

## **\*\*\*PRIMARY CARE TRUST**

### **POLICY ON THE MIS-USE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL AT WORK**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all staff employed in \*\*\*\* PCT are aware of their responsibilities, in relation to the misuse of drugs and alcohol in the workplace, and the measures that will be taken by the Trust if a member of staff is found to be misusing drugs and/or alcohol in the workplace.

#### **What is the Definition of Substance Misuse?**

- The use of drugs or alcohol at levels which result in altered perceptions or behaviours to the detriment of performance at work.

#### **Drugs**

- Drug misuse refers to the use of illegal drugs and the misuse whether deliberate or unintentional, of prescribed drugs and substances such as solvents. Drug misuse harms the misuser both physically or mentally.

#### **Alcohol**

- Alcohol for many people is an accepted part of social life and most of the time drinking alcohol does not cause any problems. However, drinking too much or at the wrong time can be harmful and have serious consequences.

#### **Alcohol at Work**

\*\*\*PCT has a responsibility to ensure that staff are aware of the rules pertaining to the consumption of alcohol whilst at work or before work. Being under the influence of alcohol or smelling of alcohol whilst on duty is not acceptable and may cause distress to patients/colleagues. All staff should therefore ensure that when at work they are fit to undertake their full range of duties and responsibilities.

- Alcohol may be served at official staff functions such as retirement parties, as long as the function is outside normal working hours. You must not consume alcohol if returning to work.
- The consumption, use or distribution of alcohol by members of staff on Trust property is prohibited except as above.

#### **Principles**

\*\*\* PCT wishes to provide a safe and healthy working environment. It recognises that this can be put at risk by members of staff who misuse alcohol and drugs to such an extent that it affects their health, work performance, conduct and relationships at work. This policy therefore aims to:

- Promote the health and well-being of members of staff and minimise problems at work arising from substance misuse.
- Identify members of staff with possible problems relating to substance misuse at an early stage, offer guidance and support and actively encourage them to seek appropriate help.

- Give guidance to Managers and staff on how to deal with staff/colleagues who are misusing drugs or alcohol.
- Safeguard the Health & Safety of patients, staff and visitors.
- Encourage responsibility/knowledge in the area of drug and alcohol use/misuse through education and welfare.
- Meet the obligations of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

### **Who does this Policy apply to?**

This Policy applies to all staff employed by \*\*\*\*PCT.

- It is recognised however that many staff employed by different organisations work together. Should you become concerned about misuse of drugs/alcohol by a member of staff employed by a different organisation, you still have a responsibility to raise this with an appropriate person (see below).

### **What are your responsibilities?**

- You must not work whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This is **not** acceptable and could lead to harm of yourself, your colleagues, patients or the public.
- If you have a problem with alcohol or drugs, you have a responsibility to raise this with your Manager/another senior Manager/a colleague or Trade Union Representative.
- You have a duty to inform your Manager/Supervisor if you are concerned about a colleague and think that the problem may be drug or alcohol related. This will be treated in the strictest of confidence where possible.
- If you suspect that your Manager is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you should report this to another senior Manager.

### **What are my Manager's responsibilities?**

- Your Manager is responsible for implementing this Policy. Your Manager will also ensure that you and your colleagues are made aware that it is unacceptable to be impaired by alcohol and/or other substances during the conduct of your duties and of the ways in which breaches will be handled.

### **What support is available to people who misuse drugs/alcohol in the workplace?**

- If you or a colleague are experiencing problems, you can seek help from your Manager, Human Resources, the Occupational health Department or your GP.
- Support and help will be offered in the strictest confidence.

### **Procedure to follow if substance misuse is suspected:**

- If you suspect that one of your colleagues is misusing drugs/alcohol, (see appendix 1 for possible signs/symptoms), you must report this to your line Manager immediately.

- Your line Manager will then seek advice from a member of the HR Department before any action is taken.

### **What if I am suspected of having a drug or alcohol problem?**

- If it is reported that you are suspected of misusing drugs/alcohol, your Manager (and possibly a member of the Human Resources Department) will ask to meet with you to discuss the situation. You may be accompanied at this meeting by a friend/colleague if you wish. You may be temporarily removed from your duties. (See paragraph 12 – Suspending a member of staff from duty of the Trust’s Disciplinary Procedure).
- The problem may be dealt with as either a health or conduct issue, depending on the circumstances (see below).

### **How will it be managed if it is a health issue?**

- If you acknowledge that you have been misusing drugs/alcohol and accept that you have a problem, you will be offered help and support to overcome this.
- Your Manager will refer you to the Occupational Health Department. They will advise on any treatment or intervention necessary and refer you to other agencies for support if appropriate.
- Depending on the severity of the problem, it may be appropriate that you take sick leave whilst rehabilitating.
- Your on-going health and rehabilitation will be managed by your line manager in accordance with the Trust’s procedure for managing sickness absence, i.e. your problem will be kept under review by both Occupational Health and your Manager.

### **In what circumstances will it be dealt with as a conduct issue?**

- If your manager suspects you of having a drug or alcohol problem which has been discussed with you, which you deny, then the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure may be invoked.
- The Trust will do its utmost to help you if you have an alcohol or drug related problem and invoking the Disciplinary Policy would only be appropriate in certain circumstances. These include:-
  - if you endanger life
  - if you adversely affect the well being of others
  - if you damage property
  - if you cause distress/disquiet to patients/staff/visitors
  - if you interfere with the working of the Trust
  - if you refuse to co-operate with the Trust in relation to this
  - if you commit an illegal act.

### **Will Disciplinary Action be taken?**

Disciplinary Action may be taken:

- If you refuse to admit you have a problem and/or refuse to seek help and your performance/ conduct at work is deemed unacceptable by the Trust.

- If you are found to be dealing or in possession of drugs on the premises that are not for medical purposes or any action, which breaches drug related legislation (the Police will also be notified).
- If you report for work clearly under the influence of alcohol or drugs and it is not deemed that you have a long-term misuse problem.
- If gross misconduct is committed e.g. theft of PCT property.

**Will I be asked to attend Occupational Health for drug/alcohol screening?**

- Screening for alcohol and drugs does and will not form part of the Trust's recruitment process. However, testing with your informed consent may be part of a clinical procedure used by Occupational Health during investigations and/or rehabilitation.

**What are the signs/symptoms of misusing alcohol/drugs?**

- Drugs/alcohol can affect the brain and the body in a number of ways. They can alter the way a person thinks, perceives and feels, and this can lead to either impaired judgement or concentration. Drug or alcohol misuse can bring about the neglect of general health and well-being. This may adversely influence performance at work, even when misuse takes place outside the workplace.

**Signs to look for include:**

- sudden mood changes
- unusual irritability or aggression
- a tendency to become confused
- abnormal fluctuations in concentration and energy
- impaired job performance
- poor time-keeping
- increased short-term absence
- deterioration in relationships with colleagues, clients and managers
- dishonesty and theft arising from the need to maintain an expensive habit

Please note, however, that it cannot be stressed strongly enough that other explanations involving stress, both at work and at home, may also cause the above changes, and it is essential to keep an open mind in offering help.

**Further help and information may be obtained from:**

[www.bristol-city.gov.uk/social services](http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk/social%20services)

[www.acad.org.uk](http://www.acad.org.uk)

[www.southglos.gov.uk/dat](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/dat)

[www.avon.nhs.uk/mental health](http://www.avon.nhs.uk/mental%20health)

**Affected families may contact:**

[www.al-anonuk.org.uk](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk)

**Doctors may contact:**

[www.medicouncilalcol.demon.co.uk](http://www.medicouncilalcol.demon.co.uk)