

Totton & Eling Town Council

Alcohol Policy

June 2023

Introduction

Totton & Eling Town Council are responsible employers and we take our obligations to our employees very seriously. This is why we have set out this policy to help us ensure the health, safety and welfare of our employees and to help us comply with our legal duties. Employees who develop alcohol related problems cause harm to themselves, to others and impair their performance.

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty on employers to provide a safe and healthy working environment, and to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees as well as any visitors or contractors on the premises.

Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Promote awareness of alcohol related problems and addiction;
- Encourage a sensible approach to drinking alcohol;
- Ensure that the Council complies with its legal obligations;
- Indicate restrictions on drinking alcohol at work;
- Protect Employees from the dangers of alcohol abuse; and
- Support Employees with an alcohol related problem.

Health and Safety

In a social environment the consumption of alcohol in moderation is an accepted part of life. In the workplace however it can impair performance, result in inappropriate behaviour, and can place both the individual and those around them in danger, as well as affect health.

In the workplace alcohol abuse can take two different forms:

- Occasional inappropriate drinking; and
- Consistently inappropriate drinking.

Problems arising from the first category are more likely to be cases of misconduct whilst the second will be more likely to involve long term health and performance issues. In either case the health of the individual employee will be affected and quite possibly the health and safety of those around them.

While it will be clear if an individual is drunk at work, the symptoms of larger scale systematic alcohol abuse may be less obvious. Symptoms of alcohol abuse may include:

- Frequent absences on Mondays and Fridays;
- Unusually high rates of absenteeism;
- Unkempt appearance/Lack of hygiene;
- Spasmodic work patterns and lower productivity; or
- Poor relations with others.

Restrictions on Drinking Alcohol at Work

- Unless it is formally approved by your Line Manager employees may not consume alcohol during normal working hours nor should they be incapable of work through the consumption of alcohol.
- Alcohol must not be consumed in any situation where as a consequence the safety of the individual, colleagues or visitors is put at risk.
- Alcohol must not be consumed in excess or in sufficient quantities to impinge on the exercise of any individual's duties when on The Council business outside normal working hours, for example when involved in functions or in providing hospitality.

- Employees are not obliged to work with anyone they consider to be incapable through the consumption of alcohol and should immediately report the matter to their Line Manager.
- Employees who are incapable of working through the consumption of alcohol should be immediately removed from duty and the matter reported to the HR Officer.
- Employees will be held to be contributory negligent in the event that whilst on Council business they cause an accident or damages to anyone or anything, and that the incident occurred due to the Employee's consumption of alcohol.

Disciplinary Action

Employees who are unfit or otherwise incapable for work through the consumption of alcohol will be liable for disciplinary action, may be found guilty of gross misconduct, and may face summary dismissal.

Procedure

- All information relating to an employee's health including, but not limited to, matters involving alcohol, will be collected, held, and processed in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- In the event that an employee is diagnosed with an alcohol related problem the Council will treat it as a health matter. However this does not excuse the employee from any of the disciplinary matters that may fall within the scope of the Council's disciplinary policy.
- All alcohol related issues will be dealt with in a constructive and sympathetic manner. The individual responsible for all such issues is the HR Manager who will also provide any interested employees in confidence with details of where to seek more information or help.
- All requests for help or advice will be treated in the strictest confidence and all information gathered as a result will be held in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- After receiving any appropriate medical reports the Council will provide support to any affected employees. Where an employee agrees to follow a suitable course of action or treatment any disciplinary action may be suspended.
- The Council reserves the right to give affected employees lighter duties at the same rate of pay, or require them to take paid leave if it is deemed appropriate by the Council.
- Following effective treatment and in the absence of any disciplinary action the Council will endeavour to return an affected employee to the same role previously fulfilled by the employee and where this is not possible to a suitable alternative.
- In the event that an employee following successful treatment for an alcohol related problem suffers a relapse the Council is under no obligation to make provision for any further treatment and the employee in question may face summary dismissal.
- If it is considered that the working environment or culture is the cause or a contributor to an alcohol related problem, the Council will take all reasonably practical steps to ensure a reduction of such problems.

This policy has been approved & authorised by:

Name: Susan Cutler

Position: Town Clerk

Date: 17th July 2023

Signature: