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NON-EXEMPT

# EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL/HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

Joint HR Committee

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021

## Alcohol, Substance Abuse and Addiction Policy FOR DECISION

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Lulu Bowerman Cabinet Lead and Cllr Nick Drew Portfolio Holder

Key Decision: No

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### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This paper is submitted to Joint HR Committee for agreement to update and reintroduce a policy which effectively deals with instances of alcohol, substance abuse and addiction in the workplace.

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Joint HR Committee members are asked to approve the Alcohol, Substance Abuse and Addiction Policy for East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) and Havant Borough Council (HBC. This is set out at Appendix A.

### 3. Executive Summary

- 3.1. The Councils currently have a policy in place which specifically deals with alcohol and substance abuse issues. Previous instances of alcohol and/or substance abuse which have been raised have been dealt with through the Managing Sickness Absence procedure. This is because the current policy does not treat these types of issues as an illness, is punitive in approach and does not provide a practical pathway for managers to deal with the resulting absence. This has created difficulties in the way the cases are managed particularly due to a lack of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/fact-sheets/alcohol-in-the-workplace>

<sup>2</sup> <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/statistics-on-drug-misuse/2019/part-3-drug-use-among-adults>

clarity in the approach taken when supporting employees and/or members of their family who are experiencing problems of this nature.

- 3.2. As alcohol, substance abuse and addiction can have a major effect on employee's lives, it is essential that we have a policy in place which specifically sets out our approach to managing these types of issues in the workplace. Addictive behaviours and/or the use of alcohol and substances can lead to ill-health and underperformance. There are varying statistics on the percentage of employees who have experienced these issues, but surveys indicate that more than 25 million adults regularly drink alcohol, and the cost of lost productivity due to alcohol consumption costs the UK economy more than £7 billion each year<sup>1</sup>.
- 3.3. In the last year there has been one employee relation case where alcohol and/or drugs have been cited. Whilst the number of cases the HR team deal with is/has been extremely low over the years, 3-5% of UK work absence is estimated to be as a result of alcohol consumption so the impact of this type of absence on lost productivity is significant<sup>2</sup>. Managers that are trained in being able to spot the signs and the patterns of absence coupled with a greater understanding of how employees can be supported will benefit the employee (mental and physical wellbeing) and the organisation.
- 3.4. The development of this policy supports our duty of care under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its staff, where reasonably practicable. This includes taking all reasonable steps to resolve drug, alcohol and other substance misuse related problems known within the workplace.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/fact-sheets/alcohol-in-the-workplace>

<sup>2</sup> <https://worksmart.org.uk/health-advice/employer-support/drugs-and-alcohol/how-much-problem-drug-and-alcohol-abuse-work>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/statistics-on-drug-misuse/2019/part-3-drug-use-among-adults>

#### **4. Additional Budgetary Implications**

4.1. None

#### **5. Background and relationship to Corporate Strategy and/or Business Plans**

5.1. This policy aims to promote the wellbeing of all employees. The councils are committed to providing confidential support and help where necessary. The policy supports the Council's pledge to make high quality information and interventions concerning health and wellbeing, offering both internal and external facilities and resources available to all employees.

#### **6. Resource Implications**

6.1. Financial Implications

None identified.

#### **S151 Officer comments**

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Paper has been reviewed. No comments to add.

6.2. Human Resources Implications

There are no direct HR implications. This policy will be updated in the suite of HR policies and will ensure that staff have an appropriate route to raise any issues. HR/Management/Safety and EP will have the appropriate tools to deal with the matter fairly and swiftly.

6.3. Information Governance Implications

None identified.

Other resource implications

There will be a requirement for communications support to implement the policy across the Councils.

#### **7. Legal Implications**

<sup>1</sup> <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/fact-sheets/alcohol-in-the-workplace>

<sup>2</sup> <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/statistics-on-drug-misuse/2019/part-3-drug-use-among-adults>

- 7.1. The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is in place to prevent the misuse of controlled drugs. It achieves this by imposing a complete ban on stipulated drugs. It outlines consequences and the fact that it is a criminal offence for any person to knowingly produce, supply or use controlled substances on premises unless specified (such as when prescribed).
- 7.2. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations say risk assessments should be conducted, which would include the use or presence of drugs at work if there appears to be a risk. Under the Road Traffic Act 1988 drivers must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while driving or when in charge of a vehicle.

**Monitoring Officer comments**

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Legal have reviewed the paper. Deputy Monitoring Officer sign off provided.

**8. Risks**

There is a risk that, if issues of this type are not handled in the correct way, this could lead to staff absence and loss of productivity. Ensuring that the council has the right policy approach in place will mitigate this.

There is a risk that managers will not be able to identify the warning signs of addictive behaviours/actions. Training will be provided by the HR team as part of the roll out of the revised policy to mitigate this.

There is a risk that staff who have an alcohol or substance addiction may be a hazard to themselves or others. The training to managers alongside a revised policy which treats the substance misuse as an illness should help in staff feeling more comfortable to ask for help.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/statistics-on-drug-misuse/2019/part-3-drug-use-among-adults>

## **Consultation**

- 8.1. Unison will be consulted on the policy in line with the usual consultation processes.

## **9. Communication**

- 9.1. The policy will be communicated to all members of staff via internal channels.

## **10. Appendices**

- 10.1. Appendix A – Alcohol, Substance Abuse and Addiction Policy.

## **11. Background papers**

- 11.1. None

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Agreed and signed off by:

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Drew 8.3.2021 Cllr. Bowerman 15.03.2021

Director: Lydia Morrison - 17.12.2020

Monitoring Officer: Daniel Toohey – 10.03.2021

Section 151 Officer: Matthew Tiller – 10.03.2021

## **Contact Officer:**

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