



**Manager's Guide on Alcohol, Drugs and Substance
Misuse at Work**

**The City of Cardiff Council
HR People Services
Employee Relations Team**

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this guidance is to provide information on the actions managers should take where they suspect an employee's performance is influenced by alcohol, drugs or substance misuse. It should be read in conjunction with the Council's Management of Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Misuse at Work Policy.

1.2 Alcohol, drug and substance related problems are often resolved by individuals acting on their own and who may chose to refer themselves to agencies with or without sharing this information with their manager. In other cases, further action may have to be taken to help an employee. The earlier a problem with alcohol, drugs or substances can be identified, the more likely it is that it can be successfully resolved.

1.3 This guide supports the Drug, Alcohol and Substance Misuse at Work Policy and is commended to school.

2.0 Identifying Alcohol, Drugs or Substances Misuse

2.1 Intoxication and dependency are two separate issues: people with drink, drugs or substance dependency may never appear intoxicated at work. Repeated short-term absences or erratic behaviour are common indicators of problematic drinking not dependency. Regular users can, in response to a difficult life event, suddenly increase their use of alcohol, drugs and/or substances. Although many will return to normal social drinking without any specialist help, it can still have a detrimental effect on work performance.

2.2 Signs and symptoms which could relate to an addiction problem, such as erratic behaviour and/or short term absence, can be similar to those caused by other conditions such as stress. Managers need to keep an open mind when dealing with work performance, but must provide a supportive environment where the individual will feel able to admit they have a problem and seek help.

3.0 Recognising Alcohol, Drug or Substance Misuse

3.1 In most cases it is the behaviour associated with alcohol, drug or substance misuse which managers and other colleagues will notice. The following factors are possible but not exclusive indicators to consider in conjunction with other relevant information, including the employee's explanation:

- a. The physical symptoms or manifestations of alcohol, drug or substance use such as;

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- altered or slurred speech or repeated incoherent statements;
 - dilated or constricted pupils,
 - flushed skin,
 - excessive sweating;
 - excessive drowsiness or loss of consciousness.
- b. Unexplained, abrupt or radical changes in behaviour such as;
- violent outbursts,
 - hyperactivity,
 - extreme suspiciousness,
 - frequent and/or extreme fluctuations of mood swings.
- c. Inability to walk steadily or in a straight line, or perform normal manual functions without reasonable explanation.
- d. Poor time keeping and/or unexplained, prolonged or frequent disappearances from the workplace.
- e. Accidents or near-misses on the job which appear related to unexplained sensory or motor skill malfunctions.
- f. Smell of alcohol on the employee whilst performing job duties.
- g. The direct observation of drugs or alcohol use while at work or on duty.

4.0 Employees suspected of Possession of Alcohol, Drugs or Substances or Being Under the Influence of Alcohol, Drugs or Substances

4.1 The situation should never be ignored. There may be times when alcohol, drugs or substance misuse problems come to light in such a way that action must be taken immediately. This would clearly be the case where an employee appears intoxicated and unable to work properly/safely. The line manager must be clear that there is evidence (seeing, hearing, smelling) to confirm the suspicions.

4.2 When an individual is thought to be unfit for work through intoxication, the line manager should ensure that the following action is undertaken: -

- Immediately withdraw permission to undertake their role
- Advise them that they are being sent home and assist them in making arrangements to be taken home by a friend, relative or via a taxi etc.

4.3 A return to work interview must be conducted following this absence period, to offer support and reinforce the aims and principles of the Management of Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse at Work Policy. This period of absence should not be

treated as sickness absence and should be taken as annual, flexi or unpaid leave. Options can be discussed with a HR People Services.

4.4 Any incident involving an employee suspected of being in possession or under the influence of alcohol, drugs or a substance may result in a disciplinary investigation and advice should be sought from HR People Services.

4.5 Where an employee has driven to work under the influence of alcohol and in all cases of illegal drug activity, (i.e possession, the supply or intent to supply) HR People Services should be notified.

5.0 Performance or Conduct Issues Relating to Alcohol, Drugs or Other Substances

5.1 If a line manager identifies performance related issues such as absenteeism, accident levels, work performance or behaviour and it is reasonable to suspect that the employee is under the influence of alcohol, drugs or substances, then it is important to arrange to meet with the employee and discuss their performance.

5.2 Be mindful that certain medical conditions such as diabetes or clinical depression or disabilities such as bi-polar disorder or epilepsy require regular medication. Similarly employees undergoing hormonal treatment such as the menopause or transgender reassignment may take medication regularly. An employee may display similar behaviours to that associated with being influenced by alcohol, drugs or substance misuse if for example they may be suffering from a clinical over or under dose of prescribed medication.

5.3 When meeting with the employee, the line manager must explain why the employee's work performance is giving cause for concern; ask open questions as to why their performance is below standard and what support may be given to assist in performance improvement. The line manager should encourage the employee to volunteer any relevant information, which could include problems related to alcohol, drug and substance misuse.

5.4 If an alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem is declared, if relevant the line manager should refer to the Capability Policy if there are ongoing performance issues. The manager should agree to provide the necessary supervision and support, set achievable performance targets and review timescales. The line manager may also wish to provide details of the Employee Counselling Service, The Employee Assistance Package and the list of specialist agencies. If at any point in the process the line manager becomes seriously concerned about the employee's health, a referral to the Council's Occupational Health Service through a HR People Services can be arranged. However, this should be discussed with both the HR People Services and the employee before completing the referral form.

5.5 If the employee confirms they have issues with alcohol, drugs or substance misuse the line manager should refer to the Management of Alcohol and

Substance Misuse at Work Policy and obtain advice and support from a HR People Services.

6.0 Conducting the Initial Meeting and Possible Outcomes

6.1 The misuse of alcohol, drugs or substances is a sensitive area, and individuals are often exceedingly successful in denying and covering-up their problems. This is mainly out of fear and shame – fear of being judged and stigmatised and losing their jobs, and shame at their own lack of ‘will-power’ and self-control.

6.2 Stress that the aim is to seek the co-operation of the individual in making a constructive plan to overcome the shortcomings you have identified, including identifying support.

6.3 The following points should be considered:

- Identify and clearly specify where the employee’s performance does not meet the required standards.
- State requirements in terms of work performance and why the standards are necessary.
- Stress the purpose of the meeting is to support the employee.
- Offer the employee an opportunity to discuss their situation in a constructive manner.
- Hold the meeting in a private room.
- Concentrate on the instances of poor performance which have been identified.
- Ask the employee for reasons for poor performance and question if it could be due to health problems without specifically mentioning alcohol, drugs or substances in the first instance.
- If appropriate discuss the Management of Alcohol Drugs and Substance Misuse at Work Policy
- Keep accurate, confidential records of instances of poor performance or other problems.
- Confirm confidentiality of the meeting and any outcomes.
- Agree future action.
- Arrange regular meetings to monitor progress and discuss any further problems if they arise.
- The employee has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague.

6.4 If the subject of alcohol, drugs or substances has not arisen during the meeting, share your concern with the employee. Try to keep the tone objective and non-judgemental, and avoid the use of terms such as ‘alcoholic’ or ‘drink problem’ or

'substance problem' which can arouse defensiveness.

6.5 The person may become upset, angry or defensive, or refuse to accept that they may have an alcohol, drug or substance problem. If this happens, remain calm, restate the job requirements, and emphasise the positive contribution the individual has made in the past.

6.6 If the individual refuses to acknowledge that they have alcohol, drug or substance problem, or refuses to accept help, set a time-scale for improvement in attendance and/or performance. Make sure the employee understands what is required of them. Set a date for a further meeting with the employee to review progress.

6.7 At the end of this period you may have to resort to the Disciplinary Policy if no improvements have been observed.

7.0 Colleagues having concerns about fellow employees

7.1 An employee with an alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem will sometimes come to the notice of a fellow employee/s through deteriorating work performance. It is in the employee's interests to be offered help as soon as possible, as it improves the chances of a successful outcome of treatment. It is imperative that managers create an environment where colleagues feel confident to be open and supportive in these circumstances.

7.2 Although it may be difficult, employees are encouraged to raise the issue with their line manager. Covering up for a colleague, or not addressing problems out of loyalty, will not help the colleague in the longer term. In addition, each employee has a responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others at work. If another employee's actions or behaviour compromises health and safety, this must immediately be brought to the attention of a supervisor or line manager.

8.0 Self Help Advisory Services for Alcohol, Drug or Substance Misuse

Please note all links below are available on the Health and Wellbeing page of the Intranet.

Internal Support

Employee Counselling Service 02920 788301

Employee Assistance Programme 0800174319 or via www.carefirst.lifestyle.co.uk
User name is ccw001. Password is diff1234

External Self Help Advisory Services for Alcohol, Drugs or Substance Dependency

This list is not intended to be exhaustive

NHS

(Information and advice from the National Health Service)

www.nhs.uk

EDAS – 0300 300 7000 (option 2) Substance Misuse Services in Cardiff and the Vale. This is a first point of contact for drug and alcohol services and will provide referrals for health service support, counselling and other services, dealing with drug, alcohol and other addictions.

Taith 0300300 7000 (option 1) Support Service (Neville Street)

Recovery Cymru 02920 227019 Offers friendly and informal peer support and drop in service 9 Cowbridge Road East and Holton Road, Barry.

The Living Room 02920 493895 Offers a range of support and counselling for all kinds of addictions. (Richmond Road)

Alcoholics Anonymous – 0800 917 7650 Offers confidential advice either by phone or e-mail. Calls are redirected automatically to an AA member in the caller's region. Information can be provided about future meetings that are to be conducted in the local area.

Al-Anon Family Groups – 020 7403 0888 Offers help and support for people whose lives are affected by someone else's drinking

Drinkline – 0300 123 1110

Provides free information, self-help materials and advises callers of where to go for help. Also offers help for families and friends of people who are drinking.

Drug help lines and services:

Talk to Frank – 0300 123 6600 Offers free and confidential advice about drugs and can refer people to local drug advice services. The website provides extensive drug information.

Narcotics Anonymous – 0300 999 1212 Help line offers confidential support and advice for drug addicts. Website provides a message board chat-room to discuss problems and

contact information for local support groups across the UK.

Release – 0845 4500 215 www.release.org.uk

Offers free, confidential and non-judgemental advice on drug use and legal issues.

ADFAM – 020 3817 9410 Provides information for families and friends of drug users.

Dan – Wales Drug & alcohol helpline Free phone: 0808 808 2234 Text: DAN 81066

Re-Solv -01785 810762 (helpline) www.re-solv.org

Re-Solv is a national charity dedicated to the prevention of solvent and volatile substance abuse.