

# **Policy on Alcohol and Drug Misuse**

## **1. Introduction.**

**1.1** Alcohol, drugs and substance misuse is defined as the “Intermittent or continual use of alcohol or any drug or other substance, which causes detriment to the individual’s health, social functioning or work performance. It specifically affects an individual’s productivity, efficiency, attendance, time keeping, safety or conduct in the workplace.”

**1.2** The purpose of this policy is to protect the employees of Glasgow Life from the dangers of alcohol and drugs misuse or abuse. Whilst this policy emphasises the organisation’s disciplinary code it also encourages those staff with an alcohol or drugs problem to proactively seek assistance. Glasgow Life remains committed to supporting and improving the welfare and performance of all employees by helping them to effectively manage any alcohol and/or drug issue problems and help them maintain an effective and motivated position in the workforce. As a tangible measure of this commitment Glasgow Life provides an independent referral service to all employees. This confidential service, referred to within this policy as the “Employee Assistance Provider”, offers early intervention, support and assistance via professional counselling and information services.

**1.3** Glasgow Life is committed to meeting its statutory obligations in relation to both;

- The specific provisions of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (as amended).
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, in terms of our general duty to ensure as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its staff by protecting them from hazards.

**1.4** This policy shall cover all employees of Glasgow Life and will be applied fairly and uniformly. This policy does not apply to employees who occasionally drink and due to the influence of alcohol behave in a manner contrary to the normal standard of safety or who commit a serious breach of the Company’s safety and/or conduct rules. Such instances will be dealt with in accordance with normal disciplinary procedures.

## **2. Objective.**

**2.1** The objective of this policy is to ensure all employees of the Company, irrespective of the position and level they hold, are made and kept aware of the dangers of drink and/or drug misuse. The policy aims to encourage any employee with a problem to seek help and guidance in the first instance from their supervisor / manager or from Human Resources. As an alternative, staff may make direct contact with Glasgow Life’s independent referral service provider. A further objective of this policy is to educate employees in the benefits of drinking in moderation as part of the Company’s promotion and general policies for a healthy working life.

**2.2** The above objectives will be achieved by:-

**2.2.1** Informing new employees at their induction of the benefits of moderate drinking and the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse.

**2.2.2** Taking reasonable steps to raise employee awareness of the risks involved in the misuse of alcohol and drugs, keeping all employees informed through an ongoing programme of education and training.

**2.2.3** Arranging advice and counselling for any employee who voluntarily comes forward with an alcohol and/or drug problem.

**2.2.4** Preserving the employment of those employees who co-operate with a recommended programme of counselling.

**2.2.5** Publicising the policy continuously in the workplace.

### **3. Alcohol and Drug Misuse.**

#### **3.1 Attendance at Work**

Glasgow Life requires staff to attend work free from the effects of alcohol and or drugs, and to remain so for the duration of their time on duty. This is to include periods of time when an employee is on a meal break, a rest period or about to report for duty. As detailed within Glasgow Life's disciplinary procedures, it is unacceptable for an employee to be (or appear to be) unfit for work through the misuse of alcohol and/or drugs. Any employee who, in the opinion of his/her supervisor/manager, is unfit for work due to alcohol and/or drugs will be suspended with pay, pending a formal investigation. Employees, who fail to observe the provisions of this policy, will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with relevant procedures, details of which are available from the HR Section.

Early identification of an alcohol and/or drug misuse problem will lead to a quicker recovery and Glasgow Life requires that those employees who suspect or know they have a problem will come forward voluntarily to seek help and guidance. If necessary, the employee will be granted leave to undergo treatment. Such leave will be treated as sick leave within the terms of the company sick pay scheme.

#### **3.2 Disciplinary Procedure - Drugs and/or Alcohol Abuse**

Under the "Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (as amended)" Glasgow Life may be committing an offence if it is aware that prohibited drugs are being used or distributed on its premises. We therefore have an obligation to inform the Police in this respect.

## 4. Employee Assistance Provider.

**4.1** As neither management nor trade union representatives are qualified to diagnose problem drinking or drug misuse, the Company will use an independent referral service known as the “Employee Assistance Provider” for the expert support and guidance involved. This independent referral service will assess the nature and extent of any problem and where appropriate recommend counselling. Related medical problems may also be referred to the Company’s Occupational Health Service provider.

## 5. Types of Referral.

**5.1** In most circumstances employees will be referred to the independent “Employee Assistance Provider” unless under the circumstances detailed in sections 6 and 8 of this policy.

**5.2** Referrals can be made to the “Employee Assistance Provider” in the following ways:-

**5.2.1 Self Referral** where an employee referral remains confidential to the individual. On recognition of a problem or potential problem regarding alcohol and/or drugs misuse, an employee may seek help from the 24-hour free telephone service directly. Such a referral will be confidential between the employee and the relevant counsellor and management will have no involvement.

**5.2.2 Authorised Management Referral** where management (in liaison with Human Resources) arrange an appointment, grant the employee the necessary time off with pay to attend counselling sessions with the “Employee Assistance Provider” and receive confidential confirmation that progress is being made and attendance being maintained.

Employees who come to the notice of management through work or health deterioration or behaviour associated with alcohol or drug related problems will be encouraged to take the opportunity immediately to seek diagnosis and if necessary, assistance to overcome the problem. Management will arrange an initial appointment through Human Resources and grant the necessary time off with pay for employees to attend counselling sessions.

**5.2.3 Disciplinary Referral** where disciplinary action is suspended pending assessment and help from the “Employee Assistance Provider”.

Employees who come to the notice of management through work performance or health deterioration or behaviour associated with alcohol or drug related problems will be encouraged to take the opportunity immediately to seek diagnosis and if necessary, assistance to overcome the problem. Management will arrange an initial appointment via Human Resources and grant the necessary time off with pay for employees to attend counselling sessions.

If the employee is accepted by the “Employee Assistance Provider” as having an alcohol or drug related problem, disciplinary procedures will be suspended providing the employee co-operates and successfully undertakes counselling.

Disciplinary action will not be implemented provided there is a satisfactory and sustained improvement in performance/conduct. The officer chairing the disciplinary hearing will confirm the terms of referral to the employee in writing making clear the implications of non-compliance.

If the "Employee Assistance Provider" confirms there is no alcohol and/or drug related problem, the employee cannot therefore be considered for counselling and the disciplinary hearing will be reconvened under the terms of the Company's Code of Discipline.

If the "Employee Assistance Provider" confirms a requirement for counselling, but the employee does not complete this, the disciplinary hearing will be reconvened under the terms of the Company's Code of Discipline. It is the employee's decision whether or not he/she undertakes and completes a recommended programme of counselling. It is management's responsibility in discussion with Human Resources to take the appropriate action if an employee fails to undertake and successfully complete the counselling.

## **6. Exceptions.**

**6.1** The policy applies to employees who have an identified problem as a result of the continuous or intermittent use of drink and/or drugs leading to dependence or harm which affects work performance. The application of this policy is limited to those instances of alcohol or drug related problems which affect the health and/or work performance/conduct of the employee

**6.2** As previously stated, this policy does not apply to employees who, occasionally drink and due to the influence of alcohol behave in a manner contrary to the normal standard of safety or who commit a serious breach of the Company's safety and/or conduct rules. Such instances will be dealt with in accordance with normal disciplinary procedures.

## **7. Terms of Referral (Authorised Management and Disciplinary Referrals).**

**7.1** In all instances the encouragement to seek and accept Counselling is on the clear understanding that:

**7.1.1** The employee complies with the recommended counselling.

**7.1.2** Any employee undertaking recognised counselling must observe total abstinence during working hours.

**7.1.3** The employee exhibits no signs of being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs when reporting for duty or during working hours.

**7.1.4** A sustained improvement in work performance, commitment and behaviour is demonstrated e.g. timekeeping, attendance, work performance/conduct.

**7.1.5** The necessary time off with pay will be granted to employees to attend counselling sessions.

**7.1.6** Where a course of full time treatment is recommended, such leave will be treated as sick leave.

**7.1.7** Every effort will be made to ensure the employee, will be able to continue to do the same job unless continuing that same job would risk undermining a return to a satisfactory level of job performance or it is mutually agreed that a change will be desirable or beneficial.

**7.1.8** Failure to comply with these terms of referral or the commission of further breach of discipline will lead to a resumption of the disciplinary hearing.

## **8. Consideration of Re-Referral.**

**8.1** After or during Counselling should work performance suffer as a result of alcohol/drug related problems each case will be considered on its merits and, if appropriate, a further opportunity to co-operate with assistance may be offered.

## **9. Policy Application.**

**9.1** The Policy is applicable to all employees irrespective of the position they hold.

**9.2** The Policy is complementary to the Company's Disciplinary Code and Procedures, Occupational Health Service and the Company's Employee Assistance Service.

**9.3** The application of this policy is limited to those instances where an alcohol or drug problem affects the health and/or work performance/conduct of the employee.

**9.4** The policy does not apply to employees who commit a serious breach of the Company's conduct rules, such instances will be dealt with in accordance with normal disciplinary procedures.

## **10. Role of the Employee of the Assistance Provider.**

**10.1** The Employee Assistance Provider has a dual role. It assists the employers to review and maintain policies on alcohol/drugs and other related problems.

**10.2** It also provides an employee counselling service to which employees have access in the strictest confidence and where no information of a personal or confidential nature is passed to the employer or union representative without the employee's consent.

**10.3** The Employee Assistance Provider is independent of management/trade union influence and operates completely out with the work environment.

**10.4** The Employee Assistance Provider will investigate the nature of the problem and, if alcohol/drug misuse is identified, it will provide a counselling service suited to the individual.

## **11. Training.**

**11.1** HR will ensure the development and provision of training to employees to:

**11.1.1** Alert them to the risks associated with alcohol/drug misuse and promote progressive change of attitude regarding their use.

**11.1.2** Make them aware that professional and sympathetic help is available.

**11.1.3** Reduce the tendency to collusion and cover up of alcohol/drug misuse by fellow employees/supervisors/managers.

## **12. Education Relative to the Effects of Alcohol/Drugs.**

**12.1** Education on the harmful effects of alcohol/drugs and the benefits and means of identification of those suffering from its misuse will be made available to employees and will include information on:-

**12.1.1** What constitutes problem drinking, its symptoms and side effects and benefits of early identification?

**12.1.2** How the misuse of alcohol can lead to dependence and the harmful effects this can have on health work attitudes and performance.

**12.1.3** The effects of alcohol on performance at work and on the risk of injury.

**12.1.4** How an employee can learn to monitor and control his/her own alcohol intake and understand the benefits of drinking moderately.

**12.1.5** The responsibilities of management and employees towards themselves and colleagues under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 with a view to encouraging problem drinkers to seek help at an early stage.

## **13. Prescribed Medication.**

**13.1** Prescribed medication and some over-the-counter drugs such as anti-depressants, sleeping pills or hay fever remedies can cause drowsiness and loss of concentration.

These effects increase the risk of accidents particularly for staff operating machinery or working at heights. Staff taking medication have a duty to ascertain potential side effects from their GP or pharmacist and to inform their supervisor / line manager if there are any safety implications. Further advice may be obtained from Glasgow Life's Occupational Healthcare provider.

## 14. Useful Internal/ External Contacts.

### 14.1 Internal Contacts.

- The appropriate Supervisor / Line Manager.
- The Human Resources Department
- Employee Assistance Provider (insert contact telephone number)
- Appropriate Trade Union Representative.

### 14.2 External Contacts.

National Drugs Helpline – 0800 776600

A confidential and free helpline for anyone in the UK concerned about drug abuse.

<http://www.talktofrank.com/>