

Isle of Wight Council

ALCOHOL / SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

Policy Information	
Policy Title	Alcohol/Substance Misuse Policy Version 1.1
Policy Purpose	This policy provides a framework to ensure consistency in management of staff experiencing alcohol and/or substance misuse issues at work while at the same time ensuring all reasonable steps are taken to support staff to overcome the health effects.
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Policy Date	October 2022
Supersedes	• Alcohol/Substance Misuse Policy • Version 1
Consultation	Consulted and agreed with all recognised Trade Unions and Directors.
Scope	This policy applies in its entirety to all Council employees, including schools. Where appropriate, this policy will be updated to account for any changes in legislation without further consultation The Council reserves the right to amend or replace this policy at any time.

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1 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 The Isle of Wight Council ('the Council') recognises both its duty to ensure a safe working environment as specified in the [Health and Safety at Work Etc Act 1974](#) and its obligation in supporting staff experiencing alcohol and/or substance misuse difficulties.
- 1.2 This policy provides a framework to ensure consistency in management of staff experiencing alcohol and/or substance misuse issues at work while at the same time ensuring all reasonable steps are taken to support staff to overcome the health effects.
- 1.3 If you are suffering an alcohol and/or substance misuse problem this will be treated with the strictest of confidence and you will be offered support and assistance to treat the condition. As an employee of the Council you have an obligation to take reasonable care of yourself and others who could be affected by such actions at work. If you are involved in misconduct through alcohol and/or substance misuse this will be dealt with under the relevant Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.4 Alcohol and/or substance misuse, including drugs which are legitimately prescribed, can significantly affect people at work. This can result in time off from work, difficulties with performance while at work as well as changes in behaviour in relation to colleagues and the general public. You should recognise that when such actions affect your health, performance, safety, conduct, relationships at work or the reputation of the Council then this becomes a legitimate concern for the Council.

There is a responsibility on all of us to present ourselves and the Council in a way that inspires confidence and to observe their duty of mutual trust and confidence.

- 1.5 For the purposes of this policy the term "substance" includes;

Substances covered by the [Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#) (referred to as "controlled drugs") prescribed and over-the-counter drugs, Solvents, legal highs and any other substances which interferes with a person's health, social functioning, work capability, performance or conduct whilst at work.

- 1.6 The aim of this policy is to promote the health and welfare of all Council employees and to protect the public, visitors and other employees or partners of the Council as well as to set out the guidelines for dealing with associated effective and consistent advice and support in relation to the use of alcohol, drugs and substances by Council employees whilst on Council property or whilst engaged on Council business on non-Council premises.
- 1.7 For the purposes of this policy, a person is considered as having an alcohol, drug or substance misuse dependency if their drinking or use of drugs and/or substances interferes with their health, social functioning (ie the ability of an individual to interact in the normal or usual way in society), work capability, performance or conduct whilst at work. The Council prohibits the drinking of alcohol by staff including those who are under contract for services in the workplace or whilst on Council business.

2 EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

It is your responsibility to be familiar with this policy and associated procedures.

- 2.1 If you suspect or know of an employee who has an alcohol and/or substance misuse related problem you are encouraged to advise them to seek assistance voluntarily either via their line manager, HR, their GP or trade union/professional representative. Refer to Appendix 3.
- 2.2 If you have a concern regarding your colleagues, you are encouraged to seek guidance from your line manager who will offer a positive and supportive approach.
- 2.3 If you are prescribed medication you think may have an adverse effect on your ability to carry out your duties you are encouraged to notify your line manager.
- 2.4 Following consultation with HR it may be appropriate for your manager to refer you to the Occupational Health Service.
- 2.5 If you disclose you have an alcohol/substance misuse related problem, you should understand that disclosure does not excuse you from further misuse and that this misuse may then lead to disciplinary action being taken.

3 MANAGER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Human Resource team will work with the manager to identify whether a referral to Occupational Health would be beneficial.

- 3.1 Managers should take a flexible approach in allowing you time off work to attend any support /treatment programmes. It would normally be expected that you attend these groups in your own time. However, those wishing to attend recognised support treatment programmes/group activities which fall during working time will need to speak to their line manager and depending on the time/length of the session and the needs of the service, managers may be able to agree a flexible working programme for you to attend.
- 3.2 Managers, in conjunction with the Occupational Health department, and alternative support programmes (see [Appendix 2](#)), will take appropriate measures with the clear focus on supporting your return to work programme within a reasonable period of time. It should be recognised that support by a manager can only be sustained if the employee is actively participating in a recognised cessation programme and is not continuing to consume the relevant drugs/alcohol.

4 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

- 4.1 Your manager may refer you to [occupational health](#), which is a medical speciality and support mechanism to aid employees within the workplace. Occupational health will consider the severity of the illness and potential impact upon the employee's ability to undertake their job role. Following an appointment OH will write a report that can include expected time off work, if they consider you unfit for work and suggested recommendations for you and your manager.
- 4.2 Occupational health can also recommend a phased return or any work that you could engage in whilst undergoing treatment.
- 4.3 If you reject any treatment or support that is offered, or at a subsequent date stop the treatment prior to its conclusion, the matter may be referred to your line manager to consider all the information and decide whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

5 PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH STAFF WITH A SUSPECTED ALCOHOL / SUBSTANCE MISUSE PROBLEM

The potential dangers to the health and safety of drug or alcohol misusers and their colleagues are recognised if the problem is not acknowledged and goes untreated. When dealing with problems caused by suspected alcohol or drug misuse, a full investigation of all the circumstances must be undertaken before deciding the appropriate action.

5.1 If a manager suspects or is aware that you have an alcohol and/or substance related problem they should take the following steps:

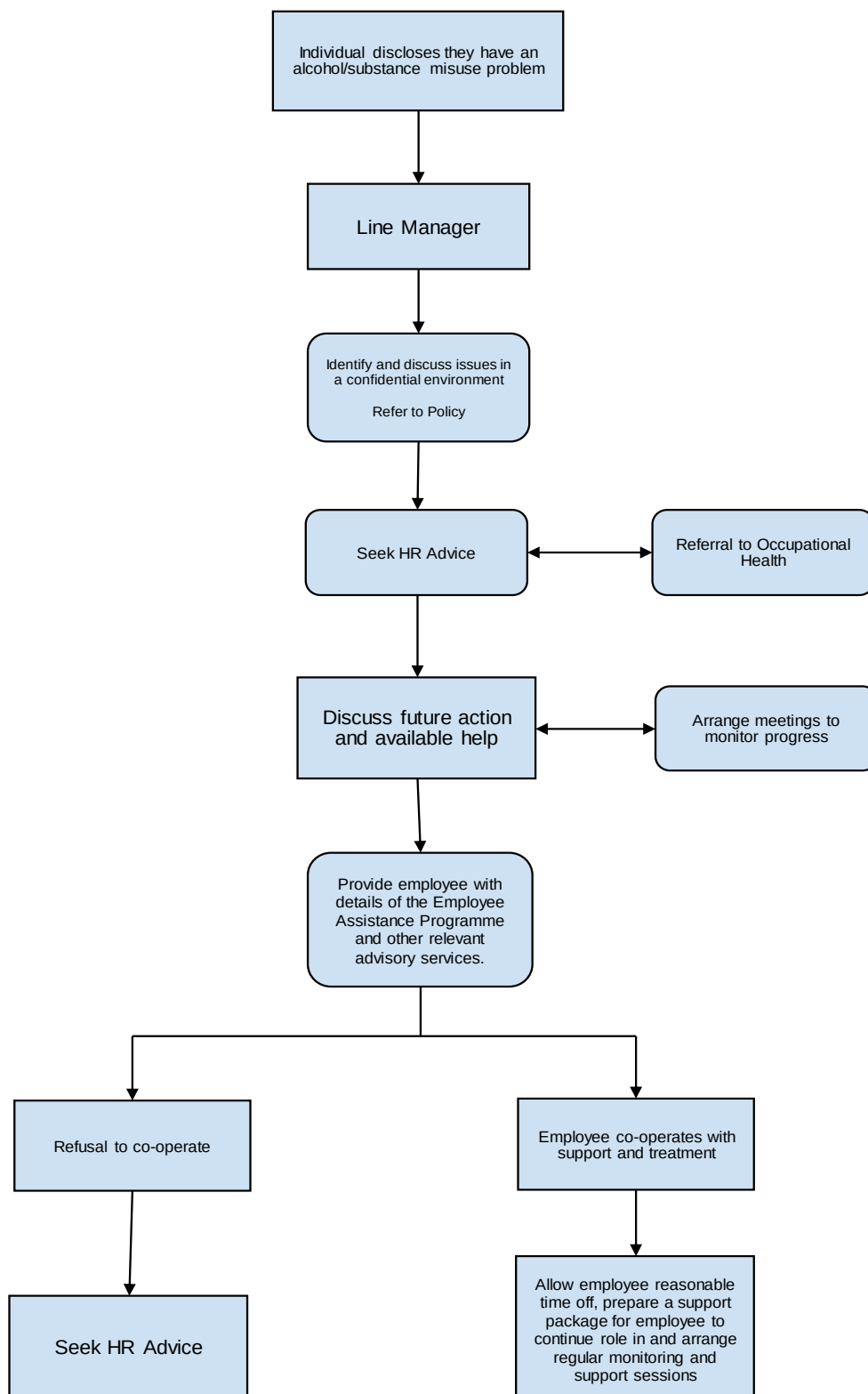
- Meet with you to discuss any concerns which may include instances of poor performance that have been identified and explore the reasons.
- Discuss this policy and the help available with a view to agreeing future action.
- Seek the advice of their Human Resource Advisor. In exceptional circumstances it may not be possible for you to continue in your role and referral to Occupational Health is necessary. Measures taken may include but are not limited to removing some responsibilities from you, making temporary adjustments to the role, temporary redeployment or requiring you to take sick leave.
- Arrange regular meetings to monitor performance and offer support on progress and discuss any future problems if they arise.
- Refer to the Occupational Health Service, being flexible with time off for appointments and further referrals for support/treatment as long as you co-operate fully (see [Appendix 1](#)).

5.2 When a line manager suspects you are under the influence of alcohol and/or substances at work they should contact their Human Resource Advisor and consider whether any immediate action needs to be taken. Depending on the circumstances this may include directing the manager to the disciplinary policy which could result in suspension.

Following referral to the Occupational Health Service, refusal by you to comply with any measures or treatment that are put in place to assist you may be treated as a disciplinary offence.

6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1



6.2 Appendix 2

6.3 HELPLINES: Local and National help lines.

Alcoholics Anonymous:	free helpline – 0800 917 7650 help@aamail.org Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain (alcoholics anonymous.org.uk)
Inclusion (NHS):	call on – 01983 526654 inclusion@mpft.nhs.uk Inclusion Isle of Wight - Inclusion IOW
Talk to FRANK:	call on – 0300 123 6600 TEXT - 82111 Honest information about drugs FRANK (talktofrank.com)
Samaritans:	call on – 0330 094 5717 or 116 123 (free from any phone) www.samaritans.org
NHS – getting help:	Drug addiction: getting help - NHS (www.nhs.uk) Alcohol misuse - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Employees can also contact the Council's free and confidential [Employee Assistance Programme](#) and visit our [Wellbeing pages](#) for links on internal and external support.

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a confidential employee benefit designed to help you deal with any personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home or work life, health and general wellbeing.

Our EAP provider is [Health Assured](#). They are an external company who are completely independent to the council therefore provide a totally impartial service.

Health Assured (EAP) provides all employees with complimentary access to an enhanced Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). Focused one to one counselling is also available with the agreement of your manager – (currently provided as telephone counselling).

EAP can be accessed in the following ways:

EAP TELEPHONE HELPLINE 0800 030 5182 - confidential support (24-hours a day and 365 days of the year)

EAP MY HEALTHY ADVANTAGE APP - download the *My Healthy Advantage App* which provides an enhanced set of wellbeing tools and engagement features. Available to download from the Apple or Android app stores using the code: **MHA102177**

EAP WEBSITE - online access to practical self-help information and wellbeing tools - <https://www.healthassured.org/your-eap/>

Log in details for the website are: Username: **Isle** Password: **Wight**