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# Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace Policy

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Turas Training

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Approval date:

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Revision date:

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## 1. Policy Statement

TURAS is committed to the safety and wellbeing of its employees and the promotion of good health.

## 2. Purpose

This policy is intended to provide a means of supporting employees whose performance of duties is impaired through consuming alcohol or taking drugs. The aim of the policy is:

- 2.1. To ensure that staff understand the organisation's position in relation to alcohol and drug use in the workplace or being used outside of work and having impact on work activity or performance.
- 2.2. To encourage the early identification of employees who may be experiencing an alcohol or drug related problem.
- 2.3. To ensure that staff are aware of the support available to them, should they have alcohol or drugs related issue.
- 2.4. To safeguard the wellbeing of staff and service users.
- 2.5. To clarify the action that will be taken in the event of misconduct related to improper alcohol consumption or the use and/or possession of illegal drugs.

## 3. Scope

This policy covers all staff, and volunteers within the organisation. It also includes people from other agencies conducting in-reach services in TURAS for the time they are on the premises.

## 4. Glossary of Terms and Definitions

- 4.1. For the purpose of this policy, the term alcohol and drugs will be defined as mood altering substances, either legal or illegal. This includes alcohol, abuse of prescribed medication with or without a prescription as well as the use of illegal substances.

## 5. Principles

- 5.1. Employees should not be adversely affected by alcohol or drug use during work hours and must at all time carry out their duties and responsibilities in a safe manner.
- 5.2. Work premises are alcohol and drug free during work hours.
- 5.3. Use of alcohol or drugs outside of work hours should not impair performance and behaviour at work.

## 6. Responsibilities

- 6.1. Managers are responsible for ensuring that staffs are able to carry out their duties effectively. Additionally, all managers are responsible for ensuring that their employees are aware of this policy, their responsibilities in following it and the consequences of their failure to do so.
- 6.2. Employees are responsible for following this policy as failure to do so may compromise the health, safety and welfare of themselves and their colleagues.

## 7. Service Rules in Relation to Alcohol / Drugs

- 7.1. TURAS explicitly prohibits:
  - 7.1.1. Alcohol and illicit drugs consumption on TURAS premises, in company cars, or in time as a paid employee of the organisation. Note that out of hours functions and social events are outside the remit of this policy. An exception may be made for designated special occasions e.g. Christmas party or fundraisers, where employees may be seen to represent the organisation. When organising such events, due diligence and care must be afforded in respect of the location of the function and access to appropriate and safe arrangements to get home.
  - 7.1.2. The use, possession, solicitation for, or sale of the following substances on the premises, while in work hours or performing work related tasks:
    - 7.1.2.1. narcotics or other illegal drugs,
    - 7.1.2.2. alcohol,
    - 7.1.2.3. prescription medication without a prescription,

- 7.1.3. Employees being impaired or under the influence of legal or illegal drugs or alcohol outside of the workplace: where this adversely affects the employee's work performance or the safety of the employee or of others.
- 7.2. Any member of staff who is concerned that he/she may have a problem with alcohol or drugs is encouraged to seek help and advice by contacting their supervisor and making them aware of the issue. In this instance support will be provided by the organisation as detailed in point 9.
- 7.3. Employees taking prescription drugs that are not recommended to be taken whilst driving a car or operating machinery should notify their supervisor where the role may necessitate either driving or the operation of machinery.
- 7.4. Non-compliance with the drug and alcohol policy will be viewed as a very serious manner and treated in the same way as any breach of policy. Any individual who is adversely affected by alcohol or another drug will not be allowed to work while intoxicated. If an employee affected by alcohol or another drug is sent home, they will not be paid for lost time. Disciplinary action may be taken when they return to work.

## 8. Procedures Regarding Identification of Alcohol or Drug Use Issue

- 8.1. Employee Identifies alcohol or drug use issue  
Employees who recognise that they have a alcohol or drug problem, or that they are at risk of developing one, will receive full support of the organisation in the way outlined in this policy. Employees in this situation should approach their line manager in confidence. Admittance of an alcohol or drug problem and seeking support for it will not affect the employee's job or promotion prospects. Managers must agree further appropriate action with the employee and arrange regular support/review meetings.

- 8.2. Suspected intoxication in the workplace  
In the instance of suspected intoxication in the workplace the manager or supervisor will record the factors supporting this conclusion, for example: smell of alcohol on breath, dilated pupils, impaired co-ordination or speech. The first step will be the manager to request an immediate meeting with the staff member. If possible another manager or senior staff member will also be present.

If no agreements exist regarding testing, then the Manager or Supervisor cannot accuse the employees of being intoxicated – all they can state is that in their opinion and that of the second member of Management with them, that the employees is "unfit for work" and to request that the employee goes home. Matters arising from their unfitness for work will then be dealt with the following day.

If the employee has driven to work and if unfit for work as above, then they may well be unfit for driving also and Management should request that the hand over their keys and that a taxi will be arranged for them. Again these requests should be made with another Management person as a witness and if the employee refuses to hand over their keys then they should be informed that Management then have no option but to inform the Gardai about them and their car so that they can be stopped on the public road as they pose a road safety threat to themselves and other road users.

The concerns and factors leading to the concern will be outlined to the staff member who is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If the individual admits to being under the influence, they will be sent home immediately.

If the staff member denies being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at work they may be asked to provide consent for drug or alcohol testing. In this instance the organisation will assume all costs and will arrange for the testing. Following positive confirmation the individual will be sent home immediately. Staff have the right to refuse testing and workplaces. If employee agreements are in place regarding testing, employers have the right to request testing.

The individual will be in breach of their employment contract if there is a clear stipulation in this saying that they agree to abide by organisational policy and any changes to these policies.

On return to work the issue will be dealt with in a meeting and disciplinary measures may be taken. In this instance all points outlined in 8.3 will also be followed.

- 8.3. Suspicion that alcohol or drug use is effecting work performance  
In the instance of the line manager suspecting that alcohol or drug use outside of the work hours is impairing a person's workplace performance, they will keep confidential and anonymous notes on any instances and will raise these in a meeting with the individual. It should be noted that, in general, not one characteristic identifies an alcohol or drug misuse issue. The following may be indicators if occurring over a period of time: smelling of alcohol; fluctuations in concentration or work performance; significant issues with timekeeping or high levels of absenteeism, non co-operation with colleagues, hand tremors, poor work performance.

If an employee's work performance or behaviour is unsatisfactory and the line manager suspects that there may be an underlying substance abuse problem, they will meet with the employee as soon as possible and clearly state their concerns and the situations and issues involved. Employees will be given an opportunity to explain their behaviour/work/presentation. The organisations policy around supporting access to appropriate health services in the case of problematic alcohol or drug use is to be clearly explained (section 9). The employee is to be provided with an opportunity to raise any health issues in this regard. Line managers will not pass judgement or opinion on the subject of substance abuse.

- 8.4. Denial of drug or alcohol use or refusal to seek assistance  
There is no obligation on a member of staff to seek or accept assistance from the employer for an alcohol or drugs related problem. Where the employee denies misuse of drugs or alcohol and/or is not willing to address the issue that member of staff may face formal proceedings as a result of their conduct, attendance or performance becoming or remaining unacceptable.

## **9. Response and Supports following Confirmation of Alcohol or Drug Use Issue**

The following guidelines will apply to any member of staff who seeks help for alcohol or drug use:

- 9.1. Sick leave and attendance of treatment programmes  
Addiction to drugs or alcohol will be treated as an illness, therefore, absence for support and rehabilitation will be covered by sickness entitlements. Staff seeking help will be supported in finding appropriate support, which may include time off for attending treatment. While appropriate time will be given to allow the employee to tackle his/her problems, employment may not be maintained indefinitely if the situation does not improve. Employees are encouraged in the first instance to self refer for support.
- 9.2. Return to work  
Every effort will be made to ensure that on completion of a rehabilitation program, the employee is able to return to the same or an equivalent post. Where such a return would jeopardize a satisfactory level of performance or hamper the employee's full recovery; the circumstances will be reviewed and a suitable course of action agreed. This may include looking at suitable alternative work, if available. Should ill health dismissal be considered, then it must be ensured that the employee is fully consulted and an occupational health report is obtained.
- 9.3. Relapse  
Where an employee suffers from a relapse, occupational health or appropriate medical advice may be sought in order to ascertain any further support required and the time needed to aid a full recovery. The employer will have the discretion to agree further support or rehabilitation time to help the employee recover fully.
- 9.4. Confidentiality will be maintained within the workplace as agreed between the manager and staff member.
- 9.5. The identification and successful treatment of an alcohol or drug issues will not adversely affect future work opportunities.

## **10. Standards of Behaviour**

- 10.1. If a member of staff fails to adhere to the employee standards of behaviour, the disciplinary procedure will be used. If a member of staff admits to an alcohol or drugs problem then disciplinary

proceedings will be held in abeyance, provided the employee agrees to and follows a relevant course of treatment and rehabilitation in association with relevant internal and external support mechanisms. An employee who fails to complete any such programme to a satisfactory standard or fails to adhere to it will have the disciplinary process reinstated.

- 10.2. Individuals considered incapable of performing duties safely or competently due to consumption of alcohol or drugs will immediately be removed from duty.

## **11. Confidentiality**

TURAS aims to ensure that the confidentiality of all employees experiencing alcohol or drug problems is maintained. Information regarding individual cases will not be shared with third parties unless consent has been provided by the individual or the safety of the person concerned or others is comprised. In this instance the Manager will need to approve disclosure.