**Substance Misuse - FAQ**

*I suspect one of my team has a problem with drugs or alcohol. What should I do?*

If you suspect a member of staff may have a drug or alcohol misuse problem you should arrange to ensure that their work (or continued attendance at work) does not pose a health and safety risk to themselves or others, and then hold an informal discussion with the individual, following the guidance set out in this document.

If the member of staff is in a safety critical role, hold the conversation immediately. Depending on the outcome of the conversation, it may be necessary to transfer the individual to alternative duties until advice can be taken, or the University can be confident that the substance misuse issues are no longer ongoing.

If having spoken to the individual there is still reasonable suspicion of substance misuse refer the employee to Occupational Health via HR.

*One of my team has told me in confidence that they have a problem. What should I do?*

Whilst individuals sometimes ask for matters to be kept confidential, and whilst we have duties under data protection legislation to ensure this confidentiality, we must also meet our duties of care as an organisation. Advise the member of staff that it is essential you refer them to Occupation Health, and ensure that they are aware of the University’s position on substance misuse (provide them with a copy of the policy). Clearly outline the standards that must be maintained.

*It has been reported to me by a third party that one of my team is misusing alcohol or drugs but I have no real evidence. What should I do?*

As we have a duty of care towards all of our staff; even if there is no evidence as such, it is still important to discuss the matter with the individual concerned. Follow the guidance in this document around having a conversation with staff about concerns about potential substance misuse.

*Can we test someone that we believe is under the influence of drugs or alcohol?*

We do not normally engage in drug or alcohol testing for our staff. However, if you believe that there are particular circumstances that apply that mean this should be considered, please discuss it with HR before taking any action.

*One of my team is receiving support via the University for a substance problem. What should I be doing as the manager?*

It is important to keep a regular and open dialogue with any individual who is receiving support for substance misuse, whether or not they are at work during this time. Agree a regular meeting, and check in regularly about whether any specific support is required. Document your discussions with them.

*One of my team is away from work due to substance misuse. Is this treated as sickness absence?*

Yes. Normal sickness procedures and contractual sick pay will apply. For the avoidance of doubt, substance misuse is not considered a disability (although conditions arising from a dependence on drugs or alcohol may be).

*I have talked to a member of staff I am concerned about, but they deny that there is a problem. What are my next steps?*

If you still believe that the individual may be misusing substances, advise them that you wish to refer them to Occupational Health.

*One of my team has been receiving treatment for a substance misuse problem, but they are also underperforming. What should I do?*

It is not unusual for someone to experience difficulties at work whilst dealing with substance misuse. Ensure that you keep a record of the performance issues, and discuss them with the member of staff. Also ensure that they are aware of the necessary performance standards required of them and their role. Whilst the University wishes to support staff with a substance misuse problem who are seeking treatment, this has to be balanced against the needs of students, colleagues and the University itself. It may become appropriate at some point to invoke the Disciplinary procedure. Each situation is different, so take advice from HR before commencing any formal action.