

# DRUG ABUSE

Below is a brief explanation of how drug abuse affects your health and your work performance.

The following information was extracted from the City University London website, which can be found at [www.city.ac.uk](http://www.city.ac.uk)

## INTRODUCTION

Drug misuse affects performance, conduct and relationships at work and at home. Employees who develop alcohol or drug related problems cause harm to themselves and to others.

Drug abuse is defined as the taking of an illicit or other chemical substance into the body in an un-prescribed manner.

## EFFECTS OF DRUGS

The effects of taking drugs depend on the type of drug and method by which they are administered.

This may include the following;

- Psychological dependence, possibly leading to psychotic illness
- Hepatitis
- HIV Infection
- Septicaemia
- Overdose

Further, as with alcohol, consumption of drugs can be a cause of accidents putting the employee, colleagues and others at risk.

## CATEGORIES OF ILLEGAL DRUGS

Unlike drinking alcohol, there are no sensible intake levels for drugs and many are illegal. The misuse of drugs Act 1971 defines three categories according to their relative harmfulness when abused.

### CLASS A

Includes cocaine, ecstasy, heroin, LSD, morphine and injectable forms of class B drugs.

### CLASS B

Includes oral preparations of amphetamines, cannabis, cannabis resin and codeine.

### CLASS C

Includes most benzodiazepines (sleeping pills, tranquillisers) and the less harmful amphetamines.

Penalties for offences tend to be more severe the more harmful the drug class.

## MEDICATION AND OTHER SUBSTANCES

Prescribed medication and some over-the-counter drugs such as antidepressants, sleeping pills or hay fever remedies can cause drowsiness and loss of concentration. These effects may be intensified if even small quantities of alcohol are also consumed. These side effects increase the risk of accidents particularly for staff operating machinery or working at heights. Staff taking medication are advised to ascertain potential side effects from their GP or pharmacist and to inform their line manager if there are any safety implications.

Everyday substances such as cleaning materials and glue have an addictive potential, appropriate risk assessment and care should be taken when they are in use.

Employees who believe they have a drug related problem are encouraged to seek confidential help and treatment. An employee may discuss the matter with their employer, which will be treated with the strictest confidence, and means of advice and support will be offered to individuals who are willing to accept it.

Being under the influence of drink and/or drugs at work could end up in instant dismissal, as clients have the right to run an alcohol or drugs test at anytime, any personnel who test positive will be immediately dismissed from site and from ABFAD Limited.