

How To – Manage circumstances relating to an employee’s Alcohol and/or Drug use

Where an employee is identified alcohol, drug or other substance (including New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) or solvents) specific care should be taken to ensure that Perth & Kinross Council, as an employer, deals with them confidentially, sympathetically and constructively. Where the employee is identified as having a dependency the aim must be to encourage them to seek an appropriate diagnosis, counselling and treatment.

Alcohol and/ or drug use may emerge or be identified through a number of ways [Identifying Alcohol or Drug use](#) and most commonly managed through the arrangements listed below.

In the case of sickness absence, impaired performance or unacceptable conduct the fact that alcohol and/ or drug use is a factor or cause will not halt the process but appropriate use must be made of the Sources of Support and Directory of Support Agencies - [Support and Agencies](#).

At any stage a member of the Human Resources Operations Team may be contacted for support and advice.

A Health and Safety Risk Assessment **should** be undertaken in all cases where there is doubt about the impact of the alcohol and/or drug use on the working environment and the outcome may result in temporary amendments to working practices (e.g. operating machinery or driving).

Employee voluntarily acknowledges alcohol and/or drug use: Where an employee acknowledges alcohol and/or drug use/dependency the manager will provide information about sources of support and approve reasonable time off to support a rehabilitation programme (following discussion with Human Resources). Where an employee does not acknowledge misuse/dependency issues the procedures listed below will continue regardless.

Performance: where an employee’s performance is being questioned and it emerges that alcohol and/or drug use is a factor it is essential that the employee is given the opportunity to seek help and encouraged to take responsibility to address their dependency as part of improving their performance. This will be incorporated into any Action or Improvement Plan.

Sickness absence: if alcohol and/ or drug use is a factor in an employee’s attendance, the employee must be given the chance to address their dependency as part of improving their absence (as with Performance). This should be incorporated into the actions agreed by a manager and employee. ([Supporting Health and Wellbeing](#)).

Conduct (disciplinary situations): where an employee demonstrates that they wish to address their dependency issues it may be appropriate to agree a recovery treatment programme following support from the appropriate agencies (e.g. arrange an assessment by the [Tayside Council on Alcohol](#) to Alcohol or Drugs use Support Agencies) and disciplinary sanctions can be suspended to allow the employee to seek help. Any failure by the employee to complete a recommended course of treatment would result in the disciplinary hearing being reconvened.

If the employee commits an act of Gross Misconduct or their conduct is sufficiently serious to warrant dismissal this will still be treated as such irrespective of the substance misuse problems - as reasonable levels of employer tolerance may have been exceeded, ([Achieving and Maintaining Standards – Discipline](#) and [Teachers Disciplinary Procedure](#)).

Possession of Drugs or other illegal substances on Council premises: possession will always be considered a potential criminal offence and an employee found in possession will be reported to the Police and dealt with under the relevant disciplinary procedure ([Teachers Disciplinary Procedure](#)).

Employee present at work showing signs of alcohol and/or drug use: As this is one of the most common alcohol and/or drug related scenarios that managers deal with in relation to employees there is a separate 'How to' ([How to Deal with an Employee who shows signs of Alcohol and/or Drug Use at work](#)).

Alcohol and/or Drug use out-with working time: Additional advisory guidance is available about circumstances outwith working time (including 'on call' and Council/Civic events) - [advisory guidance](#).