



DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLICY

PURPOSE

The University of Nottingham Students' Union (UoNSU) is fully committed to supporting the safety and wellbeing of our staff and officers, and to providing a working environment in which people can thrive and perform at their best.

This policy describes our approach to drugs and alcohol at work. It seeks to give guidance on attending events where alcohol is available, and to provide clear direction for staff on their responsibilities around and the consequences of using alcohol or drugs in the workplace. It also outlines our firm commitment to support staff who have drug or alcohol dependency and wish to have help.

POLICY

Introduction

UoNSU provides a diverse range of entertainment activities as part of its calendar of events for students, staff and officers. In delivering our work, we are also engaged in many activities with the University and our partners. We recognise that alcohol may be available at some of our own and at University-related events (whether held on the premises or not), such as departmental balls, election celebrations, Christmas parties, entertaining visitors or other work-related events such as training courses, conferences etc. Our aim is to ensure that everyone fully enjoys their time at such events but, as a responsible employer, we must balance this against any risks to our reputation connected with the behaviour of staff, officers and those working in connection with the Union. We expect you to use good judgement and to behave professionally at all times.

In addition, UoNSU has clear obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, which stipulates that employers have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees as far as is reasonably practicable.

This policy sets out our position with regard to alcohol and drugs within the workplace and the approach we will take when the consumption of alcohol and drugs affects staff or officers' performance at work.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff employed by and working for UoNSU and officers (any reference to staff should also be taken to include Officers and Student Staff). The procedures cover one-off situations of staff being under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst at work, as well as the action to be taken when a member of staff has an underlying alcohol or drug-related dependency.

Although we have a genuine interest in the well-being of our staff, what you do in your private life is generally outside the scope of this policy unless it affects your work, interferes with the legitimate activities of other members of the UoNSU, risks their safety or that of others.

Breaches of this policy or action taken as a consequence of substance misuse will be addressed under our Disciplinary Procedure. Probationers who breach this policy will have the circumstances considered as part of their Probationary Review.

Definitions

Substance Misuse

Drinking alcohol, taking drugs or a controlled substance, either intermittent or continuous which interferes with an individual's health, work capabilities or conduct, or which affects the work performance and/or safety of themselves and others.

Drugs

Means and includes any substance (other than alcohol) that produces physical, mental, emotional or behavioural change in the user, and where the sale, possession or consumption of them is illegal. This term includes prescription drugs where they have not been prescribed for the person possessing or using the drugs, and/or the prescription drugs are not taken in accordance with a doctor's direction.

'Legal highs', also known as New Emerging Drugs (NEDs), produce the same or similar effects to drugs such as cocaine, cannabis and ecstasy, but are not controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act.

Legal highs have broadly three main effects, being either a:

- stimulant
- sedative or 'downer'
- psychedelic or hallucinogen.

Because these drugs sometime contain or have the effect of illegal drugs, taking these substances would be viewed in the same way as other drugs and controlled substances under this policy.

Controlled Substance

Means and includes all chemical substances or drugs listed in any controlled substances Acts or regulations applicable under the law.

Working Time

Is considered to be a staff member's normal working pattern in order to fulfil their contractual working hours. This excludes any unpaid lunch breaks.

Any time in which a staff member is required to represent the Union in their professional capacity. This includes time which is agreed with the manager and worked as Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) or overtime e.g. Departmental Balls.

Staff Responsibilities

As a staff member, you have a personal responsibility to:

- Familiarise yourself with the Alcohol and Drugs policy
- Be fit for work at all times when conducting duties on behalf of UoNSU.
- Notify management immediately if the use of any substance outlined above may cause any impairment of your work performance
- Avoid consuming alcohol during work time. Working time is defined above. Where you have any doubt around what is considered to be working time, prior clarification should be sought from your manager wherever possible. Our advice is not to consume alcohol in a situation where you are unsure.
- Be in full control of your behaviour and conduct at all times when attending a work- related event where you are not on working time but are still recognisable as a staff member
- Not bring or use illegal substances under any circumstances on university premises or work-related event irrespective of location
- Seek professional help if you have substance dependency
- Undertake and complete a substance dependency rehabilitation programme as recommended by a professional body
- Report to management if you suspect that another staff member in the workplace is under the influence of any substance mentioned above
- Notify your manager if you are taking medication that could affect your ability to work safely
- UoNSU will take reasonably practicable steps to reduce the risks to employees who are required to work in an environment where people may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If you have a concern about your working environment please raise this with your line manager.

Line Managers' Responsibilities

Line Managers have a responsibility to:

- Make the Alcohol and Drugs Policy available to staff, and ensure they are aware of its existence and how this relates to their role
- To be conscientious and to take appropriate action in relation to members of staff who maybe contravening this policy
- Ensure risk assessments are carried out for work under their control, taking into consideration the environment their department works within. These assessments must be communicated and understood by the affected staff members

- To ensure that activities they are involved with provide alternatives to alcohol, and that staff/volunteers and representatives from partnerships are aware of the UoNSU's expectations in this area
- Discuss with staff as soon as possible if their behaviour, performance or absence indicates a problem with substance misuse
- Refer to occupational health, staff who declare or who they suspect may have a substance abuse problem
- Seek further guidance from the HR team where appropriate
- Provide support to staff who undertake a treatment programme
- Remove from the workplace any staff who they suspect are under the influence of any substance mentioned above
- Record absence related to substance abuse in accordance with attendance reporting procedures
- Refer staff members to occupational health, for advice on health and safety at work if they are taking medication that could affect their ability to work safely
- Ensure Departmental procedures in certain areas are enforced e.g. ensure all bar staff are not allowed to drink alcohol whilst on duty or if taking a break
- Liaise with the contact point of the relevant organisation on matters that concern contractors or partners.

Procedure for Underlying Alcohol or Drug Misuse

The abuse of alcohol or drugs may be an illness which is to be treated like other illness by seeking professional advice to have the best chance of recovery. There are many dangers associated with the use of alcohol and drugs which can impair a person's physical and mental wellbeing.

If you suspect or know that another member of staff is abusing alcohol or drugs, you have a duty of care to let a manager know and you should feel supported to do so - it could be that covering up for the person may not be in their long term best interest.

Where the action of a staff member affects their performance, their manager should keep accurate, confidential records of instances of performance which cause for concern.

The manager should meet with the member of staff in private, sooner rather than later, to discuss the concerns. The focus of the meeting should be on the areas of concern and to give the member of staff the opportunity to respond.

If the member of staff discloses they have a substance dependency problem, they should be made aware of the Drugs and Alcohol Policy, and be advised of the support inside and outside the organisation that is available to them, such as occupational health.

From the meeting, agree actions (including the need for any risk assessments) and arrange regular review meetings to monitor progress.

The manager will consider whether, given the specific circumstances, to suspend any disciplinary action for misconduct where the member of staff is following a suitable course of action. In cases of gross misconduct, a substance misuse issue may be taken into account in determining disciplinary action.

If there is a disclosure that there are issues with alcohol and drugs, the manager will support the member of staff in seeking professional help. The length and paid time off for any treatments will be discussed on a case by case basis. In cases of a relapse a second course of treatment would be granted if there is a reasonable chance of success.

Employment may be terminated on the grounds of ill-health where treatment has been unsuccessful or the member of staff refuses to undertake professional help, and there remains an impact on their work performance.

Procedure for the Intermittent Use of Alcohol and Drugs

It is considered unacceptable for any staff member to arrive for work in an intoxicated state or to drink during their unpaid lunch breaks or working time, to the extent they are unable to carry out their duties satisfactorily. Any person in an unacceptable state and unfit to work will be informed by the manager that they are no longer required to carry out their work and will be sent home by the safest method. Disciplinary action may be taken.

The remaining period of working time will be recorded on the person's personnel record to reflect the circumstances of being sent home. If the member of staff is not fit to return to work after being sent home, they are to use the Attendance Management Procedure and notify their manager of being unfit to carry out their duties.

If the member of staff, during the course of their working time, becomes intoxicated or displays symptoms of taking drugs, a manager will instruct the member of staff.

The manager discovering a member of staff displaying symptoms of substance abuse will undertake a fact-finding exercise to determine the circumstances of the misuse. If the manager undertaking the fact-finding exercise is not the employees' direct report, they will pass the information to the reporting manager in order for them to take appropriate action.

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