



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

Human  
Resources.

## Drugs and alcohol guidance

### Preamble

The University wishes to promote health and wellbeing amongst its staff, and recognises its duties to ensure a safe campus for staff, students, contractors, visitors and the general public.

The aim of this guidance is to ensure the University remains compliant with safety or legal regulations in respect of the use of drugs or alcohol by its staff, can promote health and wellbeing by enabling line managers and others to support those who may have a problem or dependency, and ensure the University's reputation is not harmed through drugs or alcohol use by its staff.

This document provides guidance for staff and managers, with links to relevant policies in respect of capability, disciplinary and sickness absence management.

A variety of celebratory events are hosted on campus and nothing in this guidance should be viewed as a restriction on such an event being held. However, the University is conscious that the abuse of drugs and alcohol adversely affects health and wellbeing, is not conducive to a safe environment and could lead, in some circumstances, to potential breaches of legislation. Even in moderate use, there are situations where the appearance of having consumed alcohol can undermine confidence in the University on the part of students, the public and others.

### General principle

Staff must report for work, and remain throughout the working day or the duration of their shift, in a fit, capable, professional and safe condition to undertake their duties.

### Definitions

For the purposes of this guidance, *drugs* will include any illegal drugs (and novel psychoactive substances), prescription drugs being consumed other than in line with a valid prescription, and other medicines being taken other than in line with dosage instructions. Solvents or other substances being used for drug-like effects are also included.

*Staff* (or staff member) includes all employees, workers, and casual staff. In some circumstances it may also include agency workers and contractors.

The Disciplinary Procedure states that an example of misconduct would be "conduct detrimentally affected due to alcohol, drug or substance misuse." Gross misconduct would be "serious and detrimentally" in this definition.

### Specified duties

Specified duties are those where consumption of alcohol or drugs could pose a danger to the staff member or another person due to the impairing effect on judgement and physical co-ordination, and

those where the appearance of having consumed alcohol or drugs would have an adverse effect on the reputation of the University. Managers will withdraw staff from these duties if they suspect them to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Staff may identify duties that are required to be drugs and alcohol free, for example through risk assessments, or they may be informed by their line manager. Staff and line managers should regularly assess duties, and review relevant risk assessments, to identify duties that should be specified.

For jobs that include one or more from the range of specified duties, it will be a disciplinary offence to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs when reporting for work or at any point during the working day or shift. This would be managed in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

Specified duties may include, but are not limited to:

- Clinical duties
- Driving
- Duties that directly affect the safety of staff, students, contractors or visitors
- Handling hazardous chemicals or biohazards
- Operating dangerous machinery
- Security

Medicines being consumed in accordance with prescription or over-the-counter instructions can also impair the safe conduct of some duties, including those specified above. Where the staff member has been informed of such effects by their doctor or pharmacist they must report this to their line manager before undertaking such duties, or if any unexpected symptoms are experienced whilst taking the medication. Reasonable adjustments may be required to enable the staff member to continue to attend work safely for the period of taking the medication.

## **Outside working hours**

The University promotes a healthy campus which supports its staff in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Resources are available to staff to making lifestyle choices, including information on the Juice – Everyday Health and Wellbeing website.

The University respects the professionalism and responsibility of its staff, who will be aware that drugs and alcohol consumed outside working hours may impair their ability when next at work. Staff undertaking duties specified above should be especially conscious of this.

Criminal offences due to alcohol or drugs must be declared as a change to criminal records status, in line with the Policy on the Recruitment and Employment of Ex-Offenders.

## **Problematic use of drugs or alcohol**

Where it has emerged that a staff member is recurrently using drugs or alcohol problematically, this is likely to be managed as an illness and therefore any directly associated absence, including those for treatment or rehabilitation, would be considered as sick leave, and managed in accordance with the sickness absence management procedure. Notwithstanding the above, circumstances may arise which need to be considered under the Disciplinary procedure, whether the alcohol problem is dependency-related or not.

Managers who are aware of problematic use should support the staff member to seek assistance, in the first instance this is likely to be their GP; services available at the University include Occupational Health and Staff Helpline. There may be circumstances where a staff member is required to engage with support services, as part of the application of capability or sickness absence procedures.

Staff will be required to withdraw from duties specified as alcohol and drug free until these conditions can be met. The University commits to attempt to find alternative duties at an equivalent level.

Any case which involves alcohol-related problems will be dealt with in strict confidence.

## Help for staff

Staff with concerns about their alcohol or drug use are encouraged to consult their GP in the first instance.

NHS services in Sheffield:

Opiates service [Heroin & derivatives]	Non-opiates service [Other drugs]	Alcohol Service
The Fitzwilliam Centre 143-145 Fitzwilliam St Sheffield S1 4JP	44 Sidney St Sheffield S1 4RH	Matilda St entrance 44 Sidney St Sheffield S1 4RH
0114 30 50 500	0114 272 1481	0114 226 3000

The Staff Helpline is also available to direct staff to further sources of support: 0800 028 1947.

## Help for managers

Human Resources teams are available to assist managers who are concerned that a team member may have a problem with drugs or alcohol. They will be able to advise of further sources of advice and support or if it would be appropriate to invoke other procedures such as sickness absence or disciplinary.

Occupational Health is able to provide input and advice for sources of further support that may be available.

## Further resources

NHS Choices: Alcohol misuse  
[www.nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-misuse](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-misuse)