

**Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust
Alcohol and Drug Policy**

**Agreed by Trust JCNP: January 2008
Adopted by CPCT Board: March 2008
Revised:
Reviewed: March 2011**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cambridgeshire PCT is committed to ensuring a safe, healthy and productive working environment and minimising problems arising from the misuse of drugs and alcohol, both at work and at home.
- 1.2 Most adults in Britain today drink alcohol. About 60% of women and 80% of men drink regularly. For most people the moderate use of alcohol will have no noticeable effect, but a significant minority, perhaps 10%, will cause themselves some acute or chronic alcohol-related harm and a small minority, at least 5% of men and 2% of women, will drink at levels which will affect their lives and their performance at work. Almost 17 million working days are lost each year due to alcohol misuse alone.
- 1.3 It is estimated that 25% of those seeking help for drug problems are in employment. A member of staff under the influence of drugs or alcohol will only achieve 67% of their work potential.
- 1.4 Consumption of alcohol, even in small quantities, may effect an employees judgement and efficiency at work.
- 1.5 It is now acceptable social behaviour to avoid drinking and driving. It is time that the avoidance of drinking and working became similarly acceptable.
- 1.6 Alcohol use ranks secondly only to cigarette smoking as a preventable cause of early death in this country. At least 25,000 people will die prematurely in England and Wales this year as a result of their alcohol use.
- 1.7 As a nation we are now beginning to understand that everyone who drinks excessively is at risk of suffering from some kind of alcohol-related harm - not just the identifiable heavy or addictive drinker.
- 1.8 The Trust is not against normal social drinking outside working hours, and recognises that the majority of employees alcohol consumption is enjoyable and problem free. However, it is concerned that the good health of all staff is conserved; that working efficiency and safety is maintained and that the Trust's image in public eyes is not damaged by employee abuse of alcohol or drugs. Social or problem drinking may have an adverse effect on the PCT's ability to provide its services to the public.
- 1.9.1 The onus is on employees to think about the effects of alcohol, in particular the delayed reaction to its effects and the amount of time it takes the body to eliminate it from the blood.

Over-consumption of alcohol may lead to serious effects on:

- long-term health and sickness absence
- work/employment prospects
- the economic and social well-being of the individual and their family

This policy must be read in conjunction with the capability procedure.

2. Scope and Definitions

2.1 This policy applies to all staff employed within Cambridgeshire PCT, contractors visiting the organisation and bank staff.

2.2 Drug and Alcohol problems in the context of this policy are defined as:

Behaviours resulting from the use of illegal drugs and the misuse of alcohol, other drugs and substances, such as solvents, which harm or have the potential to harm the individual, physically or mentally, and, through the individual's actions, other people and the environment.

2.3 Misuse refers to use that is problematic or harmful, either for the individual or others around them.

Misuse covers three main areas:

Inappropriate Use – where use may aggravate an existing condition or situation, or is done in potentially dangerous or inappropriate circumstances

Habitual Use – where the individual becomes dependent on the effects of the substance to the extent that the desire for these effects becomes a dominant concern in their lives, to the detriment of other aspects of their lives

Excessive Use – which can lead to physical and mental illness or antisocial behaviour

2.4 The possession of illegal drugs with the intention to supply is illegal.

2.5 Driving whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol is illegal.

3. The PCT's Approach

3.1 The use and misuse of alcohol or drugs can have a detrimental effect on work performance, reducing the service provided to patients and the individual's capacity to work safely. For these reasons the consumption or misuse of drugs or alcohol in the working environment, or while on call, is prohibited. Staff are encouraged to consider non-alcoholic alternatives if they are taking beverages during breaks or shortly before coming to work.

3.2 Alcohol or drug problems may arise because of a combination of social, work, or health factors. Those problems which affect work performance, will be addressed by the organisation with employees in a sympathetic manner and, as far as possible, as an issue of health rather than conduct. In addition the Trust will, subject to the provisions below, grant the same protection of employment and pension rights as those granted to an employee with problems related to other forms of ill-health.

3.3 Should an employee refute diagnosis or refuse help as recommended by a medical practitioner, or discontinue a programme of treatment, this should not in itself be grounds for disciplinary action. However, unacceptable behaviour and standards of

work will be dealt with through normal disciplinary procedures, although every case should be considered on an individual basis.

- 3.4 Should an employee experience further alcohol or drug related problems affecting their work after suitable and acceptable treatment has been received, the case should be sympathetically considered in the light of expert opinion. The Trust will consider providing the opportunity for further treatment and protection of employment rights.
- 3.5 The Trust discourages drinking and driving and any contravention of the Road Traffic Acts and supporting regulations in relation to alcohol consumption will be a disciplinary offence and will be treated as gross misconduct.
- 3.6 The PCT hopes that assistance and support will facilitate the employee's full recovery and rehabilitation. However, it may be appropriate to follow the disciplinary procedure on capability and/or conduct when:
- They continue to misuse alcohol or drugs
 - They refuse treatment
 - Their problem continues despite supportive efforts to help overcome them and it is beginning to adversely affect the employee's conduct or capability to perform his or her job

Ultimately this could lead to the employee's dismissal.

- 3.7 Not all alcohol issues at work will be attributable to an apparent or suspected health problem, but may rather involve isolated incidents of drinking, rendering the employee incapable of functioning effectively at work afterwards. The PCT's disciplinary rules state that being unfit for duty through the effect of drink or illegal drugs amounts to gross misconduct.
- 3.8 Managers should seek advice from the Occupational Health Service about employees fitness for work. This advice will detail a persons fitness for work, any restrictions that might apply in terms of length of hours or physical activity, and the length of time this restriction is likely to last.
- 3.9 Any clinical details and advice to staff about suitable treatment are kept in the strictest confidence within the Occupational Health Department. The Occupational Health staff only divulge clinical details when given written agreement by the member of staff to do so.

4. Procedures

- 4.1 As with any problem affecting ability to work, it is important to identify alcohol or drug problems at an early stage when help may stand a better chance of success.
- 4.2 If an employee seeks help for an alcohol or drug problem, they should be referred to the Occupational Health Department who will assist in the drawing up of an agreement, as in 4.3.4.

4.3 If a Manager notices a deterioration in work performance below acceptable levels, then he/she should:-

- (a) Contact your Human Resources Advisor
- (b) Make careful notes about the problem and specific instances
- (c) Counsel the employee about this deterioration in performance

4.3.1 It should be made clear that the Occupational Health Department is available for help and advice if the employee should so wish.

4.3.2 If the Manager feels there may be a medical problem, he/she should consider making a formal referral to Occupational Health regarding an opinion on the fitness of the employee to work.

4.3.3 Should the employee refuse a medical opinion, then paragraph 3.3 in this Policy applies.

4.3.4 Should the cause of unacceptable performance be found to be due to problems with alcohol or drugs, then an agreement should be drawn up between the employee and Occupational Health, with advice from Human Resources who will keep in contact with the Manager.

4.3.5 The Agreement must cover:

- (a) A definition of what is suitable and acceptable treatment, eg regular attendance at an Out-Patient Clinic, Counselling Service etc.
- (b) Specific review dates
- (c) Action in the event of further deterioration during or after treatment
- (d) Confidentiality

4.4 Signs of Drug or Alcohol Misuse may include:

No single characteristic exists to identify alcohol or drug problems, but the following characteristics, especially when occurring in combination, or as a pattern over a period of time may indicate the presence of an alcohol or drug related problem.

- Sudden Mood Changes
- Unusual irritability or aggression
- Hand tremor
- Dilated or pinpoint pupils
- Smelling of alcohol
- Facial flushes
- Blurry eyes
- Excessive sick leave

- Lethargy
- Changes in attitude to authority
- Over sensitivity to criticism
- Lack of concentration or confusion
- Increased mistakes and poor judgement
- Increased number of accidents
- Fluctuations in productivity
- Unreliability and unpredictability
- Difficulty in concentration
- Memory slips
- Poor timekeeping
- Frequent absences from desk/post whilst at work
- Deteriorating relationships with colleagues
- Worsening of personal appearance
- Dishonesty, such as theft to support habit or frequent borrowing of money

It must be stressed that almost any employee could exhibit some of the above characteristics occasionally and therefore these do not always indicate that an alcohol or drug problem is the cause. It is a pattern of such problems over a period of time that requires further investigation. Equally it is not advisable to wait until an employee has exhibited a wide range of problems before taking action.

5. Personal Advice, Support and Information Services

5.1 Employees may find the following services useful as a source of support and advice:

Occupational Health Service

The Trust subscribes to two Occupational Health services. Your access will be dependent on where you are based both services can provide advice to individual staff members, managers, and colleagues who may be concerned about another staff member.

The service for those in the Huntingdon area is provided by Hinchingsbrooke Hospital
Tel: 01480 416263

The service for those in the Cambridge City, South and East Cambridgeshire and Fenland areas is provided by Anglia Support Partnership.
Tel: 01733 316519

Oakdale Counselling Service

A free, 24-hour counselling service which is independent and confidential.
Tel: 0800 027 7844

FRANK

Drug and Alcohol Helpline at www.talktofrank.com or 0800 776600.

Drinkline

Call on 0800 917 8282.

Release

National Drug Helpline at www.release.org.uk or on 0845 4500215

Drug Advice Centre

154 Mill Road
Cambridge
01223 214614

Drinksense (Cambridgeshire Alcohol Advisory Service)

One to one and telephone support.

4a Gonville Place
Cambridge
CB1 1LY
01223 302850

79a Eastfield Road
Peterborough
PE1 4AS
01733 347105

23a Chequers Court
Huntingdon
PE18 6LZ
01480 456956

Email: drinksense@netcom.co.uk

Alcoholics Anonymous

Help can also be obtained from Alcoholics Anonymous, telephone (01223) 833900 or 0845 769 7555 (24-hour helpline) or visit www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk.

There are Alcoholics Anonymous meetings on every day in Cambridge and once a week in Newmarket, Ely, Haverhill, St Ives and St Neots.

Al-Anon

For relatives of drinkers - meetings available in Cambridge, Ely, Peterborough and Wisbech . Contact: (01223) 833900.

Drug and Alcohol Services Huntingdon (DASH)

The aim is to treat people as individuals, giving them guidance in making decisions about whether to stop altogether or reduce the amount they drink. The clinic is run by a multi-disciplinary team and therefore is able to offer a wide range of treatment and is based at the Community Unit – Primrose Lane, Huntingdon on 01480 415231. www.cambridgeshire.nhs.uk/localhealthservices/drug-teams/dash.

Fenland Community Drugs Team

Offers a range of Drug treatment services, works closely with GPs.
Substance Misuse
62 Lincoln Road

Peterborough
PE1 2SN
Tel:01733 898385

DIAL Drugline
Whitwell Chambers
Ferrars Road
Huntingdon
PE29 3DH

Tel: 01480 413800
Email: dialdruglink@talk21.com

6. Review

This procedure will be reviewed by the Trust Joint Staff Council at 3 yearly intervals, unless and earlier review is required e.g. due to changes in legislation, NHS directions or in the Trust.

Human Resources