



## **Drug and Alcohol related illnesses in the Workplace**

### **Employer's Information Guide**

#### **Impact of addiction on your business**

Every organisation, regardless of size or industry sector will, at some point, encounter problems relating to alcohol and drug dependency amongst its employees. It is estimated that the effects of drug and alcohol misuse cost UK industry £4.1 billion annually.

The presence of drug and or alcohol dependent employees can have an extremely damaging effect on the organisation, its workforce, clients or customers as well as business continuity and, ultimately, financial stability.

Drug and alcohol dependency should be seen as a health problem and organisations have a duty of care to their employees to provide support and treatment. The object should be to drive drugs and alcohol – not people – out of the organisation wherever possible.

#### **Some common consequences:**

- Reduced work performance
- Absenteeism and poor time-keeping
- Unacceptable conduct
- Safety and security of people and property become endangered

#### **Benefits of working with Addictions UK to provide a drug and alcohol treatment programme:**

Addictions UK works with you to offer support and treatment to the employee suffering from a drugs or alcohol related illness. Consistent programme, tailored to meet the needs of individuals and their circumstances.

Immediate programme of condition management can be commenced immediately.

Ultimately an employee back at work and healthy or a stronger case for dismissal.

#### **Savings**

Time — the Addictions UK programme offers an immediate start for employees identified as suffering from a drug or alcohol related illness.

Money — a productive employee back at work or grounds for fair dismissal sooner.

Bureaucracy — one call will set the programme in motion, no need to wait for months for a caseworker.

#### **Examples**

A previously conscientious employee of organisation A for 7 years became alcohol-dependent and his work performance deteriorated rapidly. Following a series of absences, the employee admitted what was happening to his manager who consulted the HR department. The Company followed their designated procedure and involved the occupational health team for assessment of the situation. The lengthy process meant months went by before the employee was referred to a treatment provider. Meanwhile the employee became less and less reliable, and the damage he was doing started to affect his immediate colleagues. The line manager commented that it was 'worse than being a team member short — it was as if we had a saboteur on the team'. Ultimately, the treatment programme recommended by occupational health failed, and the employee was dismissed, at the end of an 18 month period of escalating chaos.

B had worked...

B had worked for organisation C for more than 3 years when B's line manager became suspicious about her behaviour, which seemed worst on Monday mornings, and occasionally other weekday mornings. Rumours surfaced in the workplace that B was using hard drugs in her own time, and her line manager raised this with her at a return to work interview after a short absence with what she described as "flu". After initially denying that her performance and absence were in any way drug-abuse related, B broke down and admitted that she had a drugs problem. Following discussions with the HR department B agreed to undertake a treatment programme which commenced immediately.. Shortly after starting intensive treatment B's condition improved sufficiently for her to return to work. The organisation continued to support her and she quickly re-established herself as a reliable and productive employee.

D was employed in a small business. The staff often went out for a drink together on Fridays after work. Over a period of time D's colleagues noticed that he appeared to be drinking more and more, and often had little recall of the previous Friday's events on the following Monday morning. His personal appearance started to deteriorate, his time-keeping became erratic, and the company's owner became convinced that he could sometimes smell alcohol on D's breath on work mornings. The owner had worked with D for many years, and was reluctant to take action to address the apparent problem. But eventually the owner sat D down and asked him outright about his drinking. D denied he was alcoholic, but agreed that he was possibly drinking more than was wise. The owner gained D's permission to refer him to Addictions UK for support and treatment, and after a rocky few weeks, the intensive treatment and support programme helped D to come to terms with his alcoholism and start to make fundamental changes to his life. D remains a valued employee of the company, and says that facing up to his problem was the best step he has ever taken.

### Services:

- We can provide training on addiction issues – including alcohol and drug addictions.
- We provide home based treatment to your employees which is effective affordable and confidential
- We specialise in working with HR Departments and can advise on the best actions to be taken including policies on drug and alcohol issues.
- We can assist with problems of absenteeism within your workforce.

### What next?

For more information, contact Addictions UK to see how we can assist you in the treatment of drug and alcohol related illnesses within the workplace. Our immediate start treatment programme can be tailored to the individual and covered by your organisation's employee health policy. If you wish to attend one of our informative seminars, call Addictions UK to see when the next one is being held in your area.

**For more information visit [www.addictionsuk.com](http://www.addictionsuk.com)**

**Just a phone call away from addictions recovery 0845 4567 030**

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