



North

Yorkshire County Council

Improving Health and Attendance

Workplace Alcohol Policy

- *To be used in conjunction with the Workplace Alcohol policy :
Manager's Guidance and Employee Guidance*

Access: If you require this information in an alternative format, such as large type, audio cassette or Braille, please contact the Policy and Support Team, Human Resources on 01609 536028

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Workplace alcohol Policy

Background

Why does NYCC need an alcohol policy?

This policy has been developed to help managers deal with alcohol-related problems at work. There are a number of reasons for having a comprehensive alcohol policy. These include:

- The health and safety case
- Other legislative requirements
- The needs of the service
- Corporate image
- Wellbeing of employees

Failing to address factors that make a workplace unsafe can place an employer in a serious position so far as health and safety legislation is concerned. While risk assessments on machinery, production processes and manual handling and lifting are commonplace and relatively well understood, there is less awareness about the risks associated with the use of alcohol while at work and in the hours leading up to starting work. A major responsibility is placed on the employer to ensure that risks within the workplace are kept to an absolute minimum and failing to act would undoubtedly reflect badly, should an incident occur that was linked to the consumption of alcohol.

1. Introduction

North Yorkshire County Council is committed to providing a safe, healthy and productive working environment for all employees, contractors, sub- contractors, customers , people we provide care for and visitors whilst providing its services. This policy sets out NYCC's aims to protect and maintain the health, safety and welfare of employees and others in the workplace by reducing the risk of alcohol related harm in accordance with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974. This policy makes clear NYCC's disciplinary rules on these matters. If an employee has an alcohol problem, this policy also seeks to encourage them to seek help.

For most people, drinking responsibly can be part of a balanced and healthy lifestyle, although the inappropriate use of alcohol can damage the health and wellbeing of employees and have a far reaching effect on their personal and working lives. NYCC wishes to promote a culture in which the problems associated with alcohol misuse are understood.

Persistent heavy drinking can lead to a range of social, psychological and physical problems including dependence, emotional problems, depression, and changes in behaviour, irritability, cirrhosis of the liver, cancer of the mouth, high blood pressure and heart attacks. At work, alcohol misuse, including hangovers, can result in reduced levels of attendance, mistakes, sub standard work performance, impaired judgement and decision making and increased health and safety risks, not only for the individual concerned but also for others. Furthermore, employees who drink irresponsibly or commit offences related to the misuse of alcohol may put NYCC's reputation and image at risk.

NYCC wants to encourage and support employees who may have an alcohol misuse and/or an alcohol dependency problem by assisting them in seeking help and supporting them in overcoming

alcohol related problems.

2. Policy Aims and Objectives

2.1. Aims

NYCC's Alcohol Policy is intended to promote a greater awareness of the impact of alcohol in the workplace and to ensure that NYCC continues to safeguard the health and safety of employees and all others on its premises or whilst affected by its services e.g. whilst being escorted in a bus or on site etc. NYCC's approach is to set an expectation based on the individual responsibility of each employee, that alcohol will not be used in such a way as to adversely affect safe behaviour or work performance.

Addressing problems relating to alcohol directly benefits the individual concerned, whose health and continued employment may both be at risk. In addition NYCC benefits from increased efficiency, productivity and the retention of valued experienced staff.

2.2. Objectives

- To ensure that NYCC complies with relevant legislation.
- To minimise the risks associated with alcohol in the workplace.
- Raise staff awareness of the risks and potential harm associated with alcohol misuse.
- To set clear rules regarding alcohol in the workplace so that employees are aware of the likely consequences for their employment of alcohol misuse.
- To create a climate that encourages employees who face problems with alcohol to come forward and seek help voluntarily at an early stage.
- To provide support, encouragement and assistance for employees experiencing alcohol problems.
- To offer assistance to an employee with a drink-related problem which comes to light through observation
- To provide a framework to enable instances of alcohol misuse by employees to be handled in an appropriate, fair and consistent manner.
- To achieve a balance between supporting employees who come forward with a problem and the overriding need to preserve:
- To maintain the health, safety and welfare of employees and others with whom they come into contact.
- To maintain NYCC's reputation and image
- To maintain the delivery of high quality, effective services and goods

Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, alcohol misuse is defined as:

Any drinking, either intermittent or continuous, which interferes with an individual's health, work capabilities or conduct, or which affects their work performance and/or safety of others. The misuse of alcohol is further defined as inappropriate drinking which results in the following effects:

- Lateness and absenteeism
- Loss of productivity and poor performance

- Health and safety concerns
- Bad behaviour or poor discipline
- Adverse effects on team morale
- Adverse effects on people we provide care for
- Adverse effects on NYCC's image

4. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of North Yorkshire County Council, including school based employees where the governing bodies of individual schools have adopted the policy.

5. Statutory Obligations

This policy recognises the requirements to comply with the following legislation where applicable.

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999
- RIDDOR – Reporting of Incidents, Diseases, Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (as revised 1999)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Road Traffic Act 1988

In application of this policy it is expected that managers (including Headteachers and School Governors) will follow the principles of the above legislation .

6. Links with Other Policies

The following policies must also be used to inform the Workplace Alcohol Policy:

- *Health and Safety Policy*
- *Equalities*
- *Resolving Issues at Work Policy*
- *Attendance Management Policy*
- *Stress Management Policy*
- *Driving policy*
- *Disciplinary Policy*
- *Developing Performance and Capability Policy*

7. Policy Implementation

This policy and procedure will be implemented through approval and adoption by the Authority and individual school governing bodies.

8. Evaluation and Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed 12 months after implementation then every two years thereafter (or in line with changes in relevant legislation).

