

Misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances policy and guidance

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the updated version of the misuse of alcohol, drug and other substances policy along with accompanying guidance for managers.

Background

2. The existing policy has been updated to provide greater clarity regarding the role and functions of managers in the event of employees attending for work under the influence of any of these substances.
3. It also updates details of the support available for employees who declare a dependency to alcohol and drugs and sets out measures in place to support their rehabilitation.
4. After detailed consideration it was decided not to pursue random drug-testing of staff or post-incident testing as part of the policy. However the police would apply such testing of employees if any relevant incident was under its investigation.

Main Considerations for the council

5. The broad message of the policy is that employees can expect a supportive response to any proactive self-disclosure of dependency but that equally the council will consider applying appropriate disciplinary processes to anyone who endangers themselves or others through their misuse of named substances.
6. The policy and guidance includes:
 - Definitions of misuse and descriptions of what substances are included within its remit including prescribed medications;
 - Support for managers to be able to identify issues and take action at an early stage;
 - The roles and responsibilities of managers and employees;
 - Encouragement for individual employees to disclose any concerns about themselves or others regarding misuse of substances;
 - Details of the supportive measures that can be offered to employees;
 - Details of and when disciplinary action may be considered.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

7. None.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

8. The policy provides advice and guidance to all employees and aims to support those who have alcohol or substance misuse problems and associated health issues.

Risk Assessment

9. The council has a statutory duty under health and safety legislation to provide a safe working environment for its employees and those affected by its undertakings. This policy is an important contribution to this. Failure to have an effective policy on this topic not only potentially endangers safety but also gives rise to the risk of reputational harm and litigation in the event of any incident in which the misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances is contributory.

Financial Implications

10. There would be a cost to the council in providing support to staff as set out in this policy. This may include time off to attend treatment and/or the adjustment to work duties. These are however likely to be modest and insignificant against the greater costs involved in the aftermath of a serious incident.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that Staffing Policy Committee approves the revised policy and guidance for managers.

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