Kingskerswell Parish Council

Alcohol and Substance Misuse in the Workplace Policy

Date: 13th March 2025
Agreed at Full Council Meeting: 22nd April 2025

Introduction

Kingskerswell Parish Council is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy working environment for all its employees and members. This policy outlines the Council's stance on alcohol and substance misuse in the workplace and provides guidelines for addressing any issues related to misuse that may affect employees' or members' performance, health, or safety.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure compliance with legal responsibilities related to alcohol and substance misuse in the workplace.
- Safeguard the health, safety, and wellbeing of employees, members, and the public.
- Establish clear procedures for handling alcohol and substance misuse-related issues.
- Promote a responsible approach to alcohol use and raise awareness of the risks of substance misuse.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and members of Kingskerswell Parish Council and covers alcohol, drugs (prescription and illegal), solvents, and other substances that may impair judgment, performance, or safety.

Definition of Misuse

Substance misuse is defined as the ongoing or occasional use of alcohol, drugs, or other substances that negatively affect an individual's performance, health, safety, or the safety of others. This includes:

- **Alcohol Misuse**: Consuming alcohol to the extent that it impairs performance or safety.
- **Drug Misuse**: The use of illegal drugs or prescription medication inappropriately, affecting work performance or health.
- **Other Substance Misuse**: The use of solvents or other substances in a way that impairs the individual's ability to perform their duties.

Responsibilities of Employees and Members

All employees and members are expected to:

- Be fit for work and perform their duties without the influence of alcohol or substances.
- Refrain from using alcohol or drugs during working hours or while performing council duties.
- Seek help or guidance if they are experiencing problems with alcohol or substance misuse.
- Cooperate with any investigations or actions taken under this policy.

Consumption of Alcohol and Drugs

- **Alcohol Consumption**: Alcohol consumption during working hours, whether on or off Council premises, is not permitted.
- **Drug Use**: The use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited in the workplace.
- **Fitness for Work**: Employees and members must ensure they are always fit for work. If an employee or member is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs during work hours, they will be asked to leave the workplace and may face disciplinary action.

Support for Employees and Members

Kingskerswell Parish Council recognises that employees and members may experience difficulties with alcohol or substance misuse. The Council is committed to offering support by:

- Providing information on available support services.
- Offering confidential assistance and encouraging individuals to seek professional help voluntarily.
- Allowing time off for treatment or counselling where appropriate.

Disciplinary Action

Failure to comply with this policy, including being under the influence of alcohol or drugs during working hours, will result in disciplinary action, which may include:

- A formal warning.
- Suspension from duties.
- Dismissal in the case of repeated or severe violations.

In cases of illegal substance possession or dealing, the police will be notified immediately, and further action will be taken as necessary.

Confidentiality

Kingskerswell Parish Council will treat any matters related to alcohol or substance misuse with the utmost confidentiality. Employees and members seeking help will be assured that any personal information will be handled confidentially in line with data protection laws, unless there is a legal obligation to disclose information.

Procedure for Dealing with Alcohol or Substance Misuse Issues

- **Identifying Misuse**: If an employee or member is suspected of alcohol or substance misuse, the Council will gather relevant evidence and discuss the issue in a confidential meeting.
- **Support and Action Plan**: If misuse is confirmed, the Council will work with the individual to develop an action plan, offering support and time off for treatment if necessary.

- **Ongoing Monitoring**: The employee or member will be monitored and supported as required, with regular meetings to assess progress.
- **Failure to Cooperate**: If the individual refuses support or fails to improve, disciplinary action may be taken, which could lead to dismissal for employees or other sanctions for members.

Review of the Policy
This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains up to date with relevant laws and best practices. Employees and members will be informed of any changes.

Policy Approval

This Alcohol and Substance Misuse in the Workplace Policy was adopted by the Parish Council on 22nd April 2025.