

BROADWAY

TRANSFORMING LIVES

Since 1974



**Addiction in the Workplace
Advice for Employers**

Did you know that 10% of people suffer from addiction?

Perhaps you have an employee that goes from a star performer to an individual prone to absenteeism and inappropriate behavior at work. Or imagine one of your most consistent, productive team members becoming erratic to the point of endangering co-workers around them. Situations like these can signal an employee battling substance abuse (alcohol, drugs and prescription drugs). It has been stated that employees who abuse substances are 25% – 30% less productive and miss work three times more often than their colleagues, so it's in the employees' and the employers' interest to ensure that an addiction problem is recognised and help sought.

This guide is intended to help you and your organisation navigate the complexities of facing addiction and the employees it affects within your organisation.

How do you Define Substance Abuse?

Where 'substance abuse' is used in this document, we are referring to alcoholism and drug addiction, both are defined below.

Alcoholism is a primary, chronic illness with genetic, psychological, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. The disease is progressive and fatal. It is characterised by impaired control over drinking, preoccupation with alcohol, use of alcohol despite adverse consequences and distortion in thinking, most notably denial.

Drug addiction is a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterised by compulsive drug seeking and use despite harmful consequences. It is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain; they change its structure and how it works. These brain changes can be long lasting and can lead to many harmful, often self-destructive, behaviours.

Addiction in the Workplace

More than 70% of substance abusers are employed which means the workplace is becoming a crucial focus of alcohol and drug abuse prevention and treatment activities. Management and supervisory staff are key to helping employees who are battling addiction so adequate training in this area is essential to ensure successful outcomes. Studies have indicated that workplace-based education can be a valuable resource for obtaining help for substance-using workers.

Above all else, it is our suggestion to consult your HR experts, as well as addiction specialists when shaping policies for substance abuse within your organisation (samples available in appendix A).

Warning Signs

How do you tell the difference between someone having an off day and someone who is abusing drugs or alcohol in the workplace or right before going to work?

The most obvious red flag is if a person is having more 'off days' than non 'off days' for no apparent reason. Someone who has suffered a loss in the family, for example, is going to have a period of time where they just aren't fully engaged but that time will pass. However, for someone with a substance abuse issue, a tell-tale pattern of behaviour is a constant. It may not be every single day but it will likely be more than enough to spot a problem. Despite the fact that each drug affects the body differently, an alcohol or drug abuse problem has some pretty consistent signs and symptoms.

Some of the main signs of alcohol and drug abuse include:

- bloodshot eyes, pupils larger or smaller than normal
- deterioration of physical appearance
- falling asleep or passing out at work
- noticeable change in personal grooming habits for the worse
- sudden weight loss or weight gain
- tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination
- unusual smells on breath, body, or clothing
- drop in performance or attendance at work
- unexplained need for money or financial problems, often accompanied by asking co-workers to borrow money or stealing from the company
- appear fearful, anxious or paranoid for no apparent reason
- lack of motivation, person often appears lethargic or 'spaced out'
- sudden angry outbursts, mood swings or irritability
- unexplained change in personality or attitude, particularly a negative change
- unusual hyperactivity, agitation, or giddiness for short periods of time
- getting into trouble at work or outside of work frequently (e.g. fights, accidents, illegal activities like driving under the influence)
- secretive or suspicious behaviour

Noticeable warning signs of some of the commonly abused drugs include:

Depressants: (including Alcohol, Xanax, Valium, GHB): Contracted pupils; drunk-like state; difficulty concentrating; clumsiness; poor judgment; slurred speech; sleepiness.

Hallucinogens: (LSD, PCP): Dilated pupils; bizarre and irrational behaviour including paranoia, aggression, hallucinations; mood swings; detachment from people; absorption with self or other objects, slurred speech; confusion.

- Heroin:** Contracted pupils; no response of pupils to light; needle marks; sleeping at unusual times; sweating; vomiting; coughing, sniffing; twitching; loss of appetite.
- Inhalants:** (glues, aerosols, vapors): Watery eyes; impaired vision, secretions from the nose or rashes around the nose and mouth; headaches and nausea; appearance of intoxication; drowsiness; poor muscle control; changes in appetite; anxiety; irritability.
- Marijuana:** Glassy, red eyes; loud talking, inappropriate laughter followed by sleepiness; loss of interest, motivation; weight gain or loss; excessive snacking or eating at inappropriate times.
- Stimulants:** (including amphetamines, cocaine, crystal meth): Dilated pupils; hyperactivity; euphoria; irritability; anxiety; excessive talking followed by depression or excessive sleeping at odd times; may go long periods of time without eating; weight loss; dry mouth and nose.

Legal Considerations

No organisation is required to tolerate illegal drug use or allow employees to be under the influence of alcohol in the workplace. However, recovering addicts or alcoholics cannot face disciplinary action based solely on their past history with addiction. Their behaviour, legally, can never be treated more harshly than those non-addicts engaged in the same behaviour — even if it involves substances that have been identified as problems.

Some Simple Guidelines for Employers

Check organisation policy

Ensure expectations and rules are clear in your employee handbook. Also, be prepared to offer and discuss details of available help. You may even enlist the help of a counsellor in determining next steps.

Always start with a conversation

The goal of this step is confirming that substance abuse is the problem. Express empathy. Show your concern within the safety of a confidential meeting and always respect the employees' right to medical and personal privacy. Ensure that you remain factual in your comments e.g. it is better to say “there is a smell of alcohol” rather than “you have been drinking”.

Document any relevant behaviour

Interactions with colleagues, punctuality, attendance, safety, job performance and compliance with organisational rules are all appropriate to note. Also log how the changes deviate from the employees' normal or expected behaviours.

A human resources specialists within your organisation may have had the opportunity to set out a policy and appropriate steps before an employee faces an addiction crisis. If that hasn't happened already, we suggest taking steps today to design a legal, thoughtful and conscientious policy or addition to employee codes of conduct.

Plot out the desired course of action

Whether your employee denies or accepts help, you will need to clearly communicate the next steps. Details worth working out beforehand could include leave status, expectations for a return to work and the importance of follow-up care — including rehab, 12-step or group meetings as well as sessions with counsellors.

Be prepared for resistance

While it's not the outcome your organisation is hoping for, you need to ready your response for an employee who is not willing to confront their addiction. Employee censure or probation, drug testing, suspension and possibly even termination are appropriate responses to this scenario. If you feel a more formal intervention would be beneficial to the employee and the company may need to arrange a formal intervention such as the intervention described on the next page.

Be prepared to help your employees in need while protecting your organisation.

Interventions

In some ways, staging an intervention is like arranging a business meeting. You need to decide who's going to attend, where the meeting will be held and what the goals of the intervention will be. If an intervention isn't properly planned, it could make the employee even more defensive and self-protective. As you plan your intervention strategy, think about:

- 1. Who should be present.** In addition to yourself, you'll want to have one or two of the addict's close friends or family members and someone who's knowledgeable about addiction treatment there. Ideally, the people who participate in the intervention should have direct experience with the addict's behaviour, but should be able to control their feelings during the meeting so that the intervention doesn't devolve into an argument.
- 2. Where and when the intervention will be.** By necessity, an intervention should have an element of surprise. If you tell an addict in advance that you and a few people want to talk to them about their substance abuse problem, it's unlikely that they'll be willing to meet you. Arrange a time and place where you can talk with them in a private, confidential setting.
- 3. How you'll describe the effects of their addiction.** As you plan the intervention, write down the specific circumstances that have led you to this point. Make a note of

destructive behaviours or harmful incidents that justify the intervention. At the same time, try to frame your experiences in a non-judgmental way. For the best results, you'll want to be able to present your case in a convincing yet compassionate manner. Rehearse your intervention at least once before the actual meeting.

- 4. What the plan of treatment should be.** The purpose of an intervention isn't to bombard your employee with evidence of destructive behaviour; it's to convince him or her to get help. Before your meeting, you should have a clear idea of what the treatment plan should include. A counsellor or doctor can help you decide whether outpatient therapy, a 12-step programme or inpatient rehab would be the most effective option.

Would you like to know more?

Please email hello@broadwaylodge.org.uk or telephone [01934 812319](tel:01934 812319) if you would like to discuss training for your team.

Perhaps you have spotted a problem?

If you would like to talk to someone in complete confidence please contact us and we will be able to give you impartial and confidential support.

Speak To Us

If you'd like more information about Broadway Lodge or would like to work with us, please make the first step in helping your patients achieve a life in recovery by getting in touch with us.

Telephone: 01934 812319 (general enquiries)
01934 815515 (referrals)

Email: hello@broadwaylodge.org.uk

Address: Broadway Lodge, 37 Totterdown Lane, Weston-super-Mare, BS24 9NN

Website: www.broadwaylodge.org.uk

Appendix A – Sample Policies

The following are for example purposes only and you should always discuss these matters with an HR expert.

EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF WITH AN ADDICTIVE ILLNESS POLICY

Date:

Review Date:

Author:

Approved By: Governance Committee

Signed By: _____

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy applies to all xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

2. Statement

- 2.1 In accordance with its Equal Opportunities Policy Company ABC will employ staff who have an addictive illness if they have been in recovery for a continuous period of 3 years and demonstrate themselves to be the best candidate for the advertised post.
- 2.2 Employment is dependent upon continued maintenance of recovery.
- 2.3 Company ABC requests that staff declare an addictive illness upon offer of appointment.

3. Procedure

- 3.1 Addiction of any kind is recognised as a primary illness and, therefore, a health problem. Company ABC is committed to supporting its staff and, to this end, is committed to ensuring that any member of staff with an active addiction is identified, counselled, supported and guided to receive appropriate help.
- 3.2 Should a staff member require treatment during their employment with mood altering chemicals for a medical condition, it must be discussed with their Line Manager and the Registered Manager for a decision regarding the suitability of continuing duties for the period of their treatment.
- 3.3 In support of the ethos of Company ABC and the services provided, it is imperative that staff members understand that where there is evidence of active addiction Company ABC reserve the right to drug and alcohol screen the employee.
- 3.4 Disciplinary measures may need to be effected and ultimately employment terminated.
- 3.5 The management of Company ABC would discuss all matters relating to this policy and the specific implications of it on an individual basis with those concerned.

MISUSE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL AT WORK POLICY

Date:

Review Date:

Author:

Approved By:

Signed By: _____

Introduction

Company ABC acknowledges that it has a duty as an employer to promote the health, safety and welfare of employees and to ensure quality of service to patients and clients.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all staff employed are aware of their responsibilities, in relation to the misuse of controlled drugs, illegal drugs and / or alcohol in the workplace, and the measures that will be taken by Company ABC if a member of staff is found to be misusing controlled or illegal drugs and / or alcohol in the workplace.

1. Policy Objectives

- 1.1 To encourage employees with alcohol or drug related problems to seek help and accept counselling or treatment. This applies to employees confirmed or suspected of being problem drinkers or drug users.
- 1.2 This policy does not apply to an employee who because of excessive alcoholic indulgence or drug misuse behaves in a manner contrary to the expected standard of safety and conduct required by Company ABC. Such instances will be dealt with in accordance with normal Disciplinary procedures.

2. What is the Definition of Substances Misuse

The use of controlled drugs, illegal drugs and / or alcohol at levels which result in altered perceptions of behaviours to the detriment of performance at work.

2.1 Drugs

Drug misuse refers to the use of controlled drugs and the misuse whether deliberate or unintentional of illegal drugs and substances such as solvents. Drug misuse harms the misuser both physically and / or mentally.

2.2 Alcohol

Alcohol for many people is an accepted part of social life and most of the time drinking alcohol does not cause any problems. However, drinking too much or at the wrong time can be harmful and have serious consequences.

3. Who does this Policy apply to?

This policy applies to all staff employed by Company ABC.

4. Alcohol at Work

Company ABC has a responsibility to ensure that staff are aware of the rules pertaining to the consumption of alcohol whilst at work or before work. All staff should therefore ensure that when at work they are fit to undertake their full range of duties and responsibilities.

- 4.1 Being under the influence of alcohol or smelling of alcohol whilst on duty is not acceptable and may cause distress to patients / colleagues.
- 4.2 Employees must not consume alcohol during contracted working hours.
- 4.3 Alcohol should not be consumed before coming to work or during work time breaks (e.g., before late / night shifts, at lunch time).
- 4.4 Any employee driving on business must ensure that they are alcohol free.
- 4.5 Alcohol may be served at official staff functions such as retirement parties, as long as the function is outside normal working hours and off the premises. You must not consume alcohol if returning to work.
- 4.6 Employees should be aware that heavy drinking the previous evening may impair their capacity to work the following morning.
- 4.7 The consumption, use or distribution of alcohol or drugs by members of staff on Company ABC's property is prohibited.

5. Drugs at Work

Are prohibited.

6. Prescribed Medication from a Registered Physician

Employees who are on medication prescribed by a registered physician must ensure that the medication is kept securely. Cross reference with sections in Contract of Employment.

7. What are your responsibilities?

- 7.1 You must not work whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This is not acceptable and could lead to harm of yourself, your colleagues, patients or the public.
- 7.2 If you have a problem with alcohol or drugs, you have a responsibility to raise this with your manager / another senior manager / a colleague or trade union representative.
- 7.3 You have a duty to inform your manager if you have concerns about a colleague and think the problem may be alcohol or drug related. This will be treated in the strictest of confidence where possible.
- 7.4 If you suspect your manager is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you should report this to another senior manager. This will be treated in the strictest of confidence where possible (refer to Whistle Blowing Policy).

8. What are my Manager's Responsibilities

- 8.1 Your manager is responsible for implementing this policy and ensure that you and your colleagues are made aware that it is unacceptable to be impaired by alcohol and / or other substances during the conduct of your duties and of the ways in which breaches will be handled.
- 8.2 If your manager suspects that you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst on duty they may relieve you from duties and send you home pending further investigation and advice.
- 8.3 You will be invited into a meeting with management to discuss the alleged incident. You may be temporarily removed from your duties (suspension of a member of staff from duty will be in line with the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure). The problem may be dealt with as either a health or conduct issue, depending on individual circumstances.

9. Help for Employees with Alcohol Related Problems

- 9.1 Where problems concerning alcohol or drug misuse do not come under the disciplinary rules then the issue is normally one of the individual's health and

/ or capacity to perform their duties. These matters will be subject to the Sickness Absence Policy and / or Capability Procedures.

- 9.2 Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent that disclosure is considered necessary in the interests of the Health or Safety of the individuals, colleagues, clients / patient or the general public. In such cases where it becomes necessary to breach confidentiality the employee will be informed of the pending disclosure and the reasons why.
- 9.3 In some cases an alcohol / drug problem will be identified by a manager during discussions with the employee relating to sickness absence, poor work performance or other problems. Where consideration of an employees work performance etc reveals an alcohol / drug problem, the manager should initially seek to offer the employee assistance and time to overcome the problem and any more formal management action will be suspended.
- 9.4 If the employee accepts assistance from Company ABC then:-
- Reasonable time off will normally be given to attend counselling or treatment during (rostered) working hours.
 - The employee will be entitled to sick leave within the terms of the appropriate sick pay scheme while treatment is in progress.
 - Where an employee has satisfactorily completed treatment, every effort will be made to return him or her to the same job, unless, if after discussion with the employee and having taken appropriate advice the manager considers that he / she can no longer do the job or that returning to it would be inconsistent with long term resolution of the employees alcohol / drug problem.

In the case of the employee being unable to resume normal duties, every consideration will be given to alternative employment within the organisation.

- If the employee is accepted for treatment but does not complete the programme, he / she loses the protection provided by this policy. Consideration of the original poor performance or misconduct will be reopened and dealt with in the appropriate way.

10. In what circumstances will it be dealt with as a conduct issue

Company ABC will do its utmost to help you if you have an alcohol or drug related problem and invoking the Disciplinary Policy would only be appropriate in certain circumstances. These include:

- If you endanger life

- If you adversely affect the well being of others
- If you damage property
- If you cause distress / disquiet to patients / staff / visitors
- If you interfere with the working of Company ABC
- If you refuse to co-operate with Company ABC in relation to this
- If you commit an illegal act

11. Disciplinary Action will be taken

- 11.1 If you refuse to admit you have a health issue and / or refuse to seek help and your performance / conduct at work is deemed unacceptable by Company ABC.
- 11.2 If you are found to be dealing or in possession of alcohol and / or drugs on the premises.
- 11.3 In you are found to be involved in action, which breaches drug related legislation. In this instance the Police will also be notified.
- 11.4 If you report to work clearly under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 11.5 If gross misconduct is committed e.g. theft of property.

12. Will I be asked to undertake drug/alcohol screening?

Screening for alcohol and drugs does not and will not form part of the recruitment process at Company ABC. However, testing with your informed consent may be part of a clinical procedure used by Company ABC during investigations and / or rehabilitation. If suspected an employee will be tested for drugs and alcohol.

13. Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed in 1 year or earlier on the request of either the Trade Union or Management side of the recognised Governance Forum.