

Millennium Farm Trust

GN1.3 Policy on Alcohol and Non-Prescription Drugs V02

Review date March 2025



Version Control

Version number	Date of changes	Who	Review summary
02	03/03/19	T Freathy	Annual review.
	Jan 20	NA Hunter	Annual review. No changes
	Feb 22	T Freathy	Annual Review No changes
	Feb 24	T Freathy	Annual Review No changes

Introduction

The consumption of alcohol, prescription or illegal drugs in relation to work can raise complex ethical and practical questions. Millennium Farm Trust aims to strike a balance between supporting employees, volunteers and farm helpers who are addressing issues of drug or alcohol abuse and maintaining a safe and effective work environment.

This policy sets out the company's aims in reducing and managing alcohol and drug problems in the workplace. Alcohol and drug problems are prevalent in society and are associated with a wide variety of costs for both employers and employees. These costs include ill-health, sickness, absence, reduced work performance and accidents. The consumption of alcohol and drugs has implications for health and safety at work since these substances impair co-ordination, judgement and decision making; as such this is a policy matter.

As an organisation that works with client groups who may be in recovery from addictions there are particular sensitivities around alcohol on site.

The organisation fosters an ethos that promotes healthy living. We encourage staff to share this ethos and to develop healthy lifestyles in order to provide leadership and good role models.

Policy Aims and Objectives

Aim

To clearly state the Trust's position on alcohol and drugs within the workplace.

Objectives

1. To ensure the Trust complies with appropriate legislation
2. To minimise the risks associated with alcohol and drugs in the workplace

3. To have clear rules regarding alcohol and drugs in the workplace
4. To provide support for employees experiencing alcohol and drug problems

Definitions

Alcohol problem - An alcohol problem is defined as any drinking, either intermittent or continual which interferes with a person's health and/or social functioning and/or work capability or conduct.

Drugs - Any drug, whether illegal, prescribed or over the counter or solvents such as glue, butane, etc. In the case of prescribed and over the counter drugs, their possession and use by the employee is acknowledged as legitimate.

Drug problem - The use of illegal drugs, the deliberate use of prescribed or over the counter drugs (when not for a medical condition) and the use of solvents, either intermittent or continual which interferes with a person's health and/or social functioning and/or work capability or conduct.

Legal

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employers to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees and others who may be affected by their activities, as far as is reasonably practicable.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to carry out a risk assessment to identify hazards in the workplace and put measures in place to minimise these risks.

The Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) is the main legislation covering drugs and categorises them as classes A, B and C. These drugs are called controlled substances and class A drugs are considered to be the most harmful under this act. It is illegal for anyone, whether at work or not to produce, supply or be in possession of illegal drugs. Employers may be liable if they knowingly allow dispensing, manufacturing, possession, using or selling on their premises.

Policy Rules

1. The company requires all employees, volunteers and farm helpers to report for duty free from the effects of alcohol and drugs.
2. It is not acceptable to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at work or consume alcohol or drugs during hours of work this includes paid and un-paid breaks.*
3. Employees found in possession of illegal drugs or using illegal drugs whilst at work will normally be reported to the police.**
4. In some cases the legitimate use of prescribed drugs can affect a person's ability to do their job. In such instances employees should inform the director.

*Alcohol

While being under the influence of alcohol is potentially a disciplinary offence, in some limited circumstances it may be permissible for staff or volunteers to consume small amounts of alcohol, for example at an event or when attending a social function on behalf of the organisation. Non-alcoholic drinks are always available. Those staff drinking alcohol are expected to behave in accordance with usual business standards and company policies. This includes maintaining appropriate behaviour and a professional image.

It is important to be mindful that the organisation works with vulnerable people who may be recovering from alcohol or drug addiction. Be aware of the government's guidelines on the consumption of alcohol.

There are certain times, roles and positions where it would never be permissible to consume alcohol, even at events where alcohol is present. These include;

- any role supporting or working with children or vulnerable adults and
- any role supervising volunteers.

Drinking alcohol at the farm is not permitted during the working day.

An employee's, volunteer's or farm helper's consumption of alcohol outside the working day becomes an issue to the organisation where it affects their performance at the farm. This may be a direct effect (inability to coordinate or concentrate) or an indirect effect (impact on relationships where colleagues or clients become aware of drunkenness). The impact may be felt whether the employee is under the influence of drink or is suffering the after-effects of being drunk.

There is a link between alcohol consumption and mental health problems including depression, memory loss and heightened suicide risk. We recognise this link therefore discourage the use of alcohol. We will provide help and support to employees where appropriate.

****Drugs**

There are no circumstances where possession, supply or use of illegal drugs is permissible on the farm or anywhere on Trust business. Persons found in possession of or supplying others or using illegal drugs will be reported to the police.

Prescription drugs used according to the person's qualified medical advisor are permissible as long as their use does not adversely affect their ability to undertake their work. Employees, farm helpers or volunteers suffering adverse side effects to prescription drugs should be helped to seek medical advice as soon as possible. They should not remain at work if a health and safety risk is identified.

Approach

If there are concerns reported by colleagues or it is felt that a member of staff's performance is being affected by drugs or alcohol, or if they appear inebriated, this would be discussed with them by their line manager. Where their condition presents an immediate health and safety risk (to themselves or others), if they are incapable of work or if their condition presents a reputational risk to the organisation they will be asked to leave the site immediately.

Where the employee, volunteer or farm helper presents behaviour consistent with persistent drug or alcohol abuse the organisation will attempt to put in place a supportive plan of action. The plan would depend on the nature of the issues and would vary according to the job role and individuals but could include support, advice such as sign posting and guidance including ongoing monitoring of the situation. It may be appropriate for the individual to take time off work or away from the farm to address their drug or alcohol issues and the type of leave taken would need to be clarified with the Director. Action to address an employee's drug or alcohol issues will be undertaken in accordance with the organisation disciplinary or capability policies.

Help and Support

Alcoholics Anonymous: Call: 0800 9177 650 Email: help@alcoholics-anonymous.co.uk Visit: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Narcotics Anonymous: Call: 0300 999 1212 Visit: www.ukna.org

FRANK - friendly, confidential advice about drugs: Call: 0300 123 6600 Text: 82111 Visit: www.talktofrank.com