



The Old Needleworks Drugs and Alcohol Policy

1.0 Introduction

The Old Needleworks Foundation recognises that alcohol and drug abuse related problems are an area of health and social concern. The Charity also recognises that alcohol and drug abuse problems can have a detrimental effect on mental health, relationships, work performance and behavior.

It is therefore our policy that staff, volunteers, center users or Trustees may not bring to or consume alcohol or any unlawful or controlled drugs in the workplace during work time or during a period prior to work where the effects may carry over to the workplace, in line with our Zero tolerance policy. This includes functions or events where the person is representing the Charity. Special rules may apply in relation to alcohol, where the Charity sponsors an event, such as a Christmas party. In these circumstances the CEO will use their discretion to apply any variation to the alcohol policy, which will be communicated in advance of the event.

The Old Needleworks recognises that a member of staff or volunteer with alcohol or drug abuse problems needs help and support, which may be provided in-house if this is appropriate. The Charity also understands that it has a responsibility to all its employees and other stakeholders to ensure that any risks related to this are minimized.

Accordingly, our policy involves the following approaches

- Providing reasonable in-house assistance to the member of staff or volunteer with an alcohol or drug abuse problem who is willing to co-operate in treatment for that problem.
- Where it is not appropriate to provide in-house support, through this policy the Charity will seek to assist a member of staff in obtaining and engaging with specialist help, and to protect his/her employment. Such services are provided by GPs, hospitals and other agencies.

- Any safeguarding concerns being raised and reported as appropriate and relevant support being provided in relation to safeguarding issues.
- Disciplinary rules, enforced through disciplinary procedures, where use of alcohol or drugs (other than on prescription) affects performance or behavior at work, and where either (1) an alcohol or drug dependency problem does not exist or (2) where treatment is not possible or has not succeeded.

1.1 Assistance for an employee

The Charity will, where possible, provide the following assistance to a member of staff or volunteer:

- Helping the member of staff/volunteer to recognise the nature of the problem, through referral to an appropriate service.
- Support during a period of treatment. This may include a period of sick leave or approved other leave, continuation in post or transfer to other work, depending upon what is appropriate in terms of the staff member's or volunteer's condition and needs of the Charity.

The opportunity to remain or return to work following the completion of a course of treatment, as far as is practicable, in either the employee's own post or an alternative post.

The Charity's assistance will depend upon the following conditions being met:

- A statutory diagnosis of an alcohol or drug dependency related problem.
- The member of staff/volunteer recognises that he/she is suffering from an alcohol or drug abuse problem and is prepared to co-operate fully in referral and treatment from appropriate sources.

The Charity and its stakeholders must recognise the following limits to the assistance the Charity can provide:

- Where a member of staff or volunteer fails to co-operate in referral or treatment arrangements, no special assistance will be given and any failure in work performance and behavior will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure.
- If the process of referral and treatment is completed but is not successful, and failure in work performance or behavior occurs, these will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure.
- A member of staff or volunteers' continuation in his/her post or an alternative post during or after treatment will depend upon the needs of the Charity at that time.

1.2 Disciplinary Action

In line with the Charities disciplinary rules, the following will be regarded as serious misconduct:

- Attending work and/or carrying out duties under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Consumption or distribution of alcohol or drugs whilst on duty (other than where prescribed or approval has been given).

Breach of these rules will be treated as gross misconduct or a breach of the agreement between organisation and volunteer. This may result in summary dismissal, or removal from your position from The Old Needleworks Foundation. Only in exceptional cases will either notice or the reduced disciplinary action of a final written warning be applied.

Where a breach of these rules occurs, but it is established that an alcohol or drug abuse related problem exists, and the member of staff or volunteer is willing to co-operate in referral to an appropriate service and subsequent treatment, the Charity will suspend application of the Disciplinary Procedure and provide assistance as described above. Staff or volunteers who do not comply with the treatment suggested or continue to abuse alcohol or drugs will be subjected to the application of the Disciplinary Policy.

2.0 Procedures

2.1 Nature of the Procedures

The procedures define management responsibilities and provide guidelines on:

- Where assistance to a member of staff/volunteer should be provided and the nature of and limits to such assistance.
- The application of the Charity's Disciplinary Procedure.

Through discussion and appropriate advice, the Trustees and CEO will decide:

- a)
 - i) Whether an alcohol or drug related problem exists
 - ii) progress in treatment
 - iii) re-establishment or continuation at work of a member of staff/volunteer or other appropriate arrangements.
- b) Assistance to members of staff/volunteers with alcohol or drug abuse related problems.

The Trustees and CEO will work together to assist staff or volunteers referred in the following ways:

- encourage them to access therapy to come to a better understanding of their problem and the benefits of seeking treatment or help.
- providing advice and direction regarding obtaining treatment and specialist help.
- assisting in continuing at or achieving a return to work.

Alcohol or drug abuse related problems can come to the notice of management through:

- Failures in work performance or behavior necessitating use of the Disciplinary Procedure. In such situations the procedure described above should be followed.
- Other means, where a member of staff or volunteer seeks or agrees to accept assistance on a voluntary basis. In such situations, the procedures described above should be followed.

2.2 Situations where use of the Disciplinary Procedure is Appropriate

Recognition of the existence of a possible alcohol or drug abuse problem.

Abuse of alcohol or drugs can affect performance and behavior at work, ie, either through serious misconduct at work, (where there is a direct and demonstrable breach of the disciplinary rules regarding alcohol or drug abuse at work), or where there is a falling off of standards of work performance or behavior, and abuse of alcohol or drugs is a possible cause.

The CEO will be responsible for responding to such situations, carrying out either coaching support, referrals or disciplinary investigations and interviews, supported as appropriate by the Trustees.

In such interviews the possible existence of an alcohol or drug abuse problem should be explored. The CEO is not required to diagnose the existence of an alcohol or drug abuse problem, merely to assess whether such abuse is a possible factor.

Any requirements of the Disciplinary Procedure regarding allowing the member of staff representation will be observed.

2.3 Diagnosing the existence of an alcohol or drug abuse problem.

Should the interviews lead to the conclusion that an alcohol or drug abuse problem might exist, and the member of staff/volunteer accepts referral, the CEO should refer the matter to the person's GP, who will be responsible for establishing whether or not a diagnosis of alcoholism or drug dependence can be made.

Disciplinary action should be suspended until diagnostic advice is obtained. Where appropriate, suspension arrangements in the Disciplinary Procedure should be followed.

If the interview fails to lead to the conclusion that an alcohol or drug abuse problem exists, or the member of staff/volunteer rejects, or fails to co-operate in referral, disciplinary action should be continued, where and as the situation justifies.

2.4 Confirmation that an alcohol or drug abuse problem exists and treatment arrangements.

If a positive diagnosis of an alcohol or drug abuse problem is made, and the member of staff agrees to co-operate in treatment, treatment arrangements/referrals should commence.

Should a diagnosis of alcoholism or drug dependence not be confirmed or should the member of

staff refuse to co-operate in treatment, disciplinary action should be continued.

The Trustees will seek advice on whether a situation has been reached where there is a lack of progress with treatment or lack of co-operation by the member of staff or volunteer. They must then review the facts and consider whether or not there needs to be a return to the use of Disciplinary Procedures.

Where medical certificates are submitted, sick leave should be given. Should the employee continue to be fit for work during the period of treatment, he/she should be permitted to continue in his/her post or alternative work unless such an arrangement would have an adverse effect on Charity services. In such circumstances, annual or unpaid leave should be approved or, exceptionally, suspension arranged.

If a member of staff has been off work during the period of treatment, before returning to duty, he/she will be seen by their GP who will advise management regarding capability for continuation in his/her own post and whether any special supervision or other arrangements are required.

Every effort should be made to comply with the advice of the GP. If it is not reasonably practicable to do so, and as a result, the member of staff is not able to resume duty, employment may be terminated on the grounds of incapacity (ill health).

If a member of staff/volunteer is again involved in disciplinary situations resulting from alcohol or drug abuse related problems, a second referral for in-house or exterior support and suspension of the disciplinary procedure may be appropriate. If the support service advises positively on the possibilities of further treatment or help and the willingness of the member of staff/volunteer to co-operate, the disciplinary procedure may be suspended again to permit treatment and help to be undertaken. This second referral will not apply if the further disciplinary problems involve serious misconduct. Third and subsequent referrals are not permissible.

3.0 Situations where a Disciplinary Situation does not exist

There may be situations where the possible existence of alcohol or drug abuse problems affecting a member of staff/volunteer comes to the CEO or Trustee's attention, although there is, or has been, no discernible effect on work performance or behavior. This could arise if a member of staff confides in the CEO about an alcohol or drug abuse problem, or the CEO could see a need to approach a member of staff after observing possible "indicators" of an alcohol or drug abuse problem e.g. an absence pattern, information provided by the member of staff's colleagues, etc.

In such situations, the Charity would wish staff and volunteers to feel they could seek help (in complete confidence) without worry that their job security would be in jeopardy. Accordingly, if the CEO should be faced with a situation of this type they should:

- seek the advice of an appropriate professional or the board of Trustees regarding whether and how the matter could be dealt with
- coach the member of staff/volunteer and, if appropriate, support the member of staff/volunteer to contact their GP.
- as in the procedure described above, the CEO and Trustees will play a facilitating role i.e. seeking to establish whether a problem exists, advising and directing the member of staff/volunteer towards appropriate forms of treatment and help.
- These steps cannot be taken without the co-operation of the member of staff/volunteer. If the member of staff/volunteer does not wish to co-operate, no further action should be taken. There are however a number of external organisations which provide help and support for individuals with an alcohol or drug related problem – a list of contacts is provided at

appendix 1 – Sources of External Support.

- Should a member of staff/volunteer take up the opportunity of assistance on this voluntary basis, there need be no further formal involvement of management in terms of action or the right to learn of progress with treatment. It may be however that the member of staff/volunteer would wish, or agree to, further involvement of management as a means of assisting progress with treatment.
- Use of the disciplinary procedures and/or the application of the approach described above would only be appropriate if subsequently, the member of staff/volunteer is involved in a breach of disciplinary rules.
- Should the problems of the member of staff develop to an extent that his/her continuation in post or employment became impossible, it may be necessary to identify alternative work or arrange for termination, on the same basis as the Company operates for staff with problems of incapacity due to ill health.

Signature:

E Grant

CEO

Date: 21.03.24

Review Date: 20.03.24

Appendix 1 – Sources of External Support

Alcohol Dependence

Drinkline

Helpline: 0800 917 8282

Drinkline runs a free, confidential helpline for people who are concerned about their own drinking, or someone else's.

NHS Choices Website

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Alcohol-misuse/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

National Health Service advice page.

Drinkaware

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

Drinkaware works to reduce alcohol misuse and harm in the UK.

Addaction

<http://www.addaction.org.uk/default.asp>

Addaction is the UK's leading drug and alcohol charity, helping over 40,000 people a year to recover from their addiction problems.

Al-Anon

<http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk>

Provide support to anyone whose life is, or has been, affected by someone else's drinking, regardless of whether that person is still drinking or not.

Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain

<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>

AA is an organisation of men and women who share their experience with each other hoping to solve their problems and help others to recover from alcoholism.

Drug Dependence

NHS Choices Website

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/drugs/Pages/Drugtreatment.aspx>

National Health Service advice page.

Addaction

<http://www.addaction.org.uk/default.asp>

Addaction is the UK's leading drug and alcohol charity, helping over 40,000 people a year to recover from their addiction problems.

Talk to Frank

<http://www.talktofrank.com/>

National drugs awareness site for young people and parents/carers.

Narcotics Anonymous

<http://ukna.org/>

Helpline for the UK: 0300 999 1212

N.A. is a non-profit fellowship of recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean.

Membership is open to anyone with a drug problem seeking help, regardless of what drug or combination of drugs have been used, and irrespective of age, sex, religion, race, creed or class. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using drug