



People Matter

Frequently Asked Questions – Drug, Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy

The Drug, Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy is a new policy however, the principles of this policy were previously contained in the Wellbeing at Work Policy. These have now been established in this stand-alone policy.

The Drug, Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy refers to a **Charter of Commitment** which will also come into effect in January 2020. The Charter of Commitment outlines the role and responsibilities for all those involved in the process of the policy including employee of the Council

Therefore, this set of FAQ's has been designed to answer some of the questions you may have in relation to this policy.

1. What has changed?

- This replaces the testing guidance within the Wellbeing at Work Policy and Toolkit and has been created as a stand-alone policy that aims to provide a framework to enable any instances to be handled fairly, consistently and confidentially.
- The policy outlines the Council's approach in that it will operate a zero tolerance policy for the consumption and/or misuse of drugs, alcohol or substances in the workplace.
- There is clarity of understanding in the Council's approach to prevent employees from being subject to disciplinary procedures and outlines support and assistance to employees who disclose a dependency or addiction.

1. Why does the Council have a Drug, Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy?

Your safety and the safety of your colleagues and the wider community is the Council's first priority. The Council is committed to providing a safe working environment and will therefore endeavour to prevent and eliminate, as far as is reasonably possible, any such behaviour which will increase the potential for ill health, accidents, absence, poor performance or which will otherwise adversely affect the Council, its employees and/or its customers/clients.

The Council also has legal obligation to be compliant with appropriate legislation including Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and Road Traffic Act 1988.

2. What is zero tolerance?

The Council is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all employees and has adopted a **zero tolerance** approach for the consumption and/or misuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances in the workplace. You must therefore attend work **free from** the effects of drugs, alcohol and substances e.g. this requires that you are not hung-over, nor should your breath smell of alcohol, nor should you have taken drugs or substances. See response to Question 3 where prescribed medication is taken.

Small amounts of intoxicating/illegal substances can impair performance and may jeopardize your safety and the safety of others. You need to be aware that these substances can remain in your system for some time. How long the effects last and how long the drug stays in your system depends on a number of factors and you may test positive for illegal drugs days, weeks or even months after last use.

3. Do I need to advise my Line Manager if my GP has prescribed medication?

You should seek advice from your GP or pharmacist as to whether the medication might affect your ability to fully undertake your duties. If this is the case, you should talk to your Line Manager immediately to advise that the medication may cause side effects and impair your ability to undertake your duties safely and effectively.

Your Manager will ensure that the necessary support is put in place for you to continue operating safely in your role and where appropriate implement temporary restrictions on certain duties whilst you are taking the medication. Where you are required to take the medication long term you may be asked to attend Occupational Health for further information in relation to your role.

4. I have an alcohol and/or addiction problem that I have not disclosed and need support. What should I do?

You are encouraged to make your Manager aware of the issue and seek help in advance of any concerns and/or allegations being raised. If you do not feel comfortable talking to your Manager please contact one of the HR Case Adviser's in the contact list below. They will be able to direct you to the appropriate help and support. Your manager may have to be informed for considerations in relation to the role you carry out. **In these circumstances, we will aim to consider the support required to assist you to manage your addiction and will not move to the disciplinary policy at the support stage.**

Depending on the nature of your job, temporary redeployment to a different work location or redeployment to alternative duties may be appropriate to ensure the safety of all our employees and the wider community.

The Council may still carry out a "for cause" test however you will be advised of the requirement to undertake a test.

5. Why have I been asked to consent to a "for cause" alcohol and/or drugs test?

You may be asked to consent to a "for cause" testing when your manager has reasonable cause to suspect that you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs at work. Reasonable cause may include:

- Physical signs such as smelling of alcohol or of other drugs
- A whistleblowing disclosure alleging that you are under the influence of drugs and or alcohol

Written consent will be requested on each occasion before you are asked to participate in testing and you will be provided with the right to representation.

6. What if I refuse the test?

If you refuse to give consent to testing you will be treated in the same way as failing an alcohol/drug test. You will be precautionary suspended from work on full pay pending a fact finding investigation which may then lead to disciplinary action being taken up to and including dismissal.

7. Who carries out the alcohol and or drugs test?

The initial assessment will be carried out by your Manager and a specialist independent provider will carry out the actual test. The Technician will explain the process to you before commencing the test. Your consent will be requested at relevant stages during the testing.

8. Where can I seek additional information and support from?

If you have any further queries you can speak to your line manager in the first instance. You can also address any queries to the following contacts in the Workforce Strategy Team:

HR Case Advisers			
Name	Job Title	Email	Ext No
Anne Marie Cunningham	Team leader HR Operations	annemarie_cunningham@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	5535
Nikki Edgar	HR Case Management Adviser	nikki.edgar@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	5647
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HR Business Partners			
Name	Job Title	Email	Ext No
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Cheryl Silvester	HR Business Partner	cheryl.silvester@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	3216

Your Trade Union representatives are also available for support.