

LYTHE PARISH COUNCIL ALCOHOL AND DRUGS POLICY

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.

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 volunteer's information to the Council that they have an alcohol or drug problem they will be always treated with dignity.

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.

Adopted at the Lythe Parish Council meeting on 13 May 2024, minute ref 3.9.

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.

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(Source: CIPD HR)