illicit substance.

2. **Drug Misuse**

Drug use that harms social functioning – either dependent use (physical or psychological) or use as part of a wider spectrum of problematic or harmful behaviour.

3. **Dependency**

A compulsion to continue taking a drug in order to feel good or avoid feeling bad.

4. **Safety Critical Role or Activity**

Includes:

- (a) Driving or working with machinery,
- (b) Where employees have access to work materials which might be used as drugs, or to any drugs medically prescribed for other persons, which could be misused.