

# Alcohol and Drugs:

## Guidance on Alcohol and Drug Use

### Alcohol

**The effects of drinking alcohol can encroach into our working lives and can have a very real effect on employee performance. Employees have an individual responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and others who could be affected by their actions in the workplace. There is a huge amount of information available about alcohol in the workplace and it may be useful to look at our external contact information to assist in finding specific help.**

Drinking alcohol is an accepted social activity and when taken in moderation can have positive relaxation effects.

The government advise that women can drink 2-3 units of alcohol per day and men 3-4 units a day without damaging their health. A unit is equal to 10ml of pure alcohol. As a rough guide to what you're drinking:

- A pint of ordinary strength lager or beer - 2 units
- A pint of strong lager - 3 units
- A pint of ordinary strength cider - 2 units
- A 175ml glass of red or white wine - around 2 units
- A pub measure of spirits - 1 unit
- An alcopop - around 1.5 units

There are often fluctuations in drinking patterns throughout the year. Here are some tips to see you through these times with your health intact.

- Don't drink on an empty stomach and avoid salty snacks as they tend to make you thirstier.
- Pace yourself - consider choosing a half instead of a pint, use extra mixers, or alternate with soft drinks or water.
- Darker drinks like red wine, brandy and whisky give worse hangovers because of higher concentrations of chemicals called congeners.
- Decide on a limit of how much you plan to drink and stick to it.
- Avoid top-ups as it's more difficult to keep track of how much you've had.
- Remember that home measures are usually larger.

**Remember you might be over the limit the next morning after a heavy drinking session - if in doubt, leave the car at home.**

According to some research it is easy to consume 3 units of alcohol in one drink, particularly with wine. On average it takes about one hour to process one unit of alcohol in the body therefore a 250ml glass of wine 12% ABV (alcohol by volume) will take 3 hours to process. An additional factor is

tolerance which in general increases with consumption. Gender affects the rate of processing of alcohol in the body, with women being slower to process alcohol than men.

## **Drugs**

Many people take prescribed medication on either a short term or long term basis. If you're taking prescribed medication check with your G.P. if it's wise to take alcohol, as many drugs can be affected by, and can affect, alcohol potency.

Also be aware of the effects and side effects of any medication, as it may alter your ability to concentrate or drive, or operate machinery. Read the leaflets supplied with your medication and if in doubt, contact your G.P. and /or Pharmacist.

## **Information for Managers**

### **Employer responsibility**

Employers are responsible for the safety, well-being and welfare of their employees while at work. This includes protecting them from accidents in the workplace caused by the use of alcohol.

Other rules also apply, for example drinking and driving while over the limit. 1 in 6 drink drivers are convicted the morning after consumption.

Employment laws demand that alcohol dependency ('alcoholism') and drug misuse are initially treated like any other 'sickness' and this protects employees from summary dismissal if they're found to have a problem with misuse or addiction.

Employees who are underperforming due to excessive consumption of either drugs or alcohol should be managed. Be proactive, benefits of prevention include improving performance, improving health and increasing safety. Try to discuss concerns and assist in offering solutions. It may be helpful to have the information about various agencies available (see external links).

Advice would be to treat alcohol or drug related problems as health issues first and only use disciplinary measures as a last resort or when safety is compromised.

Should this extend to hangovers and attendance issues? In these circumstances the employee is probably unaware of the extent of the problem or the impact. With improved awareness, employees would be better equipped to make informed decisions about their consumption and change their drinking style before the employer intervention becomes necessary.

Where further intervention and / or treatment become necessary, proceed as a health issue, clearly set out a program that is agreed upon by both

management and the employee. Be aware of the organisations policy for dealing with such situations.

Having clear guidance on what should happen if someone is found to have a problem with alcohol and / or drugs misuse benefits both employers and employees.

Seek help to manage the situation if required, contact HR and or Occupational Health for a chat.

## Role of the Occupational Health Unit

Where alcohol or drug use becomes problematic, confidential advice can be obtained from the Occupational Health Unit.

The Occupational Health Unit (OHU) aims to play an active role in the implementation of the University Code of Practice on Alcohol and Drug Abuse by providing medical advice and over-viewing the employee's treatment through regular communication with the various agencies dealing with alcohol/drug addiction.

We encourage staff to self refer and we accept formal referrals of the individual concerned from managers or human resources.

## Identifying Problem Drinking or Drug Misuse

Employees would be considered as having a problem with alcohol or possibly drug misuse where intake is affecting work or if safety is compromised. The World Health Organisation attributes 20-25% of accidents as being alcohol related.

Know your staff. Look for changes in performance, mood, attendance patterns, concentration and general behaviour.

From an employment perspective there are two types of problem drinker. Firstly, those who have a clearly identified drink problem with a need for intervention or treatment. Secondly, the so called 'social drinkers' who might over indulge and cause work problems that are often small and consistent, but are usually wider spread and more difficult to monitor.

A positive safety culture embraces the principle of **PREVENTION** before **INTERVENTION** before **TREATMENT**.

**Advice would be to treat alcohol or drug misuse related problems as health issues first and only use disciplinary measures as a last resort or when safety is compromised.**

## Self Referrals

Employees who either suspect or know that they have an alcohol or drug related problem are advised to seek help from the Occupational Health Unit. Their disclosure of such information will remain confidential to the Occupational Health Unit, unless the employee decides after discussion that it is in their interest to let Human Resources or their own department know. Advice regarding the different sources of help will be given. If the individual agrees to let the Occupational Health Unit inform Human Resources, he/she should be treated under the Code of Practice on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. Code of Practice On Alcohol And Drug Abuse University Of Edinburgh

## Formal Referrals

Formal referrals are encouraged prior to invoking any disciplinary procedure. However, where disciplinary action has highlighted an issue or where an individual admits to having an alcohol or drug related problem, under the Code of Practice on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, referral should occur and further related disciplinary action will be suspended. Referral can only occur when an individual has agreed to be referred and admits to having a drug or alcohol problem.

## Procedure

The employee will be invited to attend the Occupational Health Unit for an initial discussion with the Occupational Health Advisory staff. If the employee admits to having an alcohol or drug related problem, he/she will be asked to adhere to a specific course of action and we will discuss the consent required to adhere to treatment. If in agreement the employee will be asked to give consent to treatment. Consent form.

Any requirements regarding contact with the GP or external agency will be explained to the employee who subsequently will be asked to sign a consent form to enable the Occupational health professionals to request ongoing medical report(s) from appropriate sources.

Follow up appointments will be made at appropriate intervals. Consent to treatment allows occupational health to provide regular reports advising on the employee's progress and intention of further review to either the Human Resources Adviser concerned or the referring manager. Equally any relevant information regarding the individuals' progress at work should be reported to the Occupational Health Unit.

Please note if the employee denies having an alcohol or drug related problem, he/she will be referred back to the original source of referral.

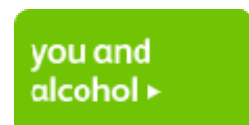
The Occupational Health Unit will advise Human Resources or Head of Department of any discontinuation or non adherence to a course of treatment by the employee who has signed the consent form and treatment plan. Normal disciplinary procedures may then be taken by Human Resources.

Any recurrence of the problem with an employee who had previously satisfactorily completed a course of treatment will be dealt with individually on merit. Further treatment may in certain circumstances be possible.

## Sources of Guidance and Advice

A number of external agencies can provide information and advice which may be of assistance.

A self assessment questionnaire can be found at this NHS-run website. It is aimed at young people and explores the issues around alcohol use and misuse in a fun and interesting way.



Got a hangover again? Find out more about your relationship with alcohol in My Drinking Questionnaire:

[http://www.infoscotland.com/alcohol/interactivedisplay.jsp?pContentID=79&p\\_applic=CCC&p\\_service=Content.show&](http://www.infoscotland.com/alcohol/interactivedisplay.jsp?pContentID=79&p_applic=CCC&p_service=Content.show&)

<http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk/>

The Scottish Executive initiative 'Healthier Scotland' gives access to a huge amount of information on all aspects of alcohol use/misuse. [Infoscotland.com](http://www.infoscotland.com)

Below is an excerpt from a directory of local and national services and sources of information, help and advice.

### Immediate Help

To speak to someone right now about problem drinking, whether your own or someone you're concerned about, call DRINKLINE free on 0800 7 314 314 (open 24 hours, 7 days a week).

Drinkline's trained and experienced staff deal with callers in the strictest confidence and are happy to give information and advice, send out self-help materials and give support to the family and friends of problem drinkers.

Alcohol and Drugs at Work (HSE)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/alcoholdrugs/index.htm>

Alcohol Focus Scotland: [www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk](http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk) provides advice on alcohol related issues and has a number of useful leaflets including:

### Action on Alcohol and Drugs in Edinburgh

1st Floor  
17 Waterloo Place

Edinburgh EH1 3BG  
telephone: 0131 529 2119  
email: [maggie.murray@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:maggie.murray@edinburgh.gov.uk)

Drug and alcohol action teams give advice and information about alcohol issues and put people in touch with local services that can help.

### **Al-Anon**

Al-Anon Information Centre  
Mansfield Park Building  
Unit 6  
22 Mansfield Street  
Partick  
Glasgow G11 5QP

**T: 0141 339 8884 - 24hr Helpline**

Al-Anon (commonly known as 'Alcoholics Anonymous') runs support groups for people who have problems with alcohol and their families across Scotland, whether they're still drinking or not. Ring their helpline number (above) to find one near you.

### **Alateen**

Al-Anon Information Centre  
Mansfield Park Building  
Unit 6  
22 Mansfield Street  
Partick  
Glasgow G11 5QP

**T: 0141 339 8884 – 24hr Helpline**

W: [www.hexnet.co.uk/alanon/alateen.html](http://www.hexnet.co.uk/alanon/alateen.html)

Alateen is part of the Al-Anon fellowship and is for young people, aged twelve to twenty, who are affected by a problem drinker. For further information and to find a group near you, ring the Al-Anon helpline number above.

### **Alcohol Concern**

W: <http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/servlets/home>

Alcohol Concern is the UK-national agency on alcohol misuse. They work to reduce the incidence and costs of alcohol-related harm and to increase the range and quality of services available to people with alcohol-related problems. Their website contains much useful information on alcohol-related issues, including downloadable briefings and fact sheets.

### **Alcohol Focus Scotland**

2nd Floor  
166 Buchanan Street  
Glasgow  
G1 2LW  
**T: 0141 572 6700**  
**F: 0141 333 1606**  
E: [enquiries@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk)  
W: [www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk](http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk)

Alcohol Focus Scotland provides information and training on alcohol issues, raises awareness of alcohol-related problems and works to influence national alcohol policy. Their website contains much useful information and advice and a range of downloadable leaflets.

### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

T: 0845 769 7555  
W: [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

Alcoholics Anonymous is an informal fellowship of recovering alcoholics. Groups meet regularly all over Scotland where people can share experiences and gather support from people who have overcome similar problems. Visit their website for more details or call their helpline.

### **Borders Drugs and Alcohol Action Team**

NHS Borders  
Newstead  
Melrose  
TD6 9DB  
**T: 01896 825561**  
**F: 01896 828266**  
E: [maurice.kilday@borders.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:maurice.kilday@borders.scot.nhs.uk)

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### **British Liver Trust**

W: [www.britishlivertrust.org.uk](http://www.britishlivertrust.org.uk)

The British Liver Trust is the UK's leading charity promoting education and research around liver health (misuse of alcohol is the main cause of liver disease in the UK). Their website contains lots of useful information and advice on the causes, signs, symptoms and treatment of liver disease.

### **Down Your Drink**

[www.downyourdrink.org.uk](http://www.downyourdrink.org.uk)



Run by Alcohol Concern, this website gives users a free, structured, 6-week programme designed to help people cut their drinking down to safe levels. Users get access to different activities and information each week, to help them along the way to healthier drinking habits.

### **Drink Aware**

<http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/>

Created by the Portman Group, you'll find on this website all kinds of useful information about alcohol and drinking, from fascinating facts to practical tips, to suit all kinds of people and occasions.

### **Drinkline**

**0800 7 314 314**

Drinkline is the free, national telephone service for alcohol advice, information and support. Lines are open from 9.00am to 11.00pm, Monday to Friday.

### **East Lothian Drugs and Alcohol Action Team**

East Lothian Council  
9-11 Lodge Street  
Haddington  
East Lothian  
EH41 4DX

**T: 01620 827375 or 01620 827398**

**F: 01620 824295 or 01620 824295**

E: [hmorrell@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:hmorrell@eastlothian.gov.uk) or [hmuldoon@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:hmuldoon@eastlothian.gov.uk)

Drug and alcohol action teams give advice and information about alcohol issues and put people in touch with local services that can help.

### **Edinburgh and Lothian Council on Alcohol (ELCA)**

6 Clifton Terrace  
Edinburgh  
EH12 5DR  
T: 0131 337 8188  
E: [elca@btconnect.com](mailto:elca@btconnect.com)

### **Fife Drugs and Alcohol Action Team**

Fife DAAT  
Pitteuchar Resource Centre  
211 Tantallon Avenue  
Glenrothes  
Fife KY7 4QA  
**T: 01592 412018**



**F: 01592 412040**

E: [eric.corstorphine@fife.gov.uk](mailto:eric.corstorphine@fife.gov.uk)

Drug and alcohol action teams give advice and information about alcohol issues and put people in touch with local services that can help.

### **Forth Valley Substance Action Team**

Forth Valley Substance Action Team  
9 Gladstone Place  
Stirling  
FK8 2AH

**T: 01786 434763 or 01786 434761**

E: [elaine.lawlor@fvhb.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:elaine.lawlor@fvhb.scot.nhs.uk) (SAT Co-ordinator) or

[anita.dufton@fvhb.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:anita.dufton@fvhb.scot.nhs.uk) (SAT Administrator)

W: [www.forthvalleysat.co.uk](http://www.forthvalleysat.co.uk)

Substance Development Officers:

Falkirk: Caird Forsyth and Gordon Coster

**T: 01324 506045**

E: [caird.forsyth@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:caird.forsyth@falkirk.gov.uk) or [gordon.coster@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.coster@falkirk.gov.uk)

Stirling and Clacks: Elaine McLaren

**T: 07717 545 434**

E: [mclarene@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:mclarene@stirling.gov.uk) or [emclaren@clacks.gov.uk](mailto:emclaren@clacks.gov.uk)

**Drugs and alcohol action teams give advice and information about alcohol issues and put people in touch with local services that can help. Local services can be found on FVSAT website.**

### **Greater Glasgow Alcohol Action Team**

Addictions Team  
NHS Greater Glasgow  
Dalian House  
350 St Vincent Street  
Glasgow  
G3 8YZ

**T: 0141 201 4516 or 0141 201 4745**

E: [jane.hasler@gghb.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:jane.hasler@gghb.scot.nhs.uk) or [omita.pandey@gghb.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:omita.pandey@gghb.scot.nhs.uk)

Drug and alcohol action teams give advice and information about alcohol issues and put people in touch with local services that can help.

### **Health Scotland**

**T: 0131 536 5500**

W: <http://www.healthscotland.com/>

E: [publications@health.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:publications@health.scot.nhs.uk) (publication requests)

Part of NHS Scotland, Health Scotland publishes information leaflets and leads education campaigns on health issues aimed at the Scottish public. Their publications section contains downloadable factsheets, leaflets and booklets on a wide range of health issues, including those around alcohol. Printed versions are available on request from their Publications Department (call or email).

### **Includem (Alcohol and Young Women Project)**

23 Scotland Street  
Glasgow  
G5 8ND  
T: 0141 429 3492  
F: 0141 429 4519  
E: [enquiries@includem.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@includem.co.uk)  
W: [www.includem.org](http://www.includem.org)

Includem works with socially excluded young people, care leavers and young offenders in many areas of Scotland. Among other supports, it helps them to address their behaviour around substance misuse, including misuse of alcohol. Call or visit their website for more information.

### **Institute of Alcohol Studies**

W: [www.ias.org.uk](http://www.ias.org.uk)

The institute of alcohol studies is the UK's leading education body for the effects of alcohol on health and society. Their website contains many useful fact sheets on a wide range of alcohol-related issues.

### **Libra**

4 Norton Park  
Edinburgh  
EH7 5RS  
T: 0131 661 0111  
E: [libra-alcohol@btconnect.com](mailto:libra-alcohol@btconnect.com)  
W: [www.librascotland.org.uk](http://www.librascotland.org.uk)

Libra is an Edinburgh-based voluntary organisation helping women concerned about their drinking regain balance in their lives. They specialise in counselling and groupwork for women worried about their own drinking, and for women affected by someone else's drinking.

### **Midlothian Drugs and Alcohol Action Team**

Midlothian Council  
Fairfield House  
8 Lothian Road  
Dalkeith  
EH22 3AA

T: 0131 271 3631 f: 0131 271 3624  
E: [paliz.coates@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:paliz.coates@midlothian.gov.uk)

Drug and alcohol action teams give advice and information about alcohol issues and put people in touch with local services that can help.

### **Safe and Healthy Working**

T: 0800 019 2211  
W: [www.sahw.co.uk](http://www.sahw.co.uk)

Part of the Scottish Centre for healthy working lives, Safe and Healthy Working provides occupational health and health and safety advice to small and medium sized enterprises in Scotland. Call their advice line or visit their website to find your nearest local adviser. Their website also contains much useful information.

### **Scottish Licensing Law and Practice**

W: [www.sllp.co.uk](http://www.sllp.co.uk)

News and information around Scottish licensing law and practice.

### **West Lothian Drug Action Team**

West Lothian Council  
West Lothian House  
Almondvale Boulevard  
Livingston  
EH54 6QG  
**T: 01506 774082**  
**F: 01506 777123**  
E: [joni.mcarthur@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:joni.mcarthur@westlothian.gov.uk)

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### **Well Scotland**

W: [www.wellscotland.info](http://www.wellscotland.info)

This site from the Scottish Executive gives information on all aspects of mental health and well-being, including advice on where to get help and simple steps everyone can take to improve their mental health.

### **Women and Alcohol**

W: [www.infoscotland.com/womenandalcohol](http://www.infoscotland.com/womenandalcohol)

This site from the Scottish Executive contains essential information and advice on alcohol use for women.

### **Wrecked**

W: [www.wrecked.co.uk](http://www.wrecked.co.uk)

This NHS-run website is aimed at young people and explores the issues around alcohol use and misuse in a fun and interesting way.

<http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk/>

Know The Score - Info and Advice on Drugs in Scotland