

# POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Solihull  
Life  
Opportunities

St Andrew's Centre  
Pike Drive  
Chelmsley Wood  
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Charity No. 1102297  
England Company No.  
5025939

## Alcohol & Drugs

**Category:** staff and volunteers

### Introduction

It is the policy and duty of Solihull Life Opportunities to maintain a safe, healthy and productive working environment for all employees, volunteer, members, contractors and visitors. Solihull Life Opportunities therefore prohibits the illicit use, possession, sale, conveyance, distribution or manufacture of illegal drugs, intoxicants, or controlled substances in any amount.

In recognition of the continued and growing problem of substance abuse in society, Solihull Life Opportunities will act to prevent and eliminate, in so far as it is reasonably possible, any such abuse which will increase the potential for ill health, accidents, absence or poor performance, or which will otherwise adversely affect Solihull Life Opportunities, its employees, volunteers or members.

While it is the intention of this policy to assist those with substance abuse problems it does not constitute a waiver of management's responsibility to maintain discipline and a safe working environment or to respond to poor work performance, misconduct or unsatisfactory levels of absence. Therefore, support programmes for employees with drug or alcohol problems can run concurrently with the disciplinary procedure.

The confidential nature of any records of employees with alcohol or drug related problems will be strictly preserved.

### Scope

This policy applies to all people working or volunteering on Solihull Life Opportunities premises, projects, or events including temporary staff and external contract personnel, and to all visitors.

Policy Name: Alcohol & Drugs

Organisation: Solihull Life Opportunities

Date policy issued: October 2005 Approved by: SoLO Board of Directors

Amended Approved by: SoLO Board of Directors

Next Review Date: October 2010

Date: October 2005

Date: October 2007

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## Aims

- To state clearly our position on alcohol and drugs.
- To seek to ensure safe and capable working practice in relation to alcohol and drugs and in line with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- To ensure that the law in relation to drugs is observed by employees and volunteers during working hours.
- To seek to ensure an education programme which covers every level of the organisation.
- To encourage employees or volunteers who are experiencing alcohol and drug related problems to seek appropriate assistance at the earliest opportunity and to ensure the availability of appropriate professional advice.

## Policy Statement

Solihull Life Opportunities requires all employees and volunteers to arrive at work free from the effects of alcohol and drugs.

The consumption of alcohol on company premises is prohibited with the exception of social functions where the CEO has granted approval in advance. In such circumstances, there should be an equal availability of non-alcoholic drinks. Employees consuming alcohol must not return to duty while under the influence of alcohol. As a general principle, Solihull Life Opportunities does not encourage the consumption of any alcohol during the working day.

In respect to Projects off site, employees or volunteers must not drive under the influence of alcohol. Anyone wishing to drive must ensure they are legally capable, although management (including project leaders) retain the ultimate sanction to instruct employees or volunteers not to drive if, in their opinion, it is not in the employee or volunteer's own interests to do so.

No employee or volunteer shall be in possession of drugs while at work or misuse drugs while on duty. However, Solihull Life Opportunities recognises the controlled use and possession of medicines for personal use as an exception. Where there is suspicion that an employee or volunteer has broken the law, management will normally inform the police.

Although illegal use of drugs will not be condoned, in most cases an employee or volunteer with an alcohol or drug misuse problem will be encouraged to seek help, advice and treatment. Solihull Life Opportunities may provide access to confidential and voluntary counselling and support.

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Solihull Life Opportunities recognises the possibility of relapse. If this occurs, the same procedures of support will be offered to the employee at management discretion depending on the circumstances.

It is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to enforce this policy. To assist with this, they will receive specific guidelines and training outlining procedures for early recognition, discipline, grievance and referral.

Infringements of this policy will be dealt with under agreed disciplinary procedures.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

**Alcohol misuse:** an alcohol-related problem is defined as any drinking , either intermittent or continual, which interferes with a person's health and social functioning and / or work capacity or conduct.

**Drug:** refers to any psychoactive drug whether illegal, over the counter from pharmacies and other retail outlets, or legal substances such as solvents. In the case of prescribed drugs, their possession and proper use is acknowledged as legitimate.

**Drug misuse:** use of illegal drugs and the misuse whether deliberate or unintentional of prescribed medicines or solvents.

**Under the influence:** an employee will be considered as being under the influence of alcohol if their blood alcohol level exceeds the national legal limit for driving (the current legal limit for driving in the UK is 80mg of alcohol in every 100 ml of blood).

## Signs to Look Out For

Typical examples of possible substance abuse include:

- Smell of alcohol on breath
- Lack of co-ordination
- Increased absenteeism, particularly multiple short spells
- Deterioration in work performance
- Repeated accidents or mistakes
- Deterioration in relationships at work, timekeeping and appearance
- Sudden mood changes
- Unusual irritability or aggression
- Abnormal fluctuations in energy and concentration

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- Unexplained over-excitability or withdrawal
- Erratic behaviour
- Dishonesty and theft

## **Self Referral**

It may be difficult for employees or volunteers to accept that they have a drink or drug problem. Employees or volunteers who recognise that they have an alcohol or drug problem will be encouraged to seek help from their doctor or counsellor or from another agency suggested by their GP. In such cases, employees will be treated as any other employee with an illness and will be entitled to sick leave. However, Solihull Life Opportunities may ask for confirmation that treatment or counselling appointments are being kept whilst on sick leave.

If the cause of the abuse appears to have risen from a situation in the workplace, Solihull Life Opportunities accepts a particular responsibility to investigate and resolve the problem.

The employee will normally return to their normal job after successful treatment.

## **Management Referral (for paid employees)**

If during the course of the attendance management or disciplinary procedure, alcohol or drug related abuse is believed to be a factor, further action will be suspended and the employee given the offer of referral for assessment and treatment. However, if the employee declines to accept the offer of referral or discontinues their course of treatment, then the normal disciplinary procedures will apply.

It is the duty of any manager or supervisor who has a reasonable belief that an employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs to remove that employee from the workplace. If necessary, (s)he may seek the opinion of another manager or supervisor. (S)he must then advise the CEO of the action taken at the earliest opportunity. The employee will then be referred to for medical help prior to any further action being taken.

Once medical help has been sought and discussed with the employee, the CEO will then decide what a ction to take.

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