

Drugs/Substance Abuse and Work Policy

Purpose

The misuse of drugs has continued to increase at national level and is of concern to all employers. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that an employee's performance is not impaired as a result of taking or possibly taking drugs.

The Policy

The provisions of the policy are:

- To make employees aware that to use, possess, consume, store or sell illicit drugs in CREST work locations or to report for work having taken such drugs will result in disciplinary action which may lead to summary dismissal
- To make employees mindful of the likely effects of medically prescribed drugs or those available over the counter without a prescription
- To identify employees whose performance is impaired by drugs and to resolve any problems that may arise
- To encourage employees with a drug related problem to come forward and seek help. It is CREST policy to ensure that any approach of this nature is treated sensitively

Responsibilities

All employees

- To be familiar with the policy and the disciplinary implications resulting from a breach of the policy
- To ascertain whether there are likely to be any side effects as a result of taking medication and inform their manager if such side effects may affect their work performance
- To avoid covering up or colluding with colleagues whose behaviour and performance is affected by the taking of drugs
- To urge colleagues to seek help if they have problems arising from the use of drugs

Those with a responsibility for managing or supervising others:

- To be familiar with the policy and guidelines

- To be aware of and to monitor changes in work performance, behaviour, attendance, sickness and accident patterns and to discuss appropriate disciplinary action with the Management Committee
- To intervene where there are identifiable symptoms of drug related problems and to seek advice from the Management Committee
- To be aware of the legal consequences surrounding drugs and work including the obligation to notify the police of incidents involving illegal drugs in the work place
- To take a non judgmental approach when counselling or interviewing employees

Actions

Sick Pay Arrangements

- Employees who are not able to work as a result of taking prescribed medication will be covered by the normal sick leave and pay arrangements
- Employees who are unfit for work as a result of treatment relating to drug addiction will normally be regarded as being on sick leave and will be eligible for the normal sick leave and pay

Legal Considerations

- If an employee possesses, supplies or uses illicit drugs i.e. heroin, ecstasy, cocaine and cannabis in CREST work locations, management is required by law to notify the police. This is also the case in respect of the supply of tranquillisers and sleeping tablets, except when medically prescribed to the employee
- It is an offence for management to knowingly allow a person to continue to consume or be in possession of illegal drugs on the premises and management should be aware of their responsibility in this respect

Disciplinary Considerations

- In the event of any breach of discipline as a result of taking drugs, illicit, prescribed or self medication the normal disciplinary procedures shall apply
- Claims of ignorance about the possible effects of the medication taken will not normally be regarded as an acceptable reason if there are any associated problems arising at work
- An employee who reports for work in possession of illicit drugs or is found to be consuming, storing or supplying illicit drugs in work locations will be liable to summary dismissal
- An employee who reports for work whilst under the influence of illicit drugs will also be liable to charges of serious misconduct

- An employee with a drug related problem who refuses to undertake or continue with treatment will be liable to disciplinary action which may lead to dismissal