Alcohol and Drug / Substance Misuse Policy

Policy information

Policy number: 283
Classification: Employment
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Approval information

Approved by: People Organisation Development & Culture Committee *PODCC*
Date of approval: 19.05.2026
Date made active: 11.09.2026
Review date: 19.05.2029

Summary of document: This policy supports the Health Board's commitment to the health and wellbeing of staff and its aim of ensuring staff are guided by helpful and useful policies to promote healthier lifestyles.

Scope: This policy applies to all Health Board employees and bank workers.

To be read in conjunction with:
768 – Attendance at Work All Wales Policy – opens in a new tab
336 - Guidance on Referral of Employees to the Occupational health Service – opens in a new tab
201 – All Wales Disciplinary Policy – opens in a new tab
340 - Staff Psychological Wellbeing Policy – opens in a new tab
203 – All Wales Capability Policy – opens in a new tab
010 - Health and Safety Policy. – opens in a new tab
488 - Professional bodies guidance and Upholding professional standards for Medical and Dental staff.
995 – All Wales Respect & Resolution Policy – opens in a new tab

Owning group: Workforce & OD Sub Committee
Executive Director job title: Director of Workforce & OD

Reviews and updates:

1	New Policy	April 2012
2	Review – minor amendments	24 May 2016
3	Minor amendments to PRISM contact details page 8	30 August 2017
4	Full review	19 March 2019
5	Full review	15.2.2023
6	Full review	

Keywords: Alcohol, Drugs, Substance, Misuse

Introduction

The Health Board recognises its duty to take care of the health, safety and welfare of employees who have alcohol or drug/substance misuse and is committed to providing support. The Health Board also has a responsibility to protect other employees, patients and members of the public and to ensure that any risk is minimised. If an employee is observed in the workplace in a potentially unfit state due to alcohol, drug or substance misuse they could be the subject of disciplinary action.

Policy statement

This policy supports the Health Board's commitment to the health and wellbeing of staff.

Scope

This policy covers alcohol, drug/substance misuse problems and applies to all Health Board employees and bank workers.

Aim

The aim of this document is to:

- Ensure the Health Board provides support to employees with alcohol and drug/substance misuse related problems ensuring that employees are treated according to their circumstances and needs
- Balance the needs of the individual with delivering safe patient care and a safe working environment for all employees

Objectives

The aim of this document will be achieved by the following objectives:

- To ensure that the principles of equity and consistency are applied when dealing with employees who may have alcohol and drug/substance misuse related problem and to support the Health and Wellbeing of those employees.
- To ensure Alcohol or substance misuse problems will be treated as employee health problems and individuals will be treated sympathetically and offered support and assistance in overcoming the problem

Principles

Where a line-manager observes, or is advised of concerns relating to the conduct or performance of a work colleague, with reference to potential use of alcohol or drugs / substance misuse the steps outlined in the Guidance – Alcohol and Drugs / Substance Misuse, section 2 – opens in a new tab - will be followed.

In the event that an employee is observed in work in what their manager or colleagues consider to be potentially an unfit state due to alcohol, drug or substance misuse, the steps outlined in the Guidance – Alcohol and Drugs / Substance Misuse, section 2 – opens in a new tab - will be followed.

An employee with alcohol, drug and substance misuse related problems will be required to co-operate fully with any referral or treatment recommended by the Occupational Health Department.

It is recognised that employees may unexpectedly be called into work to cover staff shortages or to respond to a major incident. Employees will be expected to behave responsibly and if they had consumed alcohol or substances, they must not report for duty and must inform their line manager that they are unable to fulfil their duties. They would then not be in breach of this policy.

The 201 – All Wales Disciplinary Policy – opens in a new tab - will be applied where it is determined that an individual has:

- Attended work or carried out work duties under the influence of alcohol, drugs or any other substance;
- Consumed alcohol or inappropriate drugs or other substances whilst at work or on duty.

Any member of staff proven to have brought in or consumed an illicit drug on the organisation's premises will be reported to the police who will undertake the relevant investigations.

Appeals

Any appeal arising from the application of this policy will be dealt with under the 995 – All Wales Respect & Resolution Policy – opens in a new tab - appeals procedure.

Responsibilities

Chief Executive

As Accountable Officer, the Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring the health board has appropriate WCDs in place. These WCDs must comply with legislation, meet mandatory requirements, and provide services that are safe, evidenced-based and sustainable.

Director of W&OD

Has responsibility for ensuing that this policy is monitored and reviewed on a 3 yearly basis.

Managers Role

- Ensure that all staff are aware of and adhere to this policy and understand its implications.
- Ensure they treat all alcohol, drug and substance misuse related cases confidentially and with sensitivity.
- Support employees at work and encourage them to seek help voluntarily in the first instance.
- Ensure they are aware of the health, safety and welfare of their staff.

Employees Role

- Seek appropriate support and advice from their manager, Occupational Health Department, Workforce or their GP as appropriate if a problem is identified personally or concerns arise regarding a colleague.
- Avoid covering up for or colluding with colleagues and advise their manager if a work colleague has a suspected alcohol, drug and substance misuse related problem that is endangering the safety of other staff, patients or the public.
- To behave responsibly about consuming alcohol or substances and to remember that they must comply with their professional codes of practice at all times.

Occupational Health Department Role

- Provide support, guidance and advice to managers and staff
- Respond to referrals from Managers

- Provide an impartial, confidential service to staff which includes advice or referral/signposting to another agency.
- Raise awareness of this policy and actively promote health promotion initiatives in relation to alcohol, drug and substance misuse.

Workforce Role

- Co-ordinate the monitoring of the effectiveness of this policy.
- Provide advice, guidance and support when required.
- Ensure fairness and consistency in the treatment of all employees.
- Refer employees to external bodies where appropriate.
- Advise on the appropriateness of invoking disciplinary procedures.

Staff side Role

- Encourage their members to seek help where appropriate.
- Inform members of their rights and responsibilities under this policy.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed in three years' time. Earlier review may be required in response to exceptional circumstances, organisational change or relevant changes in legislation or guidance.