

COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

- ✉ Postal Address: Highfield Park Visitor Centre, Hill End Lane AL4 0RA
- ☎ Telephone: (01727) 825 314
- 💻 Website: <https://colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk>
- ✉ E-mail: clerk@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk



SUBSTANCE AND ALCOHOL ABUSE POLICY

1. General

Colney Heath Parish Council recognizes that there are occasions on which it may be allowed to consume alcohol whilst at work employees must accept that they are representing the Parish Council at all times and so their behaviour must therefore be responsible and not damaging to the Council's reputation, image or working relationships.

To promote this goal, employees are required to report to work at any location in an appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their job in a safe and satisfactory manner. The following Policy is therefore in place and must be observed by all employees whether they are working in our premises or on another site on behalf of the Parish Council.

2. Policy

Colney Heath Parish Council is committed to maintaining a productive, safe, drug and alcohol free and healthy work environment and to safeguarding other persons at the workplace or other work locations whether as employees, contractors or visitors. While on the Parish Council's premises and while conducting business-related activities off site, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

The use of prescribed medication is permitted whilst at work only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace. Employees are required to advise the Clerk if they are taking any prescribed medication which may come with such a warning.

The Parish Council recognises however that drug and alcohol abuse can a treatable illness and if an employee suffers in this way, they are encouraged to seek help through an approved occupational health adviser or the employee's own Doctor.

Breaches of this Policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including summary dismissal and such may also have legal consequences for the employee involved.

3. Definition

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For the purpose of the Policy a substance is defined as any substance which chemically modifies the body's function resulting in physical, psychological or behavioural change. In this context the term substance in this policy includes, but is not limited to, drugs, alcohol and solvents. Substance abuse is the use of these substances in an improper way.

4. Rules on Substance Abuse

• **Drugs**

Illegal (controlled) drugs are defined under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and subsequent regulations. In general, it is a criminal offence for a person to produce, supply and offer to supply or be in possession of illegal drugs.

The Parish Council reserves the right to take whatever action we consider appropriate including implementing random drug testing if we believe that any employee on Parish Council business or at any work location is under the influence of drugs and impairing performance and putting other persons at risk. Such action also includes requiring a member of staff, if there is a reasonable suspicion of their being under the influence of illegal drugs whilst at work, to take, at the Council's expense, an independent and appropriate drug test. The outcome of the drug test may be used as evidence in any subsequent disciplinary proceedings.

The Parish Council also reserves the right to require any employee to take a random drug test by an appropriate independent drug testing organisation in such circumstances as we feel are appropriate.

Employees are forbidden to produce, supply, offer to supply or possess illegal drugs at any time whilst on Parish Council business or a work location. If an employee contravenes these rules the Parish Council reserves the right to take whatever action it considers appropriate including removing the employee from the premises, requiring the employee to undertake an approved drug test and in certain circumstances contacting the police. The employee may also be subject to the Parish Council's Disciplinary Procedure which could result in summary dismissal.

• **Alcohol**

The consumption of alcohol on Parish Council work locations without prior approval is prohibited. We therefore reserve the right to take whatever action we consider appropriate or as explained above if we believe that any employee on Parish Council business or at any of its work locations or other sites is under the

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influence of alcohol which is impairing their performance and/or putting other persons at risk. This action may include seeking medical assistance or the removal of the person from the work location and disciplinary action could follow under the Parish Council's Disciplinary Procedure which could result in dismissal.

• **Solvents and Other Substances**

The abuse of solvents or other substances, such as glue sniffing, is forbidden on any work location and the rules for alcohol or drug abuse as described above will also apply.

5. Employee Support and Advice

Through encouragement and support we will assist employees who have a genuine drug and/or alcohol problem to seek help and it is our policy to ensure that if an employee informs the Clerk in confidence of any such problem the matter will be treated sensitively and in strict confidence subject to any legal constraints. The Clerk, with the guidance of an external occupational health service and/or the employee's GP, will support and provide assistance where reasonably practical, and also provide appropriate confidential guidance and support for the employee to seek help including access to rehabilitation and treatment programmes. Where appropriate we will contribute to, and support employee awareness and management training programmes to assist in the implementation of this Policy. Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who refuses to take a drug test or seek counselling or medical treatment for what is shown to be a drug or alcohol problem.

Any queries on this Policy should be raised in the first instance with the Clerk.

6. Review

This Policy will be reviewed periodically by the Council, as appropriate, to assess its effectiveness or as required by legislation and any appropriate changes will be made in consultation with employees.

This policy was adopted 27th February 2023 for a period of 4 years or until legislation changes.