



MISUSE OF ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND OTHER SUBSTANCES POLICY

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1. Application

The Board has a wide range of policies which may apply to different categories of people.

An employee is any person under a current contract of employment with PBNI, including temporary and fixed term contracts.

An agency worker is any person supplied to work with PBNI through an employment agency.

A secondee is any person working with PBNI under a formal secondment agreement between the Board and another organisation.

A student is any person working with PBNI on the basis of a formal agreement between the Board and his/her university, college or other course provider.

A volunteer is any person working with PBNI under the Board's Volunteering Policy.

A partnership worker is any person working with PBNI on the basis of a formal partnership agreement between the Board and another organisation.

This policy applies only to Board employees. Matters of concern in relation to other categories referred to above may be raised under such arrangements as are agreed with seconding bodies, supply agencies and university/college authorities to deal with such matters. Matters of concern in relation to volunteers shall be dealt with under policy provision for volunteers.

2. Policy Aim

To regulate the process and procedures for dealing with matters involving the misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances by an employee of PBNI.

3. Policy Objective

To provide a clear framework within which decisions regarding such matters are made.

4. Policy Outcome

All decisions in relation to dealing with such matters will be in accordance with this policy and the related policies referred to in this document.

5. Policy Statement

The Board, through its employees meets a range of statutory requirements and other obligations which have important implications for the public and for individuals.

In such circumstances the Board must ensure that those who deliver its services do so in a way which commands public confidence and meets performance standards.

The misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances including such activity outside the work situation, calls into question matters of work performance, personal responsibility, public confidence and in some cases criminal conduct and is not acceptable.

The Board does however recognize that issues of misuse do constitute distressing personal, family and social problems for the individuals concerned and will, subject to its wider responsibilities and obligations, seek to support any employee who is trying to address such issues.

6. General Considerations

- 6.1 For some individuals the misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances is an issue in itself.
- 6.2 For others such misuse may be an inappropriate response to other issues and pressures.
- 6.3 Although issues of such misuse per se are excluded from provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 it is recognized that in some cases such misuse can be connected to a recognized disability.
- 6.4 All of the above means that each case must be addressed on an individual basis giving due consideration to such information and advice as may be available.
- 6.5 It must however be recognized that while the Board will give full consideration to circumstances and seek to take a supportive approach the commitment and motivation of the individual concerned is the crucial factor in effecting a positive outcome.
- 6.6 Employees should be aware that the Board has clear responsibilities to report criminal matters to the police and nothing in this policy detracts from that responsibility.
- 6.7 Staff should also be aware that the possession of a driving licence is an essential requirement for appointment to a wide range of posts in PBNI.

The loss of a licence following a conviction related to the misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances is therefore likely to lead to consideration of dismissal.

7. Voluntary Disclosure

- 7.1 Any Employee who believes that the issue of misuse is a problem for them is encouraged to seek the support of the Board to resolve the issue.
- 7.2 A direct approach can be made to the line manager, the senior line manager or the ACO – Human Resources.
- 7.3 Any manager or senior manager who is approached should seek the advice of the ACO – Human Resources.
- 7.4 Subject to the circumstances of the individual case a range of options may be considered including:
- Referral to the Occupational Health Service for advice
 - Referral to staff welfare or support services
 - Identification of specialist services appropriate to the individual circumstances.
 - Consideration of other Board provision or arrangements for example special leave or change in location or work pattern.
- 7.5 In all cases action will be on the basis of an agreement between the individual and the manager on the contribution each will make to address the issues.
- 7.6 In all cases due regard will be had of any matters of Health and Safety which merit consideration.
- 7.7 If in the course of discussions the individual discloses confidential information of a criminal nature that may result in disciplinary action a manager must disclose this to senior managers or PSNI (if criminal).

8. Management Concerns

- 8.1 Any manager who has concerns about the conduct or performance of an employee (including concerns for the Health and Safety of the employee or others) and believes that issues of misuse may be a factor should address the issue under the general guidance of the Boards Disciplinary Policy.
- 8.2 As with various matters of conduct there may be issues of a minor nature which can be dealt with within normal management processes.
- 8.3 Other situations will however merit formal consideration under the Disciplinary Policy and should be referred under the procedures set out in that policy.

- 8.4 In determining any disciplinary outcome consideration may be given to support for the individual employee including for example measures set out in 7.4 above.

Employees must however be aware that issues of misuse will not be accepted as a defence in disciplinary cases although appropriate action to address the matter may be considered by way of mitigation in decisions on the appropriate level of discipline.

In cases of a serious nature disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal may be justified regardless of proposals to address the individual situation.

9. Staff Concerns

- 9.1 It is fully appreciated that concerns about the performance or conduct of a colleague in relation to issues of misuse can pose a dilemma for other employees.
- 9.2 The issues are however serious with implications for the reputation of the organisation, those who use our services, managers and other colleagues and the individual employee concerned.
- 9.3 In spite of the difficulty involved staff at all levels are encouraged to support managers in identifying and addressing problems and where possible in implementing arrangements to support a positive outcome.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed within 3 years of implementation.