

KEY EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION BRIEFING

ISSUE 2: JUNE 2016



NEW POLICY



POLICY REVIEW



REGULAR REMINDER

POLICY ON THE MISUSE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER SUBSTANCES

POLICY OVERVIEW

As an employer, the council recognises that the problems associated with substance misuse can not only affect an employee's ability to work effectively, efficiently and safely but can also create difficulties and distress in domestic and social life.

The council's Policy on the Misuse of Alcohol and Other Substances is designed primarily to protect its employees from the potential risks associated with alcohol and drugs under [the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) and [the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#) and recognises that substance misuse is a health problem that requires professional help and treatment.

The policy is also a reminder to employees that the possession, supply or production of illegal drugs is a criminal offence and that use on council premises by employees will be treated as gross misconduct and may result in dismissal.

For the purposes of this policy, substance misuse is defined as the problematic use of alcohol, drugs (both prescribed, legal and illegal) or other substances, such as butane gas, glue, thinner or petrol.

KEY INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES

- The possession, supply or production of illegal drugs is a criminal offence. Consequently, if you are caught using illegal drugs on council premises this will be treated as gross misconduct and may result in your dismissal as outlined in the council's [Disciplinary Code](#).
- Any involvement in incidents out with work involving the possession, use or supply of drugs may also be considered by the council as a disciplinary offence if they are deemed to fundamentally affect your suitability for the post you hold with the council.
- The consumption of alcohol or other substances as defined in the policy is prohibited on council premises during working hours. This excludes prescribed or over the counter drugs taken for a genuine medical reason and taken in accordance with directions for use subject to the need to observe health and safety rules.
- You are expected to ensure that your personal consumption of alcohol or use of prescribed or over the counter drugs, does not interfere with your ability to work safely and effectively and/or to deal with customers or clients to the required standards.

- If you report for work under the influence of alcohol and/or other substances and your line manager or supervisor considers that you are unable to work safely or to required standards of conduct and performance, you will be sent home and suspended on full pay. The matter will then be investigated and may result in disciplinary action being taken against you.
- You must familiarise yourself with any specific requirements or controls regarding alcohol and drug use contained in workplace risk assessments. If in doubt you should ask your line manager or supervisor.
- Where you have been prescribed medication, which may make you drowsy, impair your judgement, or otherwise affect your performance, you are required to advise your line manager or supervisor.
- If you think you have a substance misuse problem, you are encouraged to voluntarily seek assistance. The council will provide support at the earliest opportunity to employees who acknowledge they have developed a substance misuse problem.
- Employees can self-refer for confidential counselling by completing a Counselling Referral Form which can be found at:
<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/4302/Occupational-Health-Referral-to-Counsellor/doc/ReferralToCounsellor.docx>
- Information on Addiction Services available in West Lothian can be found at:
<http://www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/HealthInformation/RecoveryInLothian/Documents/WL-ServiceDirectory.pdf>
- In all situations where an employee has a potential or confirmed substance misuse problem, confidentiality will be strictly preserved and only necessary information shared with those who are managing the situation. However, the council is obliged under [the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#) to inform the police where illegal drugs are found on council premises.

ROLL OUT ARRANGEMENTS

- Services should ensure that records are kept of the date that employee briefings were conducted and the employees who attended. Those records may be subject to internal audit at any given time to ensure that council employment policies are being properly disseminated throughout services.
- Employees should be encouraged to read the full Policy on the Misuse of Alcohol and other Substances and supporting Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) available on Mytoolkit and accessible from work and home at:

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/11826/Substance-Misuse>