



## Drug and Alcohol Misuse policy

### Definitions

**Intoxicating substance** – a substance that changes the way the user feels mentally or physically. It includes alcohol, illegal drugs, legal drugs, prescription medicines (for example tranquillisers, anti-depressants) over-the-counter medicines, solvents, glue, lighter fuel.

**Controlled drugs** – these are drugs covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. They include both drugs with no current medical uses as well as medicinal drugs that are prone to misuse. All are considered likely to result in substantial harm to individuals and society.

**Harmful/problematic use or misuse** – use of an intoxicating substance or substances that harms health, physical, psychological, social or work performance but without dependency being present.

**Dependency** – a compulsion to keep taking an intoxicating substance either to avoid effects of withdrawal (physical dependence) or to meet a need for stimulation or tranquillising effects or pleasure (psychological dependence).

**Addiction** – a state of periodic or chronic intoxication produced by the repeated intake of an intoxicating substance. This means that a dependency has developed to such an extent that it has serious detrimental effects on the user and often their family as well, and the individual has great difficulty discontinuing their use. The substance has taken over their life.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs can damage the health and well-being of employees and have far-reaching effects on their personal and working lives. At work, alcohol or drug misuse can result in reduced levels of attendance, sub-standard work performance and increased health and safety risks not only for the individual concerned but also for others, for example work colleagues, members of the public, contractors, customers. Furthermore, the effects of alcohol or drug misuse are likely to be detrimental to Steps to Work's reputation and image and its ability to deliver high-quality services.
- 1.2 Steps to Work is committed to providing a safe and productive work environment and to promoting the health, safety and well-being of its employees and customers. The Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy is designed to ensure that employees are aware of the risks associated with alcohol/drug misuse and the consequences, including the legal consequences, of their actions.
- 1.3 The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 specifies a list of drugs that are subject to control. Please see the attached document.

## **2.0 Objectives**

- 2.1 The policy aims to: -
- Raise staff awareness of the risks and potential harm to health associated with the use of intoxicating substances.
  - Set out the rules regarding the use of intoxicating substances so that employees are aware of the likely consequences for their employment of misusing them.
  - Create a climate that encourages employees who may be misusing drugs or alcohol to come forward and seek help.
  - Provide a framework to enable instances of substance misuse by employees to be handled in an appropriate, fair and consistent manner.
  - achieve a balance between supporting employees who come forward with a problem and the overriding need to preserve: -
    - a) the health, safety and welfare of employees, customers and others\* with whom they come into contact
    - b) Steps to Work's reputation
    - c) The delivery of high-quality, effective services.

\*section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

## **3.0 Scope**

- 3.1 This policy covers the use and misuse of intoxicating substances, which include alcohol, solvents, legal and illegal drugs, prescription and over-the-counter medicines and other substances that could adversely affect work performance and/or health and safety.
- 3.2 This policy applies to ALL employees.

3.3 Steps to Work also expects agency and casual workers, contractors, volunteers and others working on its behalf to comply with this policy. Failure to do so is likely to result in the working arrangements being terminated.

#### **4.0 Safeguarding**

4.1 Steps to Work is committed to ensuring that it maintains the highest possible standards to meet its social, moral and legal responsibilities to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom Steps to Work's activities brings it into contact. Where an employee is discovered to be or informs Steps to work that they suffer with a dependency on alcohol or illegal substances and the employee's role involves regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults advice will be sought from occupational health as to whether the individual is fit to continue working with children, vulnerable adults or young people. Redeployment opportunities may be discussed with the individual.

4.2 Where an individual has been offered a conditional offer of employment with Steps to work and an enhanced CRB check is required for the purposes of the role. Should the CRB check bring to light convictions relating to drugs or alcohol misuse within the previous 12 month period. The offer of employment may be withdrawn. Examples of instances where the offer of employment would automatically be withdrawn are: -

- Possession of controlled drugs
- Supply of controlled drugs
- Criminal offence i.e. violence whilst under the influence of alcohol or controlled drugs.

(This list is illustrative only and should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive)

4.3 Where an employee's role involves working with vulnerable adults, young people or children and the renewal of an enhanced CRB check brings to light convictions occurring during the employee's employment with Steps to Work, since their last CRB check, relating to drugs or alcohol misuse, for example:-

- Possession of controlled drugs
- Supply of controlled drugs
- Criminal offence i.e. violence whilst under the influence of alcohol or controlled drugs.

(This list is illustrative only and should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive)

The convictions would be discussed with the employee and may result in termination of the employee's employment with Steps to Work.

## **5.0 Managers responsibilities**

### **5.1 Managers are required: -**

- To be aware of the signs of alcohol and substance misuse and the effects on performance, attendance and health of employees. Some of the signs can be: -
  1. sudden mood changes
  2. unusual irritability or aggression
  3. a tendency to become confused
  4. abnormal fluctuations in concentration and energy
  5. impaired job performance
  6. poor time keeping
  7. increased short term absence
  8. dishonesty and possibly theft
- ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees, customers and others with whom they come into contact
- ensure that staff understand the policy and are aware of the rules and consequences regarding the use of alcohol, drugs and other intoxicating substances
- ensure that staff are aware of the support that is available to them should they have a problem
- monitor the performance, behaviour and attendance of employees as part of the normal supervisory relationship
- intervene at an early stage where changes in performance, behaviour, sickness levels, attendance patterns are identified to establish whether alcohol or drug misuse is an underlying cause
- provide support and assistance, where appropriate and for a reasonable period, to staff who are dependent upon intoxicating substances to help their recovery
- Instigate disciplinary measures where appropriate to do so.

5.2 Where a manager is aware, or suspects, that an employee is misusing intoxicating substances they are required to seek advice from Personnel on the approach to be adopted.

5.3 Such matters will be treated confidentially as far as is legitimately and legally possible. For example, it may be necessary in order to provide effective support for information to be shared with others, for example occupational health, other agencies.

## **6.0 Employee responsibilities**

6.1 Employees are required to familiarise themselves with this policy and comply

with its provisions.

- 6.2 They are expected to present a professional, courteous and efficient image to those with whom they come into contact at all times. They therefore have a personal responsibility to adopt a responsible attitude towards drinking and taking prescribed and over-the-counter drugs.
- 6.3 Employees are not permitted to possess, store, trade or sell controlled drugs on organisation premises or bring Steps to Work into disrepute by engaging in such activities outside of work. The only exception would be where an employee has a prescription.
- 6.4 Employees are strongly encouraged to seek help if they have concerns regarding their alcohol or drug consumption. It is recommended that they approach either their line manager or the Personnel Officer in the first instance so that Steps to Work can arrange for the provision of appropriate support to help speedy rehabilitation, for example referral to the occupational health service, professional drug/alcohol treatment agencies, and so on.
- 6.5 Wherever, an individual is employed in a capacity where they have regular contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults Occupational Health will be consulted with regards to whether they are fit to work with these vulnerable groups to ensure the safety of those protected by safeguarding legislation. Steps to Work reserve the right to redeploy individuals to undertake other duties in the interim period whilst investigations are being carried out.
- 6.6 Employees are expected to co-operate with any support and assistance provided by Steps to Work to address an alcohol or drug misuse problem. Where an employee fails to co-operate in referral or treatment arrangements no special assistance will be given and any failure in performance or behaviour will be dealt with through disciplinary proceedings.
- 6.7 Employees should not, even with the best of motives, 'cover up' for, or collude with, a colleague with an alcohol- or drug-related problem but instead should encourage the individual to seek help.
- 6.8 Where the individual concerned does not wish to come forward to seek help, and their colleague(s) genuinely suspect that the individual may be misusing drugs or alcohol, they have a responsibility to raise their concerns with the employee's line manager.

## **7.0 Managing drug and alcohol misuse at work**

- 7.1 Employees must report for work, and remain throughout the working day, in a fit and safe condition to undertake their duties and not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 7.2 Employees must not consume alcohol or drugs at any time while at work including during rest or meal breaks spent at or away from work premises. Exceptions apply to drugs prescribed for the individual or over-the-counter medicines used for their intended purpose (in accordance with the instructions given by the prescriber, pharmacist or manufacturer) and where the safety of the individual or others with whom they come into contact is not

compromised.

- 7.3 Employees who attend work related social events or functions outside of the normal working day should remember that they are still representing Steps to Work and that they should not consume excessive levels of alcohol or consume any drugs at all. This applies even when the individual is not returning to work after the event.
- 7.4 Employees must notify their manager immediately should they be prescribed medication or plan to take over-the-counter medicines that may cause side effects and impair their ability to undertake their duties safely and effectively. This is particularly important if they occupy a post where it is not only their own personal safety but those of others that could be jeopardised i.e. a post that involves regular contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- 7.5 Similarly, employees who experience side effects as a result of taking prescribed or over-the-counter medicines that impair their ability to perform their duties safely and satisfactorily must notify their line manager immediately.
- 7.6 Where an employee's role involves working with vulnerable adults, young people or children Steps to Work reserve the right to redeploy the employee to undertake other duties until it has been confirmed by Occupational Health that the individual is fit to work with vulnerable groups.
- 7.7 Employees are not obliged to disclose the actual medical condition being treated nor the medication – simply the impact/side effects.

## **8.0 Outside working hours**

- 8.1 Employees must not consume intoxicating substances before coming on duty or when they may be required to attend work at short notice, for example when they are on call.
- 8.2 Intoxicating substances such as alcohol may remain in the system for some time and even small amounts can impair performance and jeopardise safety. Employees are personally responsible for allowing sufficient time for the intoxicating substance to leave their system before reporting for work.
- 8.4 These restrictions should be incorporated into local workplace rules and must be brought to the attention of all staff as part of their induction and should be made available to staff to refer to subsequently.

## **9.0 Sickness Leave and Treatment**

- 9.1 Where medical certificates are submitted sickness leave will be given whilst an individual is undergoing treatment.
- 9.2 If an employee has been absent from work during a period of treatment, before returning to work the employee will be seen by Occupational Health who will advise on the individuals return to work with regards to duties and hours to be worked.

## **10.0 Breaches of the policy**

- 10.1 Steps to Work will, where appropriate to do so, adopt a constructive and supportive approach when dealing with employees who may be experiencing drug or alcohol dependency/addiction.
- 10.2 This means that employees seeking assistance for a substance misuse problem will not have their employment terminated simply because of their dependence/addiction. However, advice will be sought from Occupational Health with regards to their fitness for a post which involves working with vulnerable adults, children or young people.
- 10.3 However, if performance, attendance or behaviour is unacceptable, despite any support and assistance that can be offered, ultimately dismissal may be unavoidable.
- 10.4 Notwithstanding the above, there will be circumstances where breaches of the policy, whether dependency-related or not, will be treated as a disciplinary matter and may result in the summary dismissal of the employee. Examples of issues that will be subject to disciplinary action, including the possibility of dismissal, are: -
- deliberate disregard for personal safety and that of others associated with the use of intoxicating substances
  - unacceptable behaviour in the workplace associated with the use of intoxicating substances
  - being found incapable of performing normal duties satisfactorily and safely as a result of consuming alcohol or taking drugs
  - consuming intoxicating substances during the working day including rest and lunch breaks or when rostered on call and liable to be called upon to work at short notice
  - possession, consumption, dealing/trafficking, selling, storage of controlled drugs either on work premises or engaging in such activities outside of work
  - being disqualified from driving as a result of alcohol- or drug-related offences (employees required under their contract of employment to drive a vehicle/casual or essential car user)
  - Making malicious or vexatious allegations that a colleague is misusing intoxicating substances.

This list is illustrative only and should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive.

Disciplinary action will be in all cases proportionate to the circumstances of the breach of the policy.

- 10.5 Where evidence warrants, Steps to Work will inform the police of illegal drug use or any activity or behaviour over which there are concerns as to its legality. For example, it would be necessary to report criminal behaviour associated with alcohol abuse such as having a drink-driving accident in a

work vehicle.

- 10.6 Any individual found dealing or in possession of illegal drugs will be reported immediately to the police and this will be classed as gross misconduct under Steps to Work's disciplinary procedure.
- 10.7 It is an offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 for an employer knowingly to allow its premises to be used for the production or supply of controlled drugs. Steps to work reserve the right to carry out a search where it is suspected that an employee may be in possession of controlled drugs.
- 10.8 All searches will be authorised by the Chief Executive or Personnel, will be carried out away from a public area and two members of the management team, at least one being a member of the Senior Management team, will be present.
- 10.9 In order to protect the dignity of the employee searches will be carried out by managers of the same gender to the individual being searched.
- 10.11 No part of this policy will override Steps to Work's Performance Management Procedure or Code of Conduct.

Last Reviewed: November 2009

## Most commonly misused substances in the UK

<i>Name (street/trade names include):</i>	<i>How usually taken:</i>	<i>Effects sought:</i>	<i>Harmful effects include:</i>	<i>Legal status:</i>
<b>Heroin</b> (smack, horse, gear, H, junk, brown, stag, scag, jack)	Injected, snorted or smoked.	Drowsiness, sense of warmth and well- being.	Physical dependence, tolerance, overdose can lead to coma and even death. Sharing injecting equipment brings risk of HIV or hepatitis infection.	Class A
<b>Cocaine</b> (coke, charlie, snow, C)	Snorted in powder form, injected.	Sense of well- being, alertness and confidence.	Dependence, restlessness, paranoia, damage to nasal membranes.	Class A
<b>Crack</b> (freebase, rock, wash, stone)	Smokable form of cocaine.	Similar to those of snorted cocaine but initial feelings are much more intense.	As for cocaine but, because of the intensity of its effects, crack use can be extremely hard to control, damage to lungs.	Class A
<b>Ecstasy</b> (E, XTC, doves, disco biscuits, echoes, scooby doo) Chemical name: MDMA	Swallowed, usually in tablet form.	Alert and energetic but with a calmness and a sense of well-being towards others. Heightened sense of sound and colour.	Possible nausea and panic, overheating and dehydration if dancing, which can be fatal. Use has been linked to liver and kidney problems. Long-term effects not clear but may include mental illness and depression.	Class A
<b>LSD</b> (acid, trips, tabs, dots, blotters, microdots)	Swallowed on tiny square of paper.	Hallucinations, including distorted or mixed-up sense of vision, hearing and time. An LSD <i>trip</i> can last as long as 8-12 hours.	There is no way of stopping a bad trip which may be a very frightening experience. Increased risk of accidents can trigger off long-term mental problems.	Class A
<b>Magic mushrooms</b> (shrooms, mushies)	Eaten raw or dried, cooked in food or brewed in a tea.	Similar effects to those of LSD but the trip is often milder and shorter.	As for LSD, with the additional risk of sickness and poisoning.	Not illegal in raw state but Class A once dried or processed in any way.
<b>Cannabis</b> (hash, dope, grass, blow, ganja, weed,	Rolled with tobacco into a spliff, joint or reefer and	Relaxed, talkative state, heightened sense of sound and colour.	Impaired co-ordination and increased risk of accidents, poor concentration, anxiety, depression,	Class B

shit, puff, marijuana)	smoked, smoked in a pipe or eaten.		increased risk of respiratory diseases including lung cancer.	
<b>Barbiturates</b> (barbs, downers)	Swallowed as tablets or capsules, injected - ampules.	Calm and relaxed state, larger doses produce a drunken effect.	Dependency and tolerance, overdose can lead to coma or even death. Severe withdrawal symptoms.	Class B
<b>Amphetamines</b> (speed, whizz, uppers, billy, sulph, amp)	In powder form, dissolved in drinks, injected, sniffed/snorted.	Stimulates the nervous system, wakefulness, feeling of energy and confidence.	Insomnia, mood swings, irritability, panic. The comedown (hangover) can be severe and last for several days.	Class B
<b>Tranquillizers</b> (brand names include: Valium, Altivan, Mogadon (moggies), Temazepam (wobblies, mazzies, jellies)	Swallowed as tablets or capsules, injected.	Prescribed for the relief of anxiety and to treat insomnia, high doses cause drowsiness.	Dependency and tolerance, increased risk of accidents, overdose can be fatal, severe withdrawal symptoms.	Class C. Available only on prescription (Medicines Act). Supply is illegal but, apart from Temazepam, not illegal to possess without a prescription. (Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and associated Regulations).
<b>Anabolic steroids</b> (many trade names)	Injected or swallowed as tablets.	With exercise can help to build up muscle. However, there is some debate about whether drug improves muscle power and athletic performance.	For men: erection problems, risk of heart attack or liver problems. For women: development of male characteristics. Injecting equipment brings risk of HIV or hepatitis infection.	Class C
<b>Poppers</b> (alkyl nitrates, including amyl nitrate with trade names such as Ram, TNT, Thrust)	Vapours from small bottle of liquid are breathed in through mouth or nose.	Brief and intense head-rush caused by sudden surge of blood through the brain.	Nausea and headaches, fainting, loss of balance, skin problems around the mouth and nose, particularly dangerous for those with glaucoma, anaemia, breathing or heart problems.	Not illegal to possess but supply without prescription is illegal and can be an offence.

<p><b>Solvents</b> (Including lighter gas refills, aerosols, glues). Some painter thinners and correcting fluids.</p>	<p>Sniffed or breathed into the lungs.</p>	<p>Short-lived effects similar to being drunk, thick-headed, dizziness, possible hallucinations.</p>	<p>Nausea, blackouts, increased risk of accidents. Fatal heart problems can cause instant death.</p>	<p>Not illegal to possess but it is illegal for a shopkeeper to sell solvents to anyone under 18, if they suspect they are intended for misuse</p>
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Source: HSE Drug Misuse at Work, a guide for employers. [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)