

BVNA Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse Policy

Introduction

The BVNA is committed to providing a safe, healthy and sustainable working, learning and living environment for all employees, learners and visitors involved with the association.

This policy sets out the BVNA's position with regard to drugs, alcohol and substance misuse and dependency within the workplace and the approach it will take when the consumption of drugs, alcohol or substances affects staff performance at work. The policy covers the courses of action which will be taken in one-off situations of staff being under the influence of drugs, alcohol or substances whilst at work, as well as the action to be taken when a member of staff has an underlying drug, alcohol or substance related problem.

The policy applies to all staff employed by and working for the BVNA.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- encourage those with a dependency problem to seek help
- support staff in dealing with alcohol, drugs and substance misuse problems before it becomes a disciplinary matter
- meet the BVNA's obligations to ensure the health and safety of its staff, learners and others at work
- state clearly the responsibilities of managers, employees and learners

General principles

- The BVNA seeks to provide a caring and supportive environment in respect of the welfare of employees and learners
- Employees are encouraged to seek medical assistance or counselling once any alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem has been identified or at an earlier stage where there are concerns that alcohol or drugs may be becoming an issue
- Employees who declare an alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem will be treated in accordance with the guidelines outlined in this policy; having an identified alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem will not absolve an individual from disciplinary action if they are involved in an act of misconduct
- Where a member of staff, having received treatment, suffers a relapse the BVNA will consider the case on its individual merits

Responsibilities

Employees' responsibilities:

- To familiarise themselves with this policy
- To take responsibility for their own health and safety in the workplace and that of others including learners who could be affected by what they do at work

- To report for work, and remain throughout the working day, in a fit and safe condition to undertake their duties and to ensure their performance and judgement at work are never impaired by alcohol, drugs or other substances. Employees are not permitted to present themselves at work under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances
- To seek advice in the first instance from their GP at the point where they feel that alcohol or drugs misuse may be becoming a problem. The GP should be able to provide advice, support and referral to suitable agencies for counselling
- To ensure that if they buy or are prescribed medicines which warn that “use may impair driving or affect ability to operate machinery” and where relevant to that employee’s role, they seek advice from their pharmacist or doctor as to whether taking the medicine may affect their ability to work safely
- To inform their manager or a senior member of staff if they have genuine reason to believe that an employee may have a problem with the misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances which threatens to impact on that individual’s ability to do their job

Association managers’ responsibilities:

- To ensure employees are familiar with this policy
- To ensure this policy is applied consistently

If an alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem is revealed:

- To meet with the employee in a confidential setting in order to offer support and advice and to determine the extent of the issue
- To assess what action is appropriate

If an employee is involved in an act of misconduct as a result of a problem with alcohol, drug or substance misuse:

- To take action in accordance with the BVNA’s procedure for dealing with matters of conduct

Identifying potential alcohol, drug or substance abuse problems.

The following characteristics, especially in combinations, *may* indicate the presence of an alcohol, drugs or substance related problem. However, it should be noted that these symptoms could be caused by other factors and managers should monitor the situation carefully before jumping to conclusions.

- Absenteeism: instances of unauthorised leave, frequent Friday and/or Monday absences, leaving work early, lateness (especially returning from lunch), excessive sickness absence, unusually high level of short-term and intermittent absences with, or without, explanation;
- High accident level: at work, elsewhere, driving or at home;
- Work performance: difficulty in concentration, work requires increased effort, individual tasks take more time, problems with remembering instructions or own mistakes;
- Mood swings: irritability, depression, and general confusion;
- Appearance: deterioration in physical appearance and/or wellbeing

Possible action

Appropriate action will take into account the individual circumstances of each case. Our initial approach to anyone that presents themselves to us with a suspected problem in relation to alcohol or drugs will be to support them in trying to overcome their dependency/misuse. We appreciate that there are times in a person's life where it can be difficult to cope and there may be related circumstances which may lead to problems associated with drugs/alcohol.

We would, in most instances, seek to resolve issues informally, providing a flexible approach but with clear expectations on the part of the individual in terms of taking ownership of the problem.

Where this approach is not possible, or does not resolve the situation, appropriate action will take into account the individual circumstances of each case, in accordance with the following procedures:

Dealing with matters of performance

Issues of underperformance related to an employee's alcohol, drug or substance misuse will be dealt with in accordance with the BVNA's procedure for dealing with matters of performance and if necessary other organisations will be informed (i.e. LANTRA)

Dealing with matters of conduct

Issues of misconduct related to an employee's alcohol, drug or substance misuse will be dealt with in accordance with the BVNA's procedure for dealing with matters of Conduct and if necessary other organisations will be informed (i.e. LANTRA)

As an organisation that holds events at external venues we cannot control the consumption of alcohol on such premises. Inappropriate consumption during training events may lead to disciplinary action for employees. Candidates may be asked to leave if found to be disruptive to other candidates and may be removed from the course, dependent upon the circumstances.

Where it is suspected that alcohol, illegal drugs or substances have been misused at work, or if an employee or candidate is found to be under the influence due to consumption prior to work, the manager or tutor should wherever possible, contact the Association Manager immediately for advice.

Employees who break the law by consuming or trafficking in illegal drugs or substances at work are liable to be summarily dismissed.

Drugs related offences committed outside work which have the potential to bring the BVNA's reputation into disrepute could lead to further action.

Note:

In this policy the term "substance abuse" includes misuse of controlled and prescription drugs, and use of illegal and designer drugs and other substances such as solvents. Drugs are defined as any substance that affects the way the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally. Misuse is defined as any use that harms social or physical functioning.

TALK TO FRANK is the United Kingdom government's national anti-drug campaign. It's principally aimed at teenagers but has lots of useful information available for all age groups.
<http://www.talktofrank.com/>

Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain
<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>