

Employee Alcohol and Drugs Policy

August 2012

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Employee Alcohol and Drugs Policy

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Summary

This Policy covers both the use and misuse of alcohol or drugs that may impair an individual's performance or affect their behaviour. The term 'drugs' has been used in this Policy to include all drugs and substances, legal or illegal, which adversely affect behaviour or performance.

Employees who are taking medicines that may impair their performance may seek advice from their GP, pharmacist or from the Occupational Health Service and should inform their line manager or the Occupational Health Service to establish whether they can temporarily adjust their activities or take on duties which are compatible with their treatment. This Policy does not apply in these circumstances, provided that the appropriate advice has been taken and implemented.

The University is required as far as is reasonably practicable under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure the health and safety of its employees, students and others at work. This Policy sets out the University's position with regard to alcohol and drugs within the workplace and the approach it will take when the consumption of these affects an individual's performance, conduct, behaviour or impacts on safety at work. The use of alcohol or drugs both during work and out of working hours can have far reaching effects on the ability of staff to carry out their work. Serious health problems may result and the safety of the workers and others exposed to their activities may be placed in jeopardy. Furthermore, the reputation of the University could be brought into disrepute.

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the approach the University will take when the use of alcohol or drugs adversely affects the performance or behaviour of employees. The University is committed to offering information and guidance to help individuals find professional help and to ensuring that they are treated sensitively. The University also has a responsibility, however, to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of students, staff or members of the public are not jeopardised through staff use of alcohol or drugs. It also has a responsibility to safeguard University property.

The University is committed to promoting the health and well-being of its employees but what staff do in their private lives is generally outside the scope of this Policy unless it affects their work and interferes with the legitimate work-related activities of other members of the University.

Employees, who contravene this Policy, refuse support and whose performance or behaviour does not improve may be subject to the University's Disciplinary Procedure, the Management of Under-Performance Procedure, Managing Sickness Absence Procedures Part 1 and Part 2 or other relevant policies and procedures as appropriate.

2. Scope of the Policy

This Policy relates to all employees and workers at the University of Portsmouth, during their working hours, when undertaking activities on behalf of the University or attending University-related events. Where members of staff of the University work off site or on projects with, or for, external organisations the University requires them to comply with that organisation's own policies relating to alcohol and drugs in addition to this Policy.

People working with or on behalf of the University, for example contractors, are also required to comply with this Policy and must ensure that they or their staff are not allowed to work in the University of Portsmouth under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

3. Definitions

Alcohol and drugs misuse and 'dry roles' are defined as follows:

Alcohol misuse: the drinking of intoxicating liquor whereby an individual's ability to perform their duties is impaired, their attendance at work is interfered with, they endanger the safety of others or they exhibit physical, mental, emotional or behavioural changes.

Drug misuse: the taking of drugs, including the use and abuse of other substances whereby an individual's ability to perform their duties is impaired, their attendance at work is interfered with, they endanger the safety of others or they exhibit physical, mental, emotional or behavioural changes.

Dry roles: roles involving, for example, the operation of vehicles, potentially dangerous equipment, hazardous substances where there is a greater risk of accidents occurring should the role holder be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

4. Responsibilities and guiding principles

Individuals:

- should familiarise themselves and comply with this Policy
- are responsible for ensuring their own behaviour and work performance remain appropriate whilst engaged in University activities and are not affected by alcohol or drug misuse
- must not bring onto or use illegal or unlicensed drugs on University premises under any circumstances
- must not bring alcohol onto University premises unless it is in a sealed container and remains in the sealed container until they have left the University premises. The drinking of alcohol is only allowed in permitted areas, for example, bars, private accommodation, permitted events and only in compliance with this Policy
- who suspect, or know, that they have an alcohol or drug-related problem should seek professional help (see Appendix 4) at an early stage to avoid the problem becoming worse
- who suspect a colleague is under the influence of alcohol or drugs are encouraged to inform their line manager or another senior colleague. If their line manager is suspected a more senior manager, Occupational Health or HR should be informed

Managers should:

- ensure that their staff are aware of the Policy and the support available to them
- ensure compliance with the Policy
- identify work/locations/tasks with high accident risk and implement a 'dry roles' policy
- ensure staff employed in designated 'dry roles' are aware, provide them with a copy of this Policy and explain the implications of 'dry roles'
- refer staff to Occupational Health for assessment or other help where required (see Appendix 4)
- provide individuals with support and adjustment to their role to facilitate recovery, as far as reasonably practical, following advice from Occupational Health and Human Resources and in accordance with the Managing Sickness Absence Procedures

The Occupational Health Service will:

- make available information on the harmful effects associated with alcohol and drug abuse
- provide advice to managers on the early recognition of individuals misusing alcohol or drugs
- assess staff referred to them under this Policy or the Managing Sickness Absence Procedures on their fitness for work
- provide advice on the rehabilitation of staff before, during and after treatment for an alcohol or drug problem and monitor their progress

5. Taking action

Where an individual appears to be under the immediate influence of alcohol or drugs it is the responsibility of the manager to discuss the matter with the individual as soon as possible and, preferably, with a witness present. Managers should seek guidance from Human Resources prior to doing so and contact Occupational Health (OH) immediately requesting an assessment.

Where an individual discloses an alcohol or abuse problem the individual should be referred to the OH Service for assessment and advice.

Managers and supervisors should encourage individuals who they believe may have an alcohol or drug problem to seek help even though it does not appear to be affecting their work.

If the manager witnesses, or has direct evidence of or suspects the use of alcohol (other than where permitted) or illegal drugs by staff on University premises they should call the Security Lodge (on extension 3333). Security will then take over the handling of the incident. Where illegal drugs are involved, Security will call the police, deal with the safe keeping of any evidence (including the drugs) and arrange for the safe clearance of drugs-related paraphernalia or any bodily fluids. The member of staff concerned will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure and, with the approval of the Vice-Chancellor, may be suspended, pending further investigation.

If there is any immediate risk to the safety of the member of staff, to others or of damage to property, the manager (or any other member of staff) should call the police directly and also notify the Security Lodge.

Where possible the University will take a supportive approach. There may, however, be situations where the circumstances are such that the situation should be dealt with under the provisions of the Disciplinary or Management of Under-Performance Procedures rather than under the Alcohol and Drugs Policy. Advice should be sought from HR. See Appendix 2 for more detailed guidance for managers.

6. Guidance on dry roles

Alcohol, even in amounts insufficient to cause obvious intoxication, can impair physical coordination and reflexes. It can also adversely affect concentration and alertness. A person under the influence of alcohol is at greater risk of an accident, risking harm to themselves and others.

Managers should identify jobs or tasks where there is potential for serious injury or significant damage to property or equipment in the event of an accident and designate these as 'dry roles'. Jobs which require sustained vigilance or careful attention and where inattention could result in significant loss or harm to others should also be considered for designation. Managers should additionally carry out a risk assessment for dry roles and tasks.

Staff in designated dry roles should be instructed that they must not drink alcohol when at work, including during lunch breaks. They should also be advised that heavy drinking after work may mean they could be unfit for work on the following day. Jobs which should be designated dry roles include the following:

- working in a laboratory where hazardous materials including chemicals, radio-isotopes or biological agents are handled;
- operating potentially dangerous machinery, e.g. workshop machinery, food processing equipment, hand tools, cutting equipment;
- working at height, or where an unimpaired sense of balance is essential, e.g. working on a roof, scaffold or ladder;
- electrical and gas maintenance;
- driving vehicles of any description, including their own vehicle, on University business;
- clinical duties or contact with service users;
- security work;
- first aid;
- nursery work.

This is **not** an exhaustive list.

7. Alcohol at the University

Within the range of University activities there are times where alcohol is available at staff and student events. Great care should be taken in planning events to respect the views of anyone who does not drink or does not wish to drink alcohol, and non-alcoholic drinks must always be made available. Before alcohol can be served at a University event, the organiser must have the express permission from a member of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive.

The University has a duty of care to ensure that those attending events where alcohol is available and who will be driving immediately afterwards are fit to do. Every effort should be made to dissuade an individual who is obviously intoxicated from driving. If the individual is still intent on driving the Security Lodge should be contacted (on extension 3333) who will then take over the handling of the situation.

8. Equality analysis

This Policy recognises that the needs of those who do not drink alcohol, in some cases for religious reasons, must be catered for when planning events.

Measuring impact of misuse of alcohol and drugs in relation to protected characteristics should be through data analysis of formal disciplinary cases where alcohol or drugs are highlighted as a factor. Reports of disciplinary cases are presented at the Human Resources Committee, and it will be for that Committee to discuss actions needed in light of data analysis presented to them.

Appendix 1

Recognising possible alcohol, drugs or substance misuse

Alcohol, drugs or substance misuse can show in a wide variety of ways. As well as episodes of acute intoxication or drunkenness longer term misuse may show up as changes in a person's work or academic performance, their social behaviour or relationships or through deterioration in their appearance or self care.

Some of the more common signs of chronic misuse are listed below. None are specific to alcohol, drug or substance misuse so you cannot assume this to be the cause. For example, being bullied and harassed can lead to many of the performance issues in 2. below. The effects of some medical conditions may cause a person to appear drunk or intoxicated. However, you should not avoid discussing a valid concern over a person's performance or behaviour because of uncertainty over its cause.

1. Changes in behaviour and appearance

- Hand tremor, slurred speech
- Mood changes, irritability, lethargy
- Marked change in alertness or social behaviour after breaks
- Avoidance of eye contact
- Excitable or inappropriate uninhibited behaviour
- Poor personal hygiene

2. Inadequate or erratic work performance

- Improbable excuses for poor work performance
- Mistakes or errors of judgement
- Unreliability and unpredictability
- Frequent sickness absence with minor illnesses e.g. colds, stomach upsets, headaches
- Poor timekeeping: frequent lateness, repeated short absences away from a person's normal work location
- Poor concentration and forgetfulness
- Becoming more prone to accidents – at work or at home

3. Relationships with colleagues

- Complaints about behaviour
- Extreme reaction to real or imagined criticism
- Avoidance of meetings
- Borrowing money
- Unreasonable resentment

Appendix 2

Guidance for managers

Raising the issue

If you need to discuss a behaviour or performance issue with an individual, where you have a reasonable belief that they may have an alcohol or drug problem, the 'Management of Under-Performance – Guidance for Managers' should be used as a framework for the discussion. This can be found at www.port.ac.uk/intranet/humanresources/conditionsofemployment/policiesandprocedures/filetodownload,137932,en.pdf. See Appendix 3 for an overview of the process.

Discussing alcohol, drug or substance use

1. Do not accuse a person of having an alcohol or drug problem or require them to describe their use.
2. If, in the course of the discussion, an individual discloses that they have an alcohol or drug problem, offer them the opportunity to obtain professional help and advice. Inform them that the University has a policy of supporting staff whilst they pursue help for an alcohol or drug problem.
3. If the person discloses use of alcohol or drugs which they do not consider harmful, but which you think may be contributing towards their poor performance, express concern that it may be a factor and offer the opportunity of obtaining help and advice, as above.
4. If the person makes no relevant disclosure but you are still concerned that their behaviour or performance might be impaired by alcohol or drug use, consider referring the person for an OH assessment for advice on whether there is an underlying health problem that may account for the performance difficulties observed.

Referral for Occupational Health assessment

You should refer staff who disclose a problem with alcohol or drug misuse to the OH Service for assessment and advice as you would with any other concern for their health and well-being. It is important to be specific about your concerns in the management referral form, e.g. suspected alcohol consumption.

You can also refer a staff member for OH assessment who does not disclose any alcohol or drug problem but where you still have grounds for concern over the person's behaviour or performance and reasonable grounds for believing alcohol or drug misuse, or some health problem, may be a factor.

The purpose of an Occupational Health assessment is to:

1. Assess whether the individual has an alcohol or drug use problem.
2. Assess and advise on whether the individual would benefit from treatment.
3. Advise on fitness to work and on any adjustments to duties or support measures that could enable the individual to work safely whilst receiving treatment for an alcohol or drug problem.
4. Advise on the need for, and likely duration of sickness absence required for treatment.
5. Facilitate referral for treatment. Individuals who are concerned that they may have an alcohol, drugs or substance use problem may seek advice (self-referral), in confidence, from the OH Service.

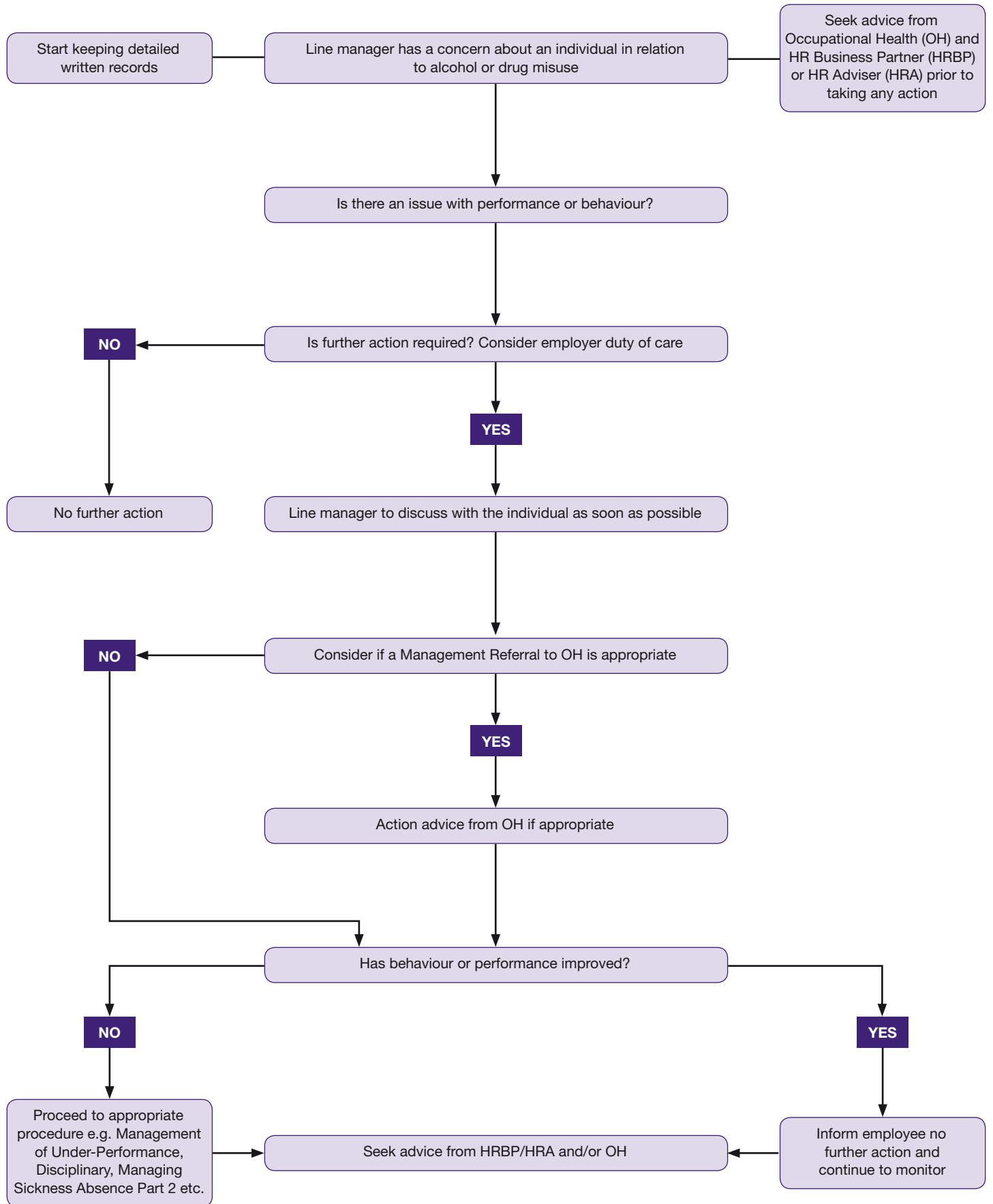
The report back to the manager will not necessarily directly address a person's use of alcohol or drugs: any disclosure on this to an OH Adviser will be covered by rules of medical confidentiality. However if a person's performance is being affected by drug or alcohol use and the person acknowledges this and is willing to accept professional help to overcome any use problems, the report will advise that their performance is being impaired by a valid health problem. The report will also provide an opinion on prospects and timescale for recovery and advice on the need for sick leave or adjustments to enable the person to cope with duties whilst pursuing treatment and afterwards. OH will also provide support and advice to the individual both during and after treatment.

If, at the OH assessment, a person does not disclose an alcohol or drug problem, or does not accept the need for professional help where, in the opinion of the OH Adviser, they need this to overcome harmful use of alcohol or drugs, the report may advise there are no recommendations to be made from a medical perspective which could assist with the management of the employee.

Individuals are encouraged to use OH but may decline to do so. However, individuals who do not attend an OH meeting or do not consent to OH sending a report to the manager should be informed that this might mean a decision about their performance or behaviour and the level of support required at work would have to be taken without the benefit of medical advice.

Appendix 3

Overview flowchart



Appendix 4

Sources of support and information

General

HR General Enquires

E: hrenquiries@port.ac.uk

HR Business Partners

W: www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/humanresources/contactus/stafflist/

UCU

W: ucu.port.ac.uk/ or www.ucu.org.uk/

Unison

W: www.port.ac.uk/unison/ or www.unison.org.uk/

Occupational Health Service

T: 023 9284 3187

W: www.port.ac.uk/occupationalhealthservice/

Employee counselling

T: 0800 1116387

W: www.wellness.rightmanagement.co.uk/login (User name: UPuser)

Adfam

T: 020 7553 7640

W: www.adfam.org.uk

Health and Safety Executive

T: 020 7222 5880

W: www.hse.gov.uk/alcoholdrugs/drugs.htm

Recourse – College and University Support Network

Support Line: 0808 8020304

W: <http://recourse.org.uk/>

Portsmouth User Self Help (PUSH)

PUSH Offices: 157 Elm Grove, Southsea PO5 1LJ

T: 023 9229 7364

M: 07847 176 933

E: info@pushingchange.org

W: www.pushingchange.org

Portsmouth City Council free counselling service for those with drug/alcohol concerns

T: 023 9273 5836

Specific organisations: Alcohol issues

Al-Anon

61 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4YF

T: 020 7403 0888

W: www.al-anonuk.org.uk

Alcohol Concern

Waterbridge House, Loman Street, London E1 0EE

T: 020 7928 7377

W: www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Alcoholics Anonymous (South East Region)

Telephone helpline: 0845 769 7555

Email help: help@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

W: www.aa-gb.org.uk/southeast/southdown/

General information about AA: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

National telephone helpline: 0845 769 7555

Institute of Alcohol Studies

W: www.ias.org.uk

Specific organisations: Drug and substance issues

FRANK

T: 0800 77 66 00, Text 82111

W: www.talktofrank.com

Narcotics Anonymous

T: 0845 373 3366

W: www.ukna.org

Related University policies and procedures

Disciplinary Procedure

www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/humanresources/filetodownload,12777,en.pdf

Management of Under-Performance Procedure

www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/humanresources/filetodownload,12779,en.pdf

Managing Sickness Absence Procedures Parts 1 and 2

www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/humanresources/filetodownload,129449,en.pdf

www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/humanresources/filetodownload,129451,en.pdf

Driving Vehicles on University Business Policy

www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/humanresources/healthandsafety/atoz/driving/#d.en.125421

Risk Assessment

www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/humanresources/healthandsafety/riskassessment/

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