

Sutton-in-Craven Parish Council  
**ALCOHOL AND DRUGS POLICY**  
[4<sup>th</sup> March 2024]

**Alcohol and drugs**

Alcohol and drug misuse can have an adverse effect not just on an individual but on their colleagues, customers and the public. Having a safe working environment, providing excellent service by maintaining productivity levels and avoiding days being lost to illness are all critical to the Council's success.

The Council requires all employees to comply with the alcohol and drugs policy. Breaches of the policy will be taken very seriously and may be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedure.

For the purpose of this policy, the term 'drugs' means illegal substances (or legal substances which induce similar effects to legal drugs) or other substances, for example, solvents. Drug misuse also refers to the misuse of prescribed medication.

For the purpose of this policy, the Council expects that councillors will also adhere to the general provisions regarding misuse.

**Policy**

The Council strongly discourages employees from drinking any alcohol or taking drugs prior to driving or reporting to work. Employees must not attend work, or perform their work duties, under the influence of alcohol or drugs under any circumstances.

Employees must not drink alcohol or take drugs during working time, or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Working time is any time between when an employee reports for work and the time they finish work and includes lunchtimes. It includes any period of call out whilst on standby duty or overtime working.

The use, possession, storage, transportation, promotion and/or sale of drugs or drug equipment is forbidden during working time, whether in the workplace or at another location on business.

Employees may be required to undergo testing for alcohol or drugs in their system in certain circumstances.

**Prescribed medication**

The policy does not stop employees from using prescribed medication, over-the-counter medication or herbal remedies. However, medication such as tranquillisers, sleeping pills, painkillers, decongestants, cough suppressants, antihistamines (for treatment of hay fever or other allergies) and antidepressants can make people feel drowsy and may affect their work performance or the safety of themselves or others. If an employee is taking any medication they should:

- check the possible side effects with their doctor or pharmacist and
- let their line manager know, in confidence, that they are taking medication and the possible side effects. Their line manager will, if necessary, make alternative arrangements for them.

**Assistance**

If an employee comes forward voluntarily and seeks help for an alcohol or drug problem they will be given help and support by the Council. If an employee thinks they have a problem and may be violating this policy as a result, the Council strongly encourages them to come forward and seek help. The Council will be sympathetic and ensure the employee gets the help and support they need which may include direction to external specialists. If an employee volunteers information to the Council that they have an alcohol or drug problem they will be treated with dignity at all times.

Any discussions will be in the strictest of confidence.

The Council recognises that employees may continue to struggle with alcohol or drug dependency even after they have sought and are receiving assistance. The Council will make every effort to provide ongoing support to employees.

**Absence**

If employees are absent from work due to their attendance for treatment in relation to alcohol or drug abuse, that absence will be treated as normal sickness absence.

**Formal procedures**

Whilst the Council will be sympathetic to employees who are experiencing difficulties with alcohol and drugs, it may be appropriate to implement a disciplinary or capability procedure as appropriate where conduct or performance is not satisfactory, which could result in termination of employment.

Criminal activity in the workplace involving drugs will, in every case, require the Council to alert the police.

**Work events**

Some employees and councillors will, in the course of their duties, attend events with external bodies/persons for various purposes. It may be that, during some of these events, alcohol will be readily available. At these events, employees and councillors are permitted to drink alcohol but must not allow themselves to surpass reasonable levels, become intoxicated or allow their judgement to become impaired. Where councillors are attending an external event and formerly representing the Council, they are reminded that they are subject to the Council's adopted Code of Conduct.