



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, 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 and/or involved in charity activities on any other site.

## 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 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 drug 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) when carrying out work for the charity.

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 still impacted by the effects of alcohol and the health and safety of themselves or 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 charity 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.

An exception on the consumption of alcohol may be made if employees are attending social business functions and are representing the charity. In such cases, the consumption of alcohol is permitted as agreed with relevant management. However, it is expected that employees 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, as outlined in the Employee Handbook. 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 may 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.

If the Huntington's Disease Association suspects there has been a breach of this policy or an employee's work performance or conduct has been impaired through substance abuse, the charity reserves the right to request that the individual undergo a medical examination. They may request that the employee is screened for substance use via standard methods such as a breathalyser or drug test.

## **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. The line manager and employee may seek additional advice from HR if needed. We urge anyone who feels that they may have a drug or alcohol problem to come forward to discuss this with their line manager.

All conversations relating to this matter will be treated as confidential, unless there is reason to believe that the employee is at risk of harm to themselves or others. In this situation, only the relevant information may be shared further (for example, with another manager), with the employee's awareness.

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 and the Employee Handbook.

Employees are urged to inform their line manager if they have a drug or alcohol problem, which will be discussed. All conversations relating to this matter will be treated as confidential, unless there is reason to believe that the employee is at risk of harm to themselves or others. In this situation, only the relevant information may be shared further (for example, with another manager), with the employee's awareness.

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 line 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
- seek advice from HR where needed to help guide through the process
- follow the charity's disciplinary process as required.

The charity reserves the right 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
- consider requesting the employee undergoes screening for substance use
- advise the employee to seek professional medical advice, such as referral for confidential counselling
- allow time off for treatment in accordance with the normal absence 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 and risk assessment if appropriate for the role.