

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS MISUSE POLICY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Lister has adopted a policy on Alcohol and Drug Misuse in the workplace to protect the health and welfare of all its employees. Lister will act to prevent and eliminate, in so far as is reasonably possible, any such misuse which will increase the potential for ill health, accidents, absence, poor performance, or which will otherwise adversely affect Lister or its employees.

2.0 POLICY AIMS

- 2.1 a. to seek to ensure the safe and capable working practice in relation to alcohol and drugs and in line with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- b. to alert employees to the risks associated with alcohol and drug misuse.
- c. to reduce the personal suffering of employees affected by alcohol or drug related problems.
- d. to create a climate which removes the tendency to conceal or deny such problems.
- e. to encourage employees who are experiencing alcohol and drug related problems to seek appropriate assistance at the earliest opportunity and to ensure the availability of appropriate professional advice.
- f. to give management and staff concerned the confidence to deal with such problems.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

Alcohol misuse: refers to an alcohol related problem which is defined as any drinking, either intermittent or continual, which interferes with a person's health and social functioning and/or work capability or conduct.

Drug: refers to any psychoactive drug whether illegal, over the counter from pharmacies and other retail outlets, or legal substances such as solvents. In the case of prescribed drugs, their possession and proper use is acknowledged as legitimate.

Drug misuse: refers to use of illegal drugs and the misuse whether deliberate or unintentional of prescribed medicines or solvents.

4.0 POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 a. Employees who have an alcohol or drug related problem will be encouraged to seek help and treatment voluntarily.
- b. Employees who are perceived to have an alcohol or drug related problem will be offered the opportunity to seek assessment, and if necessary treatment.

- c. Employees agreeing to undergo treatment will be granted sick leave for this purpose.
- d. Following treatment, the employee will be able to return to the same job unless it is considered that resumption of duties would be inconsistent with the resolution of the employee's alcohol or drug related problem.
- e. Every consideration will be given to finding suitable employment for employees whom it is considered should not resume their previous duties after treatment.
- f. The employee's normal career or promotional progress will not be affected if treatment leads to a resolution of the problem.
- g. Employees who decline offers of a referral for assessment or treatment or who prematurely discontinue treatment and whose work performance continues to be unsatisfactory, will be subject to the Lister disciplinary procedure.
- h. In cases of relapse during or following treatment resulting in an adverse effect on performance, each case will be considered on its merits and, if appropriate, a further opportunity of assistance will be offered.
- i. All employees will have the right to be accompanied at any discussion by a Trade Union Representative or fellow employee of his/her choice.
- j. Loss of licence due to a conviction for driving over the legal alcohol limit or being under the influence of drugs can have repercussions on employment. Where an employee has to drive as a requirement of his/her job, this may result in the termination of their employment.

5.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 5.1 Employees with alcohol or drug problems who are referred for treatment, whether voluntarily or mandatorily will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

6.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of every employee to ensure that the policy operates effectively.

6.2 *Role of management*

- a. to be familiar with policy procedures relating to alcohol & drug misuse
- b. to ensure that their staff/department understand the policy and their own responsibilities
- c. to be alert to and to monitor changes in work performance, attendance, sickness and accident patterns
- d. to take an objective and non-judgemental approach when counselling or interviewing employees
- e. to refer employees for assistance when appropriate
- f. to identify any aspects of the working environment which could lead to alcohol or drug abuse problems and, if possible, change them
- g. to intervene early when there are signs of problems
- h. to refer to the Lister disciplinary procedure where appropriate
- i. to be responsible for maintaining a safe and healthy workplace
- j. to act promptly on information from staff

6.3 *Role of the employee*

- a. to find out about alcohol and drugs and the social, health and employment effects
- b. to arrive at work free from the effects of alcohol and drugs
- c. to ensure alcohol is not consumed during work hours (this includes lunch and break times), except where approval has been granted in advance by Director for staff social functions. Equally when external entertaining, employees consuming alcohol must not return to duty while under the influence of alcohol. Again permission should be sought from the Director.
- d. to avoid covering up or colluding with colleagues
- e. to urge colleagues to seek help if they have problems arising from alcohol or drug misuse
- f. to seek help where they themselves have problems from alcohol or drug misuse
- g. to not use illegal drugs during work or outwith work where they impact upon performance, attendance and other requirements of work.
- h. to be responsible for maintaining a safe and healthy workplace
- i. to report any incidence of the problem amongst colleagues to management.

6.4 *Role of a counselling service*

- a. to provide advice and guidance on how best to help an employee who has a problem which might be related to alcohol and drug misuse
- b. to provide an assessment of employees who refer themselves for help
- c. to respond positively to referrals from managers
- d. to provide an impartial and confidential service to employees which may include counselling, assessment and referral to another agency
- e. to help identify and assist in any education initiative to promote knowledge of alcohol and drug misuse

7.0 PROCEDURE

7.1 *Voluntary Referral*

Where an employee voluntarily decides to seek help, he/she will contact the Director. The Director will see the employee as soon as possible and arrange an appointment with an approved counselling service.

7.2 *Referral by Management*

- a. Where an employee has a capability problem the cause of which is known or suspected to be alcohol or drug related and disciplinary measures have been applied or are indicated, the appropriate line manager will interview the employee in the normal course of endeavouring to rectify work performance or difficulties.
- b. If the line manager believes that the employee could benefit from a programme of treatment for alcohol or drug misuse he/she will offer the employee a referral to an assessment/counselling service as an alternative to taking the indicated disciplinary action. If the employee rejects the offer of referral, normal disciplinary measures will be applied.
- c. Where referral is accepted by the employee, an interview will be arranged with an appropriate assessment/counselling service, which will report back indicating the outcome of the assessment interview(s) and, if relevant, what co-operation is required to facilitate recovery.

- d. It is emphasised that disciplinary action is only suspended pending a satisfactory outcome of assessment and treatment. If, however, the counselling service indicates that no alcohol or drug related problem exists, or should the employee cease to co-operate in any way with the counselling service the suspended disciplinary action will be enforced. Normal disciplinary or workplace requirements will apply to anyone attending counselling services.
- e. It should be noted that being under the influence of drink and drugs at work is dealt with as Gross Misconduct under the disciplinary procedure.
- f. If the course of agreed treatment is satisfactorily concluded, the suspended disciplinary action will be dropped.

8.0 TRAINING

8.1 Managers who carry out implementing and operating the policy will receive regular in-depth training. All staff will be trained in the operation of the policy and alcohol and drug awareness.

9.0 MONITORING

9.1 The Director will monitor and evaluate the policy regularly. The policy will be assessed with regard to the effectiveness within Lister. This policy will be reviewed to keep up to date with the changes involved in dealing with all aspects of substance abuse.

10.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

11.0 SUPPORTING AGENCIES

Edinburgh & Lothians Council on Alcohol

Tel: 0131 337 8188 6 Clifton Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5DR
Provides confidential help and advice on alcohol

National Drugs Helpline

Tel: 0800 776600 (Freephone number) Offers a confidential telephone information and advice service for anyone who has a drug problem or is worried about someone who may be using drugs. Arranges referral to appropriate agencies.

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