

Alcohol and Drugs Policy

Reviewed

June 2006

Policy Approval

Council x date

Policy Statement

Alcohol and drugs misuse or abuse can be a serious problem within the workplace. If you drink excessively or take unlawful drugs, you are more likely to work inefficiently, be absent from work, have work accidents and endanger your colleagues.

East Devon District Council has a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees. However, the Council recognises that, for a number of reasons, employees could develop alcohol or drug related problems. In relation to drugs, these rules apply to those that are unlawful under the criminal law and not to prescribed medication. These rules aim to promote a responsible attitude to drink and drugs and to offer assistance to employees who may need it.

Specific Policy Areas

Advice and counselling

It is the Council's intention to deal constructively and sympathetically with alcohol or drug related problems. When it is known that someone has a drug or alcohol problem, Human Resources will be able to provide advice and guidance on how to seek suitable treatment.

The primary objective of any discussions will be to assist you with the problem in as compassionate and constructive way as possible. Any discussions of the nature of an alcohol or drug problem and the record of any treatment will be strictly confidential unless it is otherwise agreed by you. It is likely that Human Resources will request that you sign a consent form in order that Occupational Health can assist in providing expert medical opinion.

If you have a drug or alcohol problem, you should seek help through your GP. Alternatively, East Devon District Council offers counselling services which are available on 01392 383277. Here are some other avenues for support:

- www.edpservices.org.uk (01392 666710)
- www.addaction.org.uk (01392 255 151)
- www.alcoholconcern.org.uk (020 7928 7377)
- www.talktofrank.com (0800 776600)

If you have a problem of this nature which affects your conduct or performance at work and you refuse the opportunity to receive help, the matter will be referred for action under the disciplinary procedure. Likewise, if after accepting counselling and assistance, and following review and evaluation, your conduct or work performance reverts to the problem level, the matter may also be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

No alcohol must be brought onto or consumed on East Devon District Council's premises unless authorised by senior manager. You must never drink alcohol if you are required to drive private or Council vehicles on Council business. Drugs must not be brought onto or consumed on the Council's premises at any time.

Alcohol and drug related misconduct

Whilst this policy is aimed at assisting you with alcohol or drug problems, action will nevertheless be taken under the Council's disciplinary procedure if misconduct takes place at work as a result of drinking or taking drugs or if you are found to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst at work. Even a small amount of alcohol can affect work performance and if you are found to be under the influence of alcohol whilst at work, there could be serious health and safety consequences. The same applies to being under the influence of drugs. Incapacity or misconduct caused by the effects of alcohol or drugs is a potential gross misconduct offence under the Council's disciplinary procedure and you are therefore likely to be summarily dismissed. This also applies to anyone believed to be buying or selling drugs or in possession of or taking drugs on the Council's premises.

The Council reserves the right in any of the circumstances to arrange for you to be escorted from the Council's premises immediately and sent home.

Alcohol and drug testing

On the grounds of health and safety and where necessary to achieve a legitimate business aim, the Council reserves the right to carry out random alcohol and drug screening tests. If you receive a positive result, this will be viewed as a potential gross misconduct offence and will render you liable to summary dismissal in accordance with the DISCIPLINARY POLICY. Unreasonable refusal to submit to an alcohol or drug screening test will also be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

Policy Consultation

This policy has been agreed by the Strategic Management Team, Executive Board and Staff Joint Forum.

Policy Review

The Head of Organisational Development will review this policy in the light of any legislation and in May 2008 to consider any changes required.

Related Policies and Strategies

- Absence Management Policy
- Disciplinary Policy