



**Huntington's
Disease
Association**

Drugs and alcohol policy

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Introduction

This policy sets out the expectations, approach and procedures of the Huntington's Disease Association in relation to alcohol and drug use by those we work with, their relatives, visitors to the charity, staff and volunteers.

The charity is committed to offering support and assistance to employees who may have drug or alcohol related problems. Whilst sympathetic to these problems, the charity recognises that any misuse or abuse of alcohol and drugs presents a serious problem in the workplace.

This policy is informed by our statutory duties as an employer to protect our employees from the harmful effects of unlawful drugs and excessive alcohol consumption and should be read alongside the employee handbook.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all employees of the Huntington's Disease Association as well as subcontractors, consultants, volunteers and representatives from other organisations when working on our premises.

Our commitment

The Huntington's Disease Association is committed to ensuring that

- a safe and healthy environment for employees, volunteers and the people we support is maintained
- drug and alcohol related injuries to people or property are avoided
- applicable laws and legislation are adhered to

Our aim is to act as a good employer and conduct our business activities in a way that will achieve the highest possible standard of health and safety for our employees, visitors and members of the public. This is because we recognise that we can contribute to a safe, healthy and productive work environment by preventing drugs and alcohol problems, by raising awareness, by identifying problems at the earliest stage and by offering support to those who have a problem.

Our expectations

The consumption or possession of alcohol or recreational drugs on charity premises or when carrying out charity activity is strictly forbidden. Staff must never drink alcohol or take recreational drugs (including legal highs) if they are required to drive any vehicles on charity business, or when they are working.

Employees must never drink alcohol or consume recreational drugs immediately before coming to work, or still be under the influence during working hours. If an employee comes to work with a hangover and the health and safety of colleagues is compromised, then that employee may be subject to disciplinary proceedings. The same applies to being under the influence of drugs, or buying, selling or being in possession of illegal substances on charity premises or when carrying out charity activity.

The Huntington's Disease Association has no desire to impinge upon any employee's freedom to consume alcohol out of normal working hours.

The Huntington's Disease Association will only deem there to be a problem when, due to the excessive regular consumption of large amounts, an employee's attendance, performance or conduct becomes erratic or it becomes known that the employee is under the influence during working hours.

If employees attend social business functions outside of working hours and are representing the charity, then the consumption of alcohol is permitted as agreed with their line manager but they are expected to moderate their drinking, and stay well within the legal limit for driving. Consuming drugs on these occasions is strictly forbidden.

If employees are on prescribed legal drugs for any medical reason that may affect their ability to work or prevent them from driving safely as advised by their doctor, they should inform their line manager at once.

Consequences of non-compliance

Failure to adhere to the outlined expectations will amount to a disciplinary offence and, as such, normal charity disciplinary procedures will apply. Should the offence be of a serious nature, then it may be viewed as gross misconduct, resulting in the employee's dismissal.

Under such circumstances, we reserve the right to escort the employee from any charity premises or require the employee to cease remote working for the remainder of the day. Information about organisations who can provide help and advice will be provided as appropriate.

In the case of illegal drug use whilst on charity premises or carrying out charity activity, the Police will be informed.

There may be circumstances where we would ask you to provide an alcoholic or illegal substance test sample. Any refusal to provide a test sample may lead to disciplinary action.

Help and advice

When it is known or suspected that an employee has an alcohol or drug related problem, the staff member's line manager should provide advice and guidance on how to seek professional assistance and support. We urge anyone who feels that they may have a drug or alcohol problem to come forward to discuss this confidentially with their line manager.

If this problem affects this employee's conduct or performance at work, and they refuse to accept the guidance and help that is offered, the matter will be referred for action under normal disciplinary procedures. Similarly, any employee who undergoes counselling and rehabilitation, and later suffers a relapse in conduct and performance will, after review and evaluation, be dealt with through disciplinary channels.

Responsibilities

Employees

It is the responsibility of all employees to adhere to the expectations and procedures outlined within this policy.

Employees are urged to inform their line manager if they have a drug or alcohol problem, which will be discussed confidentially.

Employees should inform their line manager or appropriate manager if they have concerns that a colleague may be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Any such declaration will be treated confidentially in accordance with the charity's whistleblowing policy.

Line managers

It is the responsibility of all managers within the charity to ensure that the expectations and procedures detailed within this policy are adhered to in order to protect the health and safety of staff and those supported by the charity.

In the event of concern relating to a member of staff involving alcohol or drugs, the line manager should:

- discuss the matter with the employee and outline the reasons for concern in the presence of a staff representative if requested
- ensure that the member of staff is aware of the charity's no alcohol or drugs policy and what it means for their rights
- assess whether the incident is an isolated event or part of a pattern indicating the possibility of a more serious health problem
- provide advice and guidance on how to seek professional assistance and support if an alcohol or drug related problem is known or suspected.
- follow the charity's disciplinary process as required.

Line managers are able to suspend an employee to allow opportunity to investigate whether the matter should be dealt with as part of the charity's disciplinary procedure. and/or to require the employee to undergo treatment and rehabilitation.

If it is known, or suspected, that an employee has a drug or alcohol related problem, the line manager should:

- offer help and support for the employee
- advise the employee that they must refer themselves or be referred for confidential counselling and advice to or the charity would be forced to take disciplinary action with immediate effect
- allow time off for treatment in accordance with the normal procedure
- keep the individual's job open if the employee is participating in treatment and/or counselling in an attempt to deal with drug or alcohol abuse
- only take disciplinary action as a last resort if the employee refuses help or if their conduct does not improve as a result of counselling/ treatment.
- Arrange a return to work interview.

If the charity suspects there has been a breach of this policy or the individual's work performance or conduct has been impaired through substance abuse, the line manager reserves the right to request that the individual undergo a medical examination.

The Huntington's Disease Association reserves the right to screen employees for alcohol using a standard breathalyser if a manager believes the employee to be under the influence of alcohol.