

# **Alcohol and Drug Misuse Policy**

---

**Version 7**

**Greater Manchester Police**

**16<sup>th</sup> May 2019**



**POLICY IMPLEMENTED:** 25 November 2013

**REVIEW DATE:** May 2021

**POLICY OWNER:** HR Branch

**APPROVED BY:** Chief Officers Group

**ASSOCIATED POLICY:** Procedure included

---

## Table of Contents

1.	Introduction and Background.....	1
2.	Scope.....	1
3.	Terms and Definitions.....	1
4.	Roles & Responsibilities.....	1
5.	Principles.....	3
5.1	Single Occasion.....	3
5.2	Early Action.....	3
5.3	Risk Assessment.....	4
5.4	Alcohol Use.....	4
5.5	Criminal Offences.....	4
5.6	Confidentiality.....	4
5.7	Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act.....	4
5.8	Contractors.....	4
5.9	Appeal Rights.....	4
5.10	Monitoring and Review.....	5
5.11	Record Keeping.....	5
6.	Procedure.....	5
6.1	Suspicion of Alcohol or Drug Misuse.....	5
6.2	You accept you have an alcohol or drug problem.....	5
6.3	You don't accept you have an alcohol or drug problem.....	6
6.4	Following sickness absence.....	6
6.5	Following a potential misconduct offence.....	6
7.	Statutory Compliance.....	7
8.	Appendices.....	7
	Appendix A – Causes of Excessive Drinking or Drug Misuse.....	7
	Appendix B – The Effects of Excessive Drinking or Drug Misuse.....	7
	Appendix C – Recognising someone has a Drink or Drugs Problem.....	8

---

## 1. Introduction and Background

### Policy Statement

Greater Manchester Police expect all its staff to behave in a manner whether on or off duty, which does not bring discredit on the police service or undermine public confidence in policing. We will not accept the misuse of alcohol or of legal or illegal drugs. We recognise that this could affect anyone and those who do so are at risk of harm.

We'll take appropriate action if someone commits the criminal offence of possessing or supplying illegal drugs.

We'll offer help to staff who may have an Alcohol or Drug Misuse problem.

### Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote and maintain a healthy and safe working environment.
- Raise awareness of misuse so it can be prevented and effectively managed.
- Encourage staff to admit they have a problem and remove the fear of seeking help.
- Bring staff back to work where they've controlled their misuse and where it's supported by medical professionals.
- Protect members of the public from the consequences of Drug and Alcohol Misuse.
- Maintain an efficient and effective level of service to the public.

---

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all police officers, police staff, special constables and volunteers.

Where we refer to 'staff' in this policy, it also applies to all those in scope unless we say otherwise.

---

## 3. Terms and Definitions

### Alcohol Misuse

Any use of alcohol that harms social or physical action.

### Drug Misuse

Any use of illegal, prescribed and non-prescribed drugs that harms social or physical action.

### Vulnerable Role

A job where staff have a specific responsibility for handling drugs.

---

## 4. Roles & Responsibilities

### **Responsibilities of the Chief Constable**

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 the Chief Constable is responsible for making sure that effective policies are in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of:

- all staff, and
- any member of the public who could be affected by our work.

### **Responsibilities of Managers**

Managers must:

- Carry out risk assessments as required under this policy and in the interests of health and safety.
- Act on advice they're given.
- Refer cases to the Occupational Health and Welfare Unit for their views and recommendations.

### **Responsibilities of HR Branch**

The Head of HR Branch will:

- Monitor cases brought to their attention.
- Review the application and effectiveness of this policy.

Greater Manchester Shared Services (GMSS) will:

- Give advice on the practical application of this policy.
- .
- Advise managers dealing with work performance issues through the Standards, Performance and Attendance Policy.
- Advise managers on reasonable targets and timescales for improvement based on medical information where it's available.

The Occupational Health and Welfare Unit (OHWU) will:

- Encourage the early identification of drug and alcohol problems by raising awareness and providing guidance to managers and staff.
- Give advice when they're made aware of a Drug or Alcohol Misuse problem. This might be to the manager or the individual.
- Encourage staff to see their GP for treatment.
- Give management advice about appropriate action.
- Give guidance on suitable external agencies and treatments.
- Give advice on fitness for their role if staff refuse treatment or treatment isn't successful.

### **Responsibilities of Professional Standard Branch**

Professional Standards Branch will:

- Give advice on using the Police Misconduct Procedures to deal with Drug or Alcohol Misuse.
- Give advice on using the Discipline Policy for police staff to deal with Drug or Alcohol Misuse.
- Give advice on the requirement for alcohol or drug testing.

## Responsibilities of Staff

All staff:

- If you have concerns that colleague has an alcohol or drug problem you should discuss this with your manager. You mustn't cover up for a colleague as this won't help them and could compromise you.
- You can report concerns over integrity to the Crimestoppers Integrity Line 0800 555 111.
- Have the duty to take reasonable care of yourself and anyone else who may be affected by your work.

If you're misusing alcohol or drugs we expect you to:

- Accept you have a problem.
- Accept responsibility for your condition and speak to your GP.
- Seek support and advice from the Occupational Health and Welfare Unit or Employee Assistant Programme.
- Follow any advice you're given and co-operate with your treatment.
- Make sure your work performance is to a satisfactory level.

Trade Unions, staff associations and staff support networks may:

- Encourage a staff member to get help for a Drug or Alcohol Misuse problem.
- Accompany a staff member to a with cause drug screening.
- Not cause delay to a drug test they have been asked to accompany someone to.
- Attend a meeting between the staff member, manager and/or Professional Standards Branch when requested to do so.

Contractors:

- Contractors are subject to this policy when working on our sites.

---

## 5. Principles

### 5.1 Single Occasion

This policy won't be used unless there's evidence of a repeated drug or alcohol problem. A single occasion of Alcohol or Drug Misuse leading to a conduct or performance issue will be dealt with under the appropriate policy.

### 5.2 Early Action

An alcohol or drug problem that's allowed to continue for a long period of time increases the risk of damage to:

- health
- psychological stability, and
- social well-being.

We'll try to identify anyone who's starting to be affected by Alcohol or Drug Misuse early. We'll encourage them to admit they've got a problem. We'll help them to seek counselling and other treatment.

We'll consider this to be a medical condition. If you take any time off work will be recorded as sickness absence in line with the Attendance Policy.

### 5.3 Risk Assessment

Every case will be dealt with individually. This will always involve a risk assessment to minimise:

- the risk of safety to our staff
- the risk to the public, and
- any impact on the integrity of our service.

### 5.4 Alcohol Use

You have a responsibility to make sure when on duty or at work you're fit to carry out your responsibilities. Therefore you must not:

- drink alcohol before or during a period of duty if it will affect your performance or take you over the prescribed limit as set out in the Alcohol and Drug Testing Policy.
- use illegal drugs
- misuse legal drugs or substances

If you do this may lead to disciplinary action

There are certain posts where staff must not consume any alcohol at all either before starting duty or during breaks. We'll decide what these posts are by doing a risk assessment.

### 5.5 Criminal Offences

You'll be subject to criminal proceedings and possible dismissal for:

- possessing illegal drugs
- supplying illegal drugs, and
- drink driving.

It doesn't matter if the offences are committed while you're on duty or off duty.

### 5.6 Confidentiality

If you tell us that you have a Drug or Alcohol Misuse or you refer yourself to OHWU for help we'll treat this confidentially wherever possible. The exception to this is when others might be at risk.

If you need time off for treatment or appointments we won't tell anyone the reason unless you agree.

### 5.7 Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act

You have a personal responsibility to declare any matter that may affect your credibility as a witness in a court case. This responsibility comes before complete confidentiality. You'll be reminded of your responsibility if you tell us you have a Drug or Alcohol Misuse problem.

### 5.8 Contractors

Contractors will be asked if they have an Alcohol and Drug Misuse Policy. For some contracts the answer will be used when we consider tenders.

### 5.9 Appeal Rights

If you're not satisfied with the application of this policy you have the right to use the Grievance Policy.

## 5.10 Monitoring and Review

We'll review the effectiveness of this policy against information such as:

- levels of sickness absence
- referrals to OHWU
- the number of accidents, and
- the number of discipline hearings

related to Drug or Alcohol Misuse.

Professional Standards Branch will record and monitor their decisions for consistency.

## 5.11 Record Keeping

If we take any action under this policy it'll be recorded and we'll keep a copy on your personal file.

---

# 6. Procedure

## 6.1 Suspicion of Alcohol or Drug Misuse

If we suspect that you're misusing alcohol or drugs and this is affecting your performance at work, we'll speak to you about this sympathetically as soon as it's noticed. We'll carry out a risk assessment immediately if we believe the safety of you, your colleagues or the public is threatened.

If we receive intelligence or information about alleged Drug or Alcohol Misuse from a third party:

- your Borough Commander/Branch Head will be made aware of the circumstances
- we'll discuss this with Professional Standards Branch
- you may be asked to attend an interview, and/or
- you may have a With Cause Test under the [Alcohol and Drug Testing Policy](#).

## 6.2 You accept you have an alcohol or drug problem

If you tell us that you have a problem with Drug or Alcohol Misuse we'll:

- encourage you to seek help from your GP
- tell you what help is available from Occupational Health and Welfare
- consider whether a Wellness Action Plan will help us to support you at this time
- remind you of your responsibility to declare this to the CPS if relevant
- discuss your work performance, and
- tell you that we may take formal action if you don't respond to help or treatment.

We'll consider appropriate adjustments to your role during any treatment and for an agreed time afterwards. This'll be with the advice of OHWU and subject to operational needs.

If you respond to help but your conduct or performance later slips we'll consider the circumstances. We may:



- offer you further help and time to improve, or
- begin formal action under the Standards, Performance and Attendance Policy or Discipline/Misconduct action.

### **6.3 You don't accept you have an alcohol or drug problem**

If you don't acknowledge Alcohol or Drug Misuse you may be required to take a test. The Borough Commander/Branch Head will do a risk assessment in relation to:

- keeping the confidence of the public in the police service
- safety in your current role, and
- safety in future roles.

You could be removed from your current role and given temporary duties.

If you don't accept you have a problem but display unsatisfactory conduct or performance we'll consider action under the appropriate policy such as the Standards, Performance and Attendance Policy or Discipline/Misconduct.

### **6.4 Following sickness absence**

After a period of sickness absence your manager will ask you about any medication you're taking that may affect your performance or safety. We may seek advice from Occupational Health and Welfare about the affects.

### **6.5 Following a potential misconduct offence**

If you commit or are investigated for an alcohol or drug related misconduct offence when they decide whether to take formal action Professional Standards Branch will consider:

- if you're currently having expert guidance or treatment either voluntarily or through a management referral, and
- if you're co-operating with this help, guidance or treatment.

They'll record their decision and reasons.

If at first they decide not to take formal action they may reconsider if you:

- don't co-operate with expert help, guidance or treatment
- reject their help
- still have an Alcohol or Drug Misuse problem
- continue to have unacceptable behaviour, standards or performance, or
- commit further offences that justify disciplinary action.

If you commit any other type of misconduct offence and Professional Standards Branch believe Alcohol or Drug Misuse is directly or indirectly involved they'll decide whether to take formal action in line with the Police (Conduct) Regulations or Police Staff Discipline Policy.

---

## 7. Statutory Compliance

### Data Protection Act (2018) & GDPR

The Policy is compliant with the Data Protection Act and Regulation.

### Freedom of Information Act (2000)

The policy is disclosable under the Freedom of Information Act.

### Equality Act 2010

This policy is compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Additional steps have been taken to make sure that staff who may have a disability are not unduly impacted by this policy. Care has been taken to highlight that certain signs of alcohol or drug misuse may also be symptoms of illness or disability and assumptions should not be made when addressing this with staff.

---

## 8. Appendices

[Appendix A – Causes of Excessive Drinking or Drug Misuse](#)

[Appendix B – The Effects of Excessive Drinking or Drug Misuse](#)

[Appendix C – Recognising someone has a Drink or Drugs Problem](#)

### Appendix A – Causes of Excessive Drinking or Drug Misuse

Medical experts view alcohol as a drug that someone can become socially, psychologically and physically dependent on if they drink excessively.

There's no single cause of Drug Misuse or excessive drinking. It can be a combination of:

- a person's character, and
- external pressures that are
  - physical and/or
  - emotional.

It can take on a number of different forms depending on:

- the person
- the environment, and
- the stage the problem has reached.

### Appendix B – The Effects of Excessive Drinking or Drug Misuse

Drug Misuse or Alcohol Misuse over a long period is a serious health risk. Unless it's identified and treated it can:

- result in mental and physical damage
- lead to inefficiency and a reduction in work performance

- affect the safety of others, and
- upset family, social and work relationships.

Some of the affects of Drug Misuse are:

- Physical dependence resulting from the body getting used to the presence of the drug.
- Psychological dependence where the person thinks they need the drug to 'cope' with life. This can lead to mental health problems such as:
  - anxiety
  - paranoia
  - psychosis, and
  - hallucinations.
- Physical health risks can result from injecting drugs
  - Hepatitis or HIV infection
  - Septicaemia
  - Thrombosis
  - abscesses
  - brain damage, and
  - overdose.

## **Appendix C – Recognising someone has a Drink or Drugs Problem**

Remember:

- the signs below may be caused by other factors such as a disability or illness
- you shouldn't assume Alcohol or Drug Misuse, and
- someone with a drug or alcohol problem may try to cover up these signs.

The signs that someone has an Alcohol or Drug Misuse problem might include:

- reduced work performance
- making persistent mistakes or errors of judgement
- fatigue, lack of concentration and memory slips
- failure to meet deadlines and blaming others for failing
- reluctance to accept responsibility
- moodiness, irritability, uncharacteristic behaviour and over sensitivity to criticism
- becoming a 'loner' and deliberately seeking isolation from colleagues
- unexplained injuries and accidents
- unexplained absences during the working day
- poor timekeeping
- frequent absences from work explained as minor illnesses
- physical signs such as trembling hands, facial flushing, bleary eyes, lowering of personal standards of cleanliness, hygiene and dress
- reduced safety awareness shown by careless handling of mechanical or other equipment
- regularly borrowing small amounts of money from colleagues
- changes in drinking habits such as drinking early in the morning, and
- the smell of alcohol on their breath at unusual times of the day.