

AGE UK EXETER

Controlled Document

Document Name: Substance Misuse Policy

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Owner (Responsibility): Chief Executive Officer

Amendments to: Governance Lead

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Document Location: www.ageuk.org.uk/exeter/about-us/policiesandguidelines/

Document Description

We are committed to providing a safe, healthy and productive working environment. This includes ensuring that all staff, trustees and volunteers are fit to carry out their roles safely and effectively in an environment which is free from alcohol and drug misuse. This policy outlines how we will achieve this.

Implementation & Quality Assurance

Implementation is immediate and this policy shall stay in force until any alterations are agreed.

The policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Trustees, sooner if legislation, best practice, or other circumstances indicate this is necessary.

All aspects of this document shall be open to review at any time. If you have any comments or suggestions on its content, please contact Chief Executive Officer at info@ageukexeter.org.uk or at Age UK Exeter, The Sycamores, Mount Pleasant Road, Exeter, EX4 7AE, 01392 202092.

Substance Misuse Policy

1. About this policy

We are committed to providing a safe, healthy, and productive working environment. This includes ensuring that all staff, trustees and volunteers are fit to carry out their roles safely and effectively in an environment which is free from alcohol and drug misuse.

The purpose of this policy is to increase awareness of the effects of alcohol and drug misuse and its likely symptoms and to ensure that:

- (a) All staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding alcohol and drug misuse and related problems.
- (b) Staff who have an alcohol or drug-related problem are encouraged to seek help, in confidence, at an early stage.
- (c) Staff who have an alcohol or drug-related problem affecting their work are dealt with sympathetically, fairly, and consistently.

This policy is not intended to apply to “one-off” incidents or offences caused by alcohol or drug misuse at or outside work where there is no evidence of an ongoing problem, which may damage our reputation, and which are likely to be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

We will not accept staff, trustees or volunteers arriving at the premises under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and/or whose ability to work is impaired in any way by reason of the consumption of alcohol or drugs, or who consume alcohol or take drugs (other than prescription or over the counter medication, as directed) on our premises.

This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, trustees, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency workers.

This policy does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

2. Personnel responsible for this policy

Our Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the Chief Executive Officer.

All managers have a specific responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy, to ensure that all staff and volunteers understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and to take action when behaviour falls below its requirements.

3. Identifying a problem

If you notice a change in a colleague's pattern of behaviour you should encourage them to seek assistance through their manager. If they will not seek help themselves, you should draw the matter to the attention of your manager. You should not attempt to cover up for a colleague whose work or behaviour is suffering as a result of an alcohol or drug-related problem.

If you believe that you have an alcohol or drug-related problem, you should seek specialist advice and support as soon as possible.

4. Alcohol and drugs at work

Misuse of alcohol and drugs can lead to reduced levels of attendance, reduced efficiency and performance, impaired judgement and decision making and increased health and safety risks for you and other people. Irresponsible behaviour or the commission of offences resulting from the misuse of alcohol or drugs may damage our reputation and, as a result, our business.

You are expected to arrive at work fit to carry out your job and to be able to perform your duties safely without any limitations due to the use or aftereffects of alcohol or drugs. In this policy drug use includes the use of controlled drugs, psychoactive (or mind-altering) substances formerly known as "legal highs", and the misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medication.

You should not drink alcohol during the normal working day, at lunchtime, at other official breaks and at official work-based meetings and events. Drinking alcohol while at work without authorisation or working under the influence of alcohol may be considered serious misconduct.

You must comply with drink-driving and drug-driving laws at all times. Conviction of a drink-driving or drug-driving offence may harm our reputation and, if your job requires you to drive, you may be unable to continue to do your job. Committing a drink-driving or drug-driving offence while working for us may lead to action under our Disciplinary Procedure and could result in dismissal.

If you are prescribed medication, you must seek advice from your GP or pharmacist about the possible effect on your ability to carry out your job and whether your duties should be modified or you should be temporarily reassigned to a different role. If so, you must tell your line manager without delay.

5. Managing suspected substance misuse

Where a manager considers that a deterioration in work performance and/or changes in patterns of behaviour may be due to alcohol or drug misuse they should seek advice and assistance from their line manager in the first instance.

If your manager has reason to believe that you are suffering the effects of alcohol or drugs misuse, they will invite you to an investigatory interview. The purpose of the interview is to:

- (d) discuss the reason for the investigation and seek your views on, for example, the deterioration of your work performance and/or behaviour; and
- (e) where appropriate, offer to refer you to a specialist service or your GP..

If you arrive at work and a manager reasonably believes you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, they shall immediately contact the Chief Executive Officer in order that you can be provided with assistance and an investigation can be undertaken.

If you agree to be referred to a specialist agency, your manager will request an urgent appointment and prepare a letter of referral, a copy of which will be provided to you.

We may ask for your consent to approach your GP for advice. A report will be sent to your manager who will then reassess the reasons for their investigatory meeting with you and decide on the way forward.

If, as the result of the meeting or investigation, your manager continues to believe that you are suffering the effects of alcohol or drugs misuse and you refuse an offer of referral to a specialist agency or appropriate treatment providers the matter may be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

6. Providing support

Alcohol and drug-related problems may develop for a variety of reasons and over a considerable period of time. We are committed, in so far as possible, to treating these problems in a similar way to other health issues. We will provide support where possible with a view to a return to full duties. This may include:

- (f) Referral to appropriate treatment providers, where necessary in conjunction with your GP.
- (g) Time off work to attend treatment and recognition of any periods of absence for such treatment as periods of sickness absence.
- (h) Adjusting your duties or other support as recommended by your GP or specialist during treatment and for an agreed period thereafter, subject to operational requirements and feasibility.

If you do not finish a programme of treatment, or your recovery and return to work does not go as planned, your manager will meet with you to decide what further action if any should be taken.

7. Confidentiality

We aim to ensure that the confidentiality of any member of staff experiencing alcohol or drug-related problems is maintained appropriately. However, it needs to be recognised that, in supporting staff, some degree of information sharing is likely to be necessary.

If you seek help with an alcohol or drug-related problem directly and you wish to keep matters confidential from your manager and colleagues, this will be respected unless there is reason to believe that this could put you, your colleagues or anyone else at risk or carries some other material risk for the business. In those circumstances we encourage you to inform your manager and will give you sufficient time to do so before discussing the matter with them.

8. Performance and disciplinary issues

If you agree to undertake appropriate treatment and/or rehabilitation for an acknowledged alcohol or drug-related problem, we may decide to suspend any ongoing disciplinary action against you for related misconduct or poor performance, pending the outcome of the treatment.

Our intention is to support all staff with alcohol or drug-related problems to regain good health. Depending on the progress made on the course of treatment, any disciplinary action may be suspended for a specified period, discontinued, or restarted at any time as we see fit.

Revision History

Revision date	Summary of Changes	Other Comments
20.1.2022	New document using HR Express template.	Approved by the Board of Trustees on 4 March 2022. Next review due March 2025
20.06.25	Slight amendments to fit our processes, noting that we do not have an occupational health department. This is still compliant with the HR Express template.	