

## **City of Lincoln Council**

### **Substance Misuse Policy**

#### **Introduction**

The Council recognises that substance misuse related problems are an area of health and social concern. The Council also recognises that an employee with such problems needs help and support from their employer. The consumption of alcohol or any illicit substance can pose a risk to the individual, work colleagues, visitors and customers. It is unacceptable in the context of consuming alcohol or misusing substances either before or during work. Alcohol is not permitted on Council premises, unless specifically approved by your manager. Illicit substances are not allowed on work premises at all.

The Council also recognises that alcohol and drug abuse problems can have a detrimental effect on work performance and behaviour, and has a responsibility to its employees and customers to ensure that this risk is minimised. It is the responsibility of all employees to take reasonable care to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

For the purposes of this policy substance misuse refers to the misuse of illicit substances, prescription drugs, over the counter medications, solvents and alcohol which may lead an individual to experience physical, psychological or social problems.

Employees must inform their line manager regarding any prescribed medication that may have an effect on their ability to carry out their work safely.

It is a criminal offence to be in possession of, use or distribute an illicit substance and to produce, supply or possess with intent to supply psychoactive substances. If any such incidents take place on the Council's premises, they will be regarded as serious, investigated under the Disciplinary procedure and possibly reported to the police.

#### **Employee Support**

A manager who suspects that an employee has an alcohol or substance misuse problem should contact Human Resources prior to taking any action for advice.

The Council will, where possible, provide the following assistance to an employee:-

- Help the employee recognise the nature of their problem, through referral to Occupational Health for specialist support. Strict confidentiality will be maintained throughout this process.
- Support during a period of treatment – this may include a period of sick leave, approved special leave or temporary transfer to other work, depending on what is appropriate for the employee and the needs of the service
- The opportunity to return to work following the completion of a course of treatment, as far as is practicable, in either the employee's substantive post or a suitable alternative existing post. Whilst the employee is receiving treatment the Council will endeavour (where possible) to retain their substantive post and terms and conditions of service providing there is a gradual return to work. The only exception to this is where legal requirements would be compromised by continuing in the substantive

post (e.g. where driving duties are required for the role). In such exceptional circumstances the Council will make every effort to find suitable alternative employment.

The support provided will depend upon the following conditions being met:-

- Referral to Occupational Health and a diagnosis of an alcohol, drug or other substance misuse related problem
- Recognition by the employee that they have a diagnosis
- The employee takes responsibility to accepting treatment.

If an employee fails to co-operate in referral or treatment arrangements then no support will be provided or where support is not successful any work performance and/or behaviour issues will be managed through the Disciplinary Policy or Employee Capability Policy.

### **Recognition of possible alcohol, drug or other substance misuse**

Managers may recognise a problem which could be presented in one or more of the following:-

Poor timekeeping, increased short term absence, impaired job performance, abnormal fluctuations in concentration, increased errors/inaccuracies, memory loss, slurred speech, breath odour, sudden mood changes, unusual irritability or aggression, a deterioration in relationships with colleagues/customers/managers, a tendency to become confused, dishonesty and theft (arising from the need to maintain an expensive habit).

The signs above may be caused by other factors for example stress and should be regarded as indications only.

### **Breach of Policy**

Incapacity for work through alcohol or the misuse of drugs, substances, solvents, gases and the like, or being associated with them in any illegal or improper way, such as possessing or supplying drugs illicitly could be regarded as serious misconduct.

This would include:-

- Attending work and/or carrying out duties under the influence of alcohol or illicit substance
- Consumption of alcohol or illicit substances during working hours is not acceptable under any circumstances
- Breaching health and safety policies and rules or procedures likely to lead to injury to persons, loss of, or damage to property.

An employee judged to be incapable of performing their duties at work may be suspended from duty on full pay. This is a neutral act and does not make any judgement on whether or not an act of misconduct has occurred.

Any investigation will be undertaken as soon as practicable in line with the Disciplinary Policy.