

Alcohol and Drugs at Work Policy





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Introduction

Countrywide is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all of its colleagues and those impacted by its activities. This includes ensuring that any risk of injuries or incidents due to colleagues suffering from the effects of alcohol or substance abuse is minimised.

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Who does this apply to?

This policy applies to all colleagues across the Countrywide Group, including contractors and self-employed individuals in relation to service they provide the Company.

What are our responsibilities?

Responsibilities for Senior Leadership and Line Managers include the following:

- Ensuring this policy is communicated to and understood by their teams
- Monitoring changes in colleague work performance and attendance
- Where colleagues have an alcohol or drug problem:
 - encouraging colleague to seek help voluntarily; and
 - referring them to the occupational health service
 - helping the colleague at work and assisting with rehabilitation
- Using absence/performance/disciplinary measures appropriately, i.e. with the clear focus being a return to satisfactory work performance within a reasonable period.

Responsibilities for all colleagues include the following:

- Reading, understanding and complying with this policy
- Understanding the effect of alcohol and drugs on health and work
- Seek help if you are worried about your own drinking or drug taking
- Encouraging colleagues to seek help if they have a problem in the knowledge that a supportive approach will be offered

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Alcohol in the Workplace

It is not permitted for colleagues to drink or be under the influence of alcohol whilst on duty or on Company premises. The only exceptions to this are authorised events and client entertaining, however drinking to excess in these circumstances is also not permitted.

All colleagues should be aware that drinking alcohol before work and during breaks can impair performance. Even if not actually impaired, the perception of being under the influence (i.e. smell of alcohol) can negatively impact the reputation of the colleague and the company (if observed by a customer or client). This can also be the case if the colleague attends work while 'hungover' from alcohol consumption outside of work.

If a colleague is under the influence of alcohol, presenting in a way that is inappropriate for them to continue working at that time, or showing behaviour that indicates they are unfit for work, they will be sent home immediately. It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that the colleague is able to reach home safely and they should arrange for a lift if required.

All colleagues should be aware that if there is a suspicion that they are under the influence of alcohol at work the company reserves the right to require them to undertake testing, which will be conducted by our Occupational Health provider.

Colleagues who are required to drive as part of their role should not consume alcohol before work and should be aware of the length of time required for alcohol to leave their bloodstream before they are required to drive. The Road Traffic Act 1988 makes it illegal for any person to drive or attempt to drive a motor vehicle while unfit to drive through the use of a substance (including both drugs and alcohol), and this is likely to result in disciplinary action and the involvement of the police.

If a colleague receives a driving ban due to a drink/drug related offence, even if this occurred outside of work, they are not guaranteed alternative employment for the duration of the ban and may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy.

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Drug misuse

For the purposes of this policy, drug misuse refers to the use of illegal drugs and the misuse whether deliberate or unintentional, of prescribed drugs, non-prescribed drugs and other substances.

Drugs can change the way a person thinks, perceives and feels, and this can lead to impaired judgement or concentration. Drug misuse can also negatively impact general health and well-being. Both of these may detrimentally influence the performance of the colleague.

Legally prescribed and non-prescribed drugs or substances can also impact on performance. Colleagues should seek advice from their GP or pharmacist on any medicines they are taking, and should inform their line manager of any possible side effects of their medication if they are likely to impact their work performance or attendance.

All colleagues should be aware that if there is a suspicion that they are under the influence of drugs at work, the company reserves the right to require them to undertake testing which will be conducted by our Occupational Health provider.

It is not permitted for colleagues to be in possession, under the influence, deal in or take drugs within classes A, B or C in the workplace unless prescribed by a doctor. These would be classed as gross misconduct offences and would be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy.

If colleagues are charged with and/or convicted of a drugs offence, this must be disclosed to their line manager. Drug related convictions will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy.

Any disclosed drug problem will be treated in strict confidence, subject to our legal requirements.

Support for Alcohol/Drug dependence

For the purposes of this section dependence is defined as any drinking, use of illegal drugs or deliberate use of prescribed or over the counter drugs, either intermittent or continual which interferes with a person's health and/or social functioning and/or work capability or conduct.

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If either you or a colleague has a dependency on alcohol/drugs, this should be disclosed to your line manager at the earliest opportunity.

Depending on the circumstances, your line manager may monitor the situation or seek further advice, for example from our Occupational Health provider. As a company we will always be sympathetic to those who disclose a problem and will offer support, which may include temporary adjustments to enable colleagues to obtain the help they require to recover.

Colleagues should be aware that where support has been provided over a reasonable period and no improvement is made, it may be appropriate to follow the Conduct/Sickness Absence/Managing Performance Policies. Circumstances where this may be the case include:

- Where there is denial of a problem, however conduct/attendance/performance is unacceptable
- Where a problem is acknowledged, however refuses the opportunity to receive help
- Where treatment is discontinued (either prior to completion or following completion) and unacceptable conduct/attendance/performance occurs

Change history

Version no	Date	Change made by	Brief details of change
1.0	22/01/2020	Claire Raines	Launch of New Policy
1.1	21/01/2021	Claire Raines	Annual Review

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Policy sign off

Name	Role	Date
Dan Thompson	Group HR Director	22/01/2020

Need more info?

If there are any queries relating to this document or any of the local supporting policies or standards please contact the HR Helpdesk (hrsupport@countrywide.co.uk or 01908 961200)

Ownership and Confidentiality

This document should not be shared with any other third party without the written consent of Countrywide PLC. This policy and any associated documentation remains the property of Countrywide PLC and should be returned if requested.

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