



SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL

Alcohol & Drugs Policy

Version	Adopted Policy Date	Minute Reference	Review Date
1	April 2019	F&E 538-19	2022
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Introduction

Alcohol and drug misuse or abuse can be a serious problem within the workplace. Employees who drink excessively or take unlawful drugs are more likely to work inefficiently, be absent from work, have work accidents and endanger their colleagues. The Council has a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of all 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.

Advice and counselling

It is the Council's intention to deal constructively and sympathetically with an employee's alcohol or drug related problems, such as alcohol or drug dependency. When it is known that an employee has an alcohol or drug problem, the Town Clerk will be able to provide advice and guidance on how to seek suitable treatment. The primary objective of any discussions will be to assist the employee with the problem in as compassionate and constructive a way as possible. Any discussions of the nature of an employee's alcohol or drug problem and the record of any treatment will be strictly confidential unless the employee agrees otherwise. If you have an alcohol or drug problem, you should seek appropriate help. If you have an alcohol or drug problem 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 Council's disciplinary procedure as appropriate. 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.

Prohibition on alcohol and drug consumption in the workplace

No alcohol or drugs must be brought onto or consumed on Council premises at any time or whilst attending any training courses, whether internal or external. Staff must never drink alcohol or take drugs if they are required to drive private or Council's vehicles on Council business. Staff must also not drink alcohol or take drugs when they are on operational standby or on call.

Employees representing the Council at business/client functions or conferences or attending Council organised social events outside normal working hours are expected to be moderate if drinking alcohol and to take specific action to ensure they are well within the legal limits if they are driving. They are prohibited from taking drugs on these occasions.

Social drinking after normal working hours and away from the Council's premises is, of course, generally a personal matter and does not directly concern the Council. The Council's concern only arises when, because of the pattern or amount of drink involved, the employee's attendance, work performance or conduct at work deteriorates.

A breach of these provisions is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, it may amount to gross misconduct and could result in the employee's summary dismissal.

Alcohol and drug related misconduct

Whilst these rules are aimed at assisting employees 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 an employee is 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 an employee is found 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 an excess of alcohol or drugs at work is a potential gross misconduct offence under the Council's disciplinary procedure and the employee is therefore liable to be summarily dismissed. This also applies to any employee 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 these circumstances to arrange for the employee to be escorted from the Council's premises immediately and sent home ~~without pay~~ for the rest of the day or shift.

Alcohol and drug testing

On the grounds of protecting health and safety and only where necessary to achieve a legitimate business aim, the Council reserves the right to carry out random alcohol and drug screening tests on those employees in the workplace whose activities and job duties have a significant impact on the health and safety of others. If an employee receives a positive test result, this will be viewed as a potential gross misconduct offence and renders the employee liable to summary dismissal in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure. Unreasonable refusal to submit to an alcohol or drug-screening test will also be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.