

# Narberth School



## Alcohol and Drug Misuse

### Pembrokeshire County Council Alcohol and Drug Misuse

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## **1 Policy Objectives**

- To promote the general well-being of all employees
- To provide a healthy and safe working environment
- To reduce the costs of absence and accidents which directly, or indirectly, result from the misuse of alcohol and drugs
- To facilitate the early identification of problematic drinking and drug abuse by engendering a climate which encourages honesty and gives staff and management confidence to deal with substance misuse problems by following a clear procedure
- To ensure the availability of an appropriate response, including provision of support, to enable continued employment

## **2 Policy Statement**

The purpose of this policy is to be part of Pembrokeshire County Council's overall policy to prevent unreasonable risks to the health and safety of those that are affected by its work, whether employees or not.

The specific function of this Alcohol and Drug Misuse policy is to control the risks caused by employees whose efficiency is impaired by alcohol or drugs and to identify and assist those employees who may have a problem. It is not the aim of the Authority to unfairly discriminate against those with an alcohol and drug problem and the Authority will ensure that these employees have the same rights of confidentiality and access to assistance as an employee with any other medical problem. However, any employee that does not co-operate with an alcohol or drug assistance programme to which they have been referred will be subject to the Authority's disciplinary procedures that may result in dismissal.

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### 3 Application

#### The Policy applies to:

- all employees, irrespective of the position they hold

Alcohol and drug misuse not only threatens the health and safety of the person using the substance, but also his/her colleagues, service users and/or members of the public. In the interests of such concerns: -

#### Employees ARE EXPECTED TO COMPLY with the following safe working procedures:

- do not report for duty under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs
- do not drink alcohol or bring / use illegal drugs whilst on Council premises
- do not consume alcohol or drugs immediately before reporting for duty or during periods of 'on-call' duty to the level that could impair ability to perform normal duties
- do not misuse prescribed medicines at work (request advice from your GP for the possible side affects of prescribed drugs).
- adhere to the obligations placed under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 which requires you to take reasonable care of yourself and others who may be affected by your omissions at work

Whilst alcohol consumption is **not deemed appropriate during unpaid breaks for all our staff**, given the legal obligations an employer has under the relevant statutory Health & Safety provisions (Section 5) **safety-critical operational staff MUST NOT in ANY circumstance consume alcohol during the working day.**

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**Safety-critical employees are those who operate in circumstances where the Health & Safety of the Authority could be compromised and are listed in the general categories below as those who :**

- **drive any vehicle as part of their job**
- **operate or work with any machinery or plant**
- **work with hand tools**
- **work in the storage, handling or use, including disposal, of any substance hazardous to health**
- **work on or near water**
- **work with children and/or vulnerable adults**

#### **4 Definition of Alcohol and Drug Misuse**

Substance Misuse : "The non-medical use of any chemical substance\* resulting in social, psychological, physical or legal problems associated with dependence, intoxication or regular consumption".

*\* 'Substance' is a general term for alcohol, cannabis, hallucinogens, opiates, stimulants, steroids, some medical products such as benzodiazepanes & various volatile substances.*

Alcohol or drug related problems are defined as any excessive consumption, either intermittent or continual, of alcohol or drugs which definitely and repeatedly interferes with a person's health and social functioning and/or work performance or conduct

#### **5 Legal Implications**

**As an employer we are legally obligated to provide both employees and third parties with a safe working environment.**

5.1 The Authority has a general duty under **the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** (HSW Act) to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all our employees.

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- 5.2 We also have a duty under **the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**, to assess the risks to the health and safety of our employees as well as to the general public. If as an employer we knowingly allow an employee under the influence of alcohol or drugs to continue working and this places the employee or others at risk, the Authority could be prosecuted. Similarly our employees are also required to take reasonable care of themselves and others who could be affected by what they do.
- 5.3 There is additional legislation for our employees who work in the transport sector under the **Transport and Works Act 1992**, which makes it a criminal offence for certain workers to be unfit through drink and/or drugs. The **Road Traffic Act 1988** states that any person who, when driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle on a road is unfit to drive through drink or drugs shall be guilty of an offence.
- 5.4 It is an offence under the **Misuse of Drugs Act 1971** to possess, supply or produce controlled drugs without authority (possession is generally only lawful if the drug has been prescribed by a Doctor or Dentist for medical purposes). An employer who knowingly allows a drug misuser to continue working without doing anything either to help him/her or to protect the rest of the workforce may also be liable to charges.

The Act lists the drugs that are subject to control and classifies them in three categories accordingly to their relative harmfulness when misused.

**CLASS A** includes ecstasy, cocaine, heroin, LSD, mescaline, methadone, morphine, opium and injectable forms of Class B drugs

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**CLASS B** includes oral preparations of amphetamines, barbiturates, codeine and methaqualone (mandrax)

**CLASS C** includes most benzodiazepines (eg temazepam, valium), cannabis and anabolic steroids.

## 6 "Safe" Drinking Levels

***The advice provided in this section is provided by the Health and Safety Executive as general guidance only, employees should refer to their GP for advice related to their specific health needs.***

6.1 The following benchmarks **are provided by the Health and Safety Executive as a guide** to advise how much adult men and women can drink **in a day** without putting their health at risk. They apply whether you drink every day, once or twice a week, or occasionally. Saving up to binge drink on one or two evenings a week is a health risk. Similarly, the benchmarks are not targets to drink up to. There are times and circumstances when it makes sense not to drink at all.

Men

If you drink between **3 and 4 units** a day or less, there are no significant risks to your health BUT...

If you consistently drink **4 or more** units a day, there is an increasing risk to your health.

Women

If you drink between **2 and 3 units** a day or less, there are no significant risks to your health. BUT ...

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If you consistently drink **3 or more** units a day, there is an increasing risk to your health.

6.2 A unit is considered to be one of the following typical public house measures -

- Half pint of beer (ordinary strength - 4%)
- One glass of table wine
- One glass of sherry

6.3 Alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream and starts to have an effect within 5 – 10 minutes. It takes a healthy liver about 1 hour to break down and expel 1 unit of alcohol.

6.4 If someone drinks 2 pints of ordinary strength beer at lunchtime or half a bottle of wine, they will still have alcohol in their bloodstream 3 hours later. Similarly, if someone drinks heavily in the evening they may still be over the legal drink drive limit the following morning.

6.5 Black coffee, cold showers and fresh air won't sober someone up. Only time can remove alcohol from the bloodstream.

## **7 Effects of Drug and Alcohol Misuse**

7.1 The effects of drugs on the mind and body can be categorised into three general types, with some drugs falling into more than one category and sharing a number of effects.

Depressants: (which slow you down) include heroin, methadone, tranquillisers, solvents, cannabis and alcohol.

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Stimulants : (which speed you up) include amphetamines, cocaine, ecstasy and caffeine.

Hallucinogens : (which change the way you perceive people and things about you) include LSD, ecstasy, cannabis and magic mushrooms.

7.2 Excessive alcohol and drug misuse can have the following effects:

- increased errors / mistakes in judgment / reduced hand-eye co-ordination
- abnormal fluctuations in concentration and energy
- a reluctance to accept responsibility
- moodiness, lethargy, irritability
- a tendency to become confused
- trembling of hands, facial flushing, bleary eyes

It can also lead to :

- higher level of short term absenteeism
- higher accident rate
- impaired job performance
- a deterioration in relationships with colleagues, customers or management

**Remember: all the signs shown above may be caused by other factors, and should be regarded only as indications that an employee *may* be misusing drugs or alcohol.**

Please refer to **Appendix 1** for a more complete picture of the problems associated with alcohol/drug misuse.

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7.3 It is recognised that alcohol and drug misuse can cause severe problems not only for the individual and his/her family, but also for fellow employees. These problems can occur not just in the more obvious area of Health and Safety but can also give rise to unsatisfactory work performance and poor relationships at work.

The sickness absence of a problem drinker for example is estimated to cause 3-5% of all absences from work; about 8 to 14 million lost working days in the UK each year. <sup>1</sup>

7.4 While there are no precise figures on the number of workplace accidents where alcohol is a factor, alcohol is known to affect judgement and physical co-ordination. Drinking even small amounts of alcohol before or while carrying out work that is 'safety sensitive' will increase the risk of an accident.

Alcohol Concern, for example, estimates that around 75% of problem drinkers are in full time employment and may be found throughout organisations.

7.5 There has also been an acknowledged growth in drug dependence and misuse over recent years. All kinds of people are involved in drug misuse – they do not conform to any stereotype. A lot of people who are involved in drug misuse are in work. Employees do not leave their problems behind when they come to work.

It is, therefore, important for managers to take the initiative at an early stage to offer support in accordance with the procedure.

7.6 Alcohol-related issues, and the Authority's Alcohol and Drug Misuse Policy, will be included in the Authority's corporate induction programme.

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<sup>1</sup> HSE 'Don't Mix It'

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Directorates/Divisions need to re-inforce it's provision as part of departmental induction.

## **8 Support and Counselling**

8.1 The policy recognises that alcohol and drug related problems are **primarily** matters of health and social concern, and that the people affected require help, support and treatment.

8.2 The Authority is supportive of individuals with alcohol and drug related problems. The Authority seeks to develop an approach that will enable it to deal with alcohol and drug related problems sympathetically, fairly, and consistently, with the objective of restoring an employee to full efficiency to the benefit of both the employee and the Authority.

8.3 Such a **supportive** approach offers an alternative to potential disciplinary action or dismissal. In return, the person affected should participate in a programme of counselling and make a specific commitment to a change in behaviour.

8.4 This approach will include counselling, referral to appropriate agencies, and if deemed appropriate the provision of paid time off away from work to undergo support and treatment.

8.5 The following principles apply-

- the recognition that alcohol or drug misuse can lead to dependence;
- the provision of support mechanisms for those needing help;
- that confidentiality is guaranteed, subject to the provisions of the law;

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- a no blame approach is used;
- individuals should be encouraged to seek help;
- the provision of counselling, referral to appropriate agencies, etc;
- rehabilitation and re-integration into the workplace.

8.5 The Authority seeks to create a climate in which people with a problem, or potential problem, will not be inhibited from seeking help and support.

8.6 It could be too late to declare a drugs or alcohol problem in the event of an accident or incident.

8.7 The Authority extends support as and when applicable to those partners and relatives of drug and alcohol misusers whose own health and ability to work may be affected.

## **9 Procedure**

9.1 All employees are encouraged to provide constructive help to their colleagues if they are aware of an alcohol and drug related problem.

9.2 Initial referral will normally be by the employee's line manager, and this would be in the first instance to Occupational Health, but there may be instances where the employee with a drink or substance misuse problem contacts Occupational Health directly. In these cases confidentiality will be maintained and the employee encouraged to seek treatment through their own G.P. or by referral to the appropriate specialist organisation.

9.3 Where treatment is accepted, the employee's progress will be monitored by Occupational Health, in conjunction with the Line Manager. Help and guidance will be given at the workplace as

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deemed appropriate, with the ultimate aim of complete rehabilitation.

- 9.4 Time off for agreed treatment is treated as sickness absence and is subject to the Authority's normal occupational sick pay rates.
- 9.5 If the problem is affecting work performance, or where colleagues and/or members of the public are at risk, it may be necessary for the employee to accept treatment/support as a condition of continued employment.
- 9.6 If the problem continues and treatment is not effective then the line manager will consider if there can be some adjustment to existing duties or a transfer to an alternative position. If these options are not possible or are refused, termination of employment on grounds of ill-health may be necessary.

## 10 Discipline & Disciplinary Issues

10.1 The thinking behind a policy of this kind tries, as far as possible, to divorce remedial action in regard to the misuse of alcohol and drugs from disciplinary action. **However, it is not always possible to achieve this.** In certain circumstances, disciplinary action may arise as a direct, or indirect consequence of alcohol or drug use for employees who: -

- report for duty under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs
- drink alcohol whilst at work
- drink to a level during periods of 'on-call' duty that impairs your ability to perform your normal duties
- use illegal drugs at work
- misuse prescribed medicines at work

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- possess illegal drugs at work
- have consumed alcohol whilst in charge of a vehicle
- have consumed alcohol whilst in a safety critical role
- have been abusive to members of the public/service users as a consequence of alcohol use
- have deliberately flouted legitimate instructions not to have consumed alcohol or drugs at work
- issues of conduct arising from isolated incidences of alcoholic indulgence or drug use

The above are some examples and is not an exhaustive list.

In addition:

- If medical or other treatment is refused, or permission not given to approach the GP or treatment agency it may be necessary to bring the disciplinary procedure into use.

10.2 The procedures set out in this document should normally be used to complement disciplinary action. In all cases where the Authority's disciplinary/sickness or capability procedure is used in relation with alcohol/drug misuse, the person concerned will be offered appropriate help at each stage.

10.3 Provided work performance improves to a satisfactory level employees will not be subject to disciplinary action solely on the grounds that they had declined the offer of help or have withdrawn from the help offered. However, should conduct and/or capability deteriorate and help is still refused, disciplinary action would need to be considered.

10.4 Employment may be terminated in cases of alcohol/drug misuse where the subsequent action taken leads to loss of qualification required to do the job e.g. professional registration, driving licence.

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10.5 As a public sector authority we have a legal obligation to involve the Police in all cases of illegal drug activity, whether that be possession, the supply or intent to supply.

10.6 The Authority has a legitimate interest in what an employee does outside work where it impacts on their own or their colleagues work or safety.

## **11 The Role of the Personnel Division**

### **11.1 Personnel**

- To ensure that management, employees, and the trade unions are fully conversant with the policy.
- To provide training and/or assist with training as appropriate.
- To refer employees for assistance when appropriate.
- To advise managers on the approach to a specific problem, and on the question of using the disciplinary policy should it become necessary.

### **11.2 Occupational Health**

- To develop, manage and implement a programme of education to help managers and employees to understand alcohol and drug misuse, the symptoms and the effects.
- To arrange promotional events, and the distribution of literature, so as to raise awareness of "safe drinking" limits, the effects of alcohol and drugs on health, etc.,
- To emphasise the connection between alcohol, drugs and accidents.
- To raise awareness of consumption of alcohol when it compromises health and safety.
- To have an input into induction and initial training courses.
- To refer employees for assistance as appropriate.
- To monitor and evaluate the Policy through the Corporate Health & Safety Group

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Issues considered will be:

- ⇒ number of people identified or self referring for help
- ⇒ number of people seen by PRISM (see Appendix 3 & 4)
- ⇒ number of people contacting Lancaster Counselling
- ⇒ reported attitude of employees to alcohol issue being raised
- ⇒ feedback through training sessions
- ⇒ feedback through team brief

## **12 Role of Line Managers**

- To be familiar with the policy and procedures on alcohol and drug misuse.
- To ensure that the staff are fully conversant with the Alcohol and Drug Misuse Policy and the Disciplinary Procedures.
- To be aware of the effects of alcohol and drug misuse, and to be alert to possible problems.
- To approach the issue sensitively, and not to make moral judgements about employees who may have a problem.
- To accept that employees with a problem will not always be ready, or willing to disclose the problem.
- To set a good example through the non-use of alcohol during the working day.
- To consider the adverse impression caused by the smell of alcohol on the breath of an employee whose job involves direct dealings with the public.
- To refer employees for assistance as appropriate.

## **13 The Role of Employees**

- To be familiar with the policy and procedures.
- To pay heed to the information provided on alcohol and drugs its effects on work, and to act accordingly.
- To recognise the danger of alcohol and drug misuse during work times.
- To seek help if they have a problem, or potential problem.
- To be alert to substance misuse symptoms and offer support and advice to colleagues if you suspect that they have a problem - it

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is a misapprehension that turning a blind eye will protect them. Your silence may cause them more harm.

- To consider the adverse impression caused by the smell of alcohol on the breath where the job involves direct dealings with the public - and therefore to consider avoiding alcohol during the working week.

**14 The Role of Union Officials**

- To encourage their members to seek help where appropriate
- Remind members of their rights and responsibilities under this policy
- Represent members, if requested, in any problem or dispute concerning the application of the policy

**15 The Authority reserve the right to review this Policy and update the contents after consultation with interested parties**

**Personnel Division  
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## Appendix 1

Alcohol and Drug related symptoms can manifest themselves in a number of ways as listed below, though it must be recognised that the following list provides guidance **only**. The following occurrences do not automatically constitute an alcohol problem, whilst an alcohol problem may not always manifest itself as one of the following. However, ***they do indicate health issues that as an employer we have a duty of care to help address.***

### Absenteeism

- multiple instances of unauthorised leave
- excessive sick leave including frequent self-certificated leave
- frequent Monday and/or Friday absences
- frequent weekend absences if on shift work
- excessive lateness e.g. Monday mornings, returning from meal breaks
- peculiar and increasingly improbable excuses for absences
- unusually high absenteeism rate for diarrhoea, colds, flu, gastritis, depression
- frequent unscheduled short-term absences with or without explanation

### High Accident Rate

- reduced safety sense
- frequent accidents at work
- increased accidents outside the workplace
- careless handling and maintenance of equipment

### Difficulty in Concentration

- work requires greater effort
- tasks take more time

### Confusion

- difficulty reading instructions, details, etc.

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- increasing difficulty in handling complex assignments
- difficulty in recalling own mistakes

**Spasmodic Work Patterns**

- alternative periods of high and low performance
- increasing general unreliability and unpredictability
- repeated absences from work base, more than the job requires
- overlong breaks

**Reporting to Work under the Influence**

- coming to work in an obviously inebriated condition
- smelling of alcohol
- hand tremors
- facial flushing, bleary eyes
- increasingly unkempt appearance/lack of personal hygiene

**Generally Deteriorating Job Efficiency**

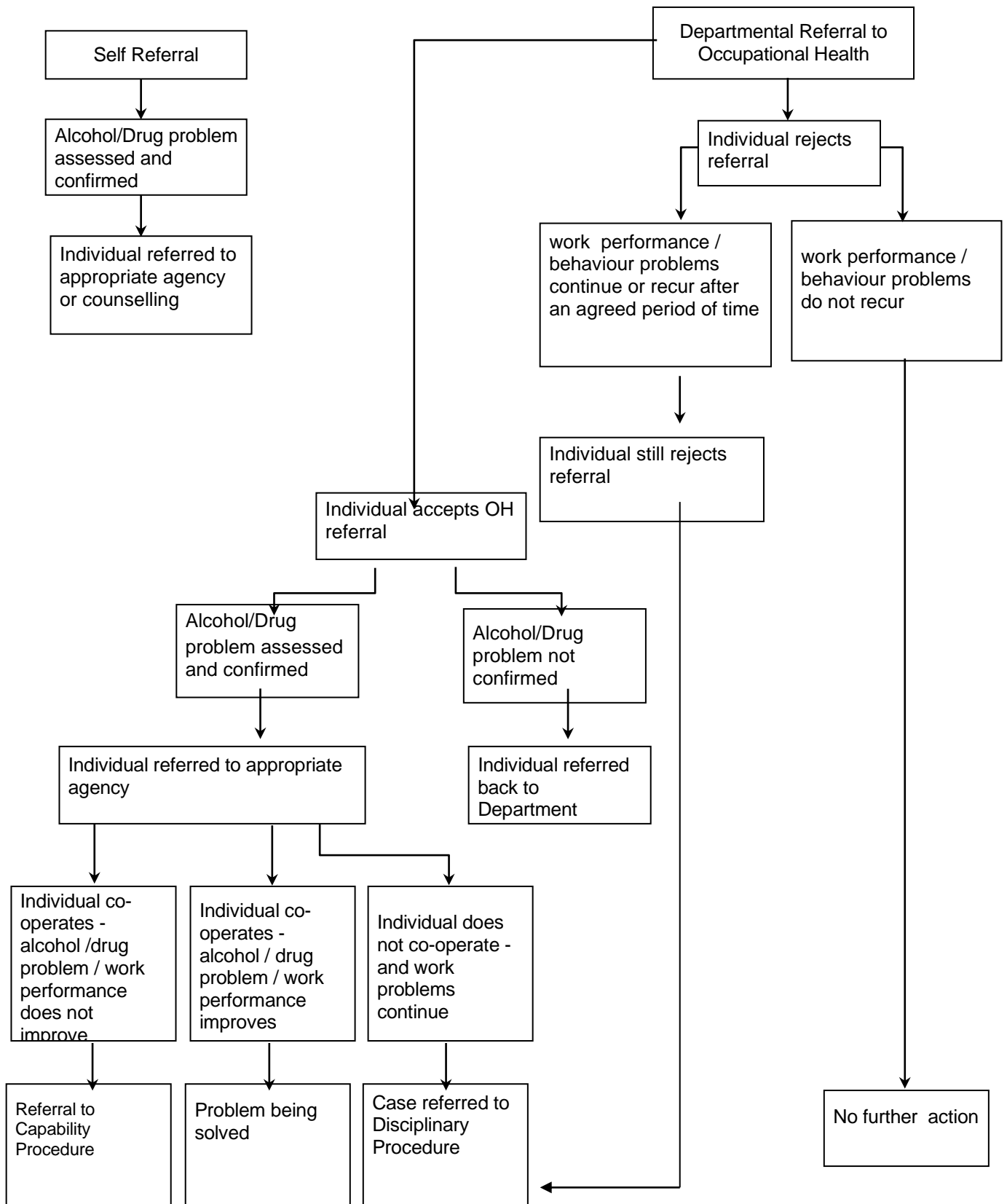
- missed targets
- mistakes due to inattention or poor judgement
- wasting time, inappropriate use of materials
- making bad decisions
- improbable excuses for poor work performance
- over-reaction to real or imaginable criticism
- a reluctance to accept responsibility
- unreasonable resentments
- complaints from colleagues
- borrowing money from colleagues
- avoidance of "boss" or associates
- moodiness, lethargy, irritability;

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**Appendix 2**

**Procedure For Case Handling**

**ALCOHOL/DRUGS**



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### Appendix 3

Help, support, information and advice is available from the following outlets:

#### **Pembrokeshire County Council Personnel Division**

Pembrokeshire County Council  
County Hall  
Haverfordwest  
SA61 1TP  
**01437 764551**

#### **Pembrokeshire County Council Occupational Health**

Pembrokeshire County Council  
Haverfordia House  
Winch Lane  
Haverfordwest  
**01437 775318**

#### **Lancaster Counselling**

Pembrokeshire County Council's employee assistance provider.  
Employees (and their immediate family) can contact Lancaster Counselling 24 hours a day every day of the year. This is a free, confidential service.  
**0800 068 5155** scheme no. 33439

#### **PRISM**

(The Mid and West Wales Alcohol and Drug Advisory Service)  
18 Mariner Square  
Haverfordwest  
**01437 769484**

A voluntary sector organisation which provides free confidential advice, information and support to individuals experiencing problems with their alcohol use and to individuals affected by another's use of alcohol.

All self-referrals to PRISM will be completely confidential

- Management referrals will be treated in confidence between the employee, line manager/personnel division and PRISM.
- Disciplinary referrals will be recorded on the employee's personal file.
- PRISM will liaise with the employee's General Practitioner, with the employee's consent, if required.
- All reports that refer to an employee's alcohol problem will not give any details of any connected personal problems. It will focus entirely on the alcohol problem, the work carried out and any recommendations for future action related to employment.

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Employees can access the service direct in person or by telephone

**Teacher Support Cymru**

www.teachersupport.org.uk

tsc@merlin-digital.co.uk.

**0800 0323 300**

**WWSAT (West Wales Substance Misuse Service)**

2 Priory Street

Milford Haven

Pembrokeshire

SA73 2AD

Telephone: 01646 690327

A statutory agency dealing with drug misuse

**Drug helplines and services**

**National Drugs Helpline (English & Welsh speaking)**

1st Floor

8 Mathew Street

Liverpool

L2 6RE

Telephone: 0800 776600

Offers free and confidential advice about any drugs issue. It can refer people to local advice services.

Telephone: 0800 371141

Service available in Welsh from 10:00 – 14:00 every day. Telephone: 0800 371141

**Release**

020 7603 8654

Charity offers confidential help line offers advice on drugs use and legal issues. [www.release.org.uk](http://www.release.org.uk)

**ADFAM National**

020 7928 8900

Provides a confidential support and information help line for families of people with drug-related problems.

**Families Anonymous**

020 7498 4680

Supports self-help groups around the country for families and friends of people with drug-related problems.

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## Support for alcohol problems

**Alcohol Concern** [www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk)

020 7928 7377

The national agency on alcohol misuse. It offers general information about alcohol and can provide details of local advisory services.

### **Al- Anon**

Family self-help groups provide support and understanding for anyone whose life is deeply affected by someone else's drinking. Contact **London 020 7403 0888** for details of local contacts.

### **AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)**

Free self-help groups offer an abstinence programme to those who wish to stop drinking. Contact on the 24 - hour help-line, **01904 644 026**

### **Drinkline**

0800 917 8282

Gives confidential information and self help advice, can put callers in touch with local alcohol advice centres for one-to-one help, and supports family and friends of people who are drinking.

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