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MAXIMISING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE BY  
MINIMISING THE IMPACT OF SUBSTANCES  
IN THE WORKPLACE  
(MEPMIS)

A resource pack to complement the delivery of  
the MEPMIS face to face training course



NOFER INSTITUTE OF OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE



## How to use this pack

This training course is intended to be delivered as a face-to-face course for managers of small and medium sized businesses (SME's). It can also be adapted where appropriate to be delivered to managers in larger organisations.

The authors acknowledge the wide range of SMEs that exist, from micro organisations with fewer than ten employees, small organisations with up to fifty employees and medium sized organisations with up to two hundred and fifty employees - businesses that can be in any sector or industry. It is intended that that this resource pack should be tailored to suit the needs of any organisation. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are socially and economically important, since they represent 99 % of all enterprises in the EU. They provide around 90 million jobs and contribute to entrepreneurship and innovation.

The course has been written to be delivered by Mepmis approved trainers; however it can also be delivered as a 'train the trainers' course, so that individuals from organisations can train their own managers in order to build capacity in the organisation. It is aimed specifically to assist owners / managers and specialists such as Human Resources advisers, Occupational Health advisers and Health and Safety advisers to improve their skills and competencies in preventing and dealing with issues that arise from alcohol and drugs at work. A separate e-learning package is also available for managers / supervisors to help them develop their knowledge in this area. It can be accessed via [www.alcoholdrugsandwork.eu](http://www.alcoholdrugsandwork.eu)

The training course will take the form of a 'pick and mix' modular approach. There are seven modules from which participants can pick the ones that best meet their needs - the number of modules dictating the length of the workshop. Sample agendas for a half day and one and two day workshops are provided below. The course covers a wide range of activities and exercises including an interactive case study and many scenarios from 'real life'.

The modules included in this resource pack originated from the topic areas that were identified by participants during a training needs analysis that was carried out in all the partner countries at an early stage of this project.

Every module consists of the module's aims and objectives, one or more activity sheets which outline instructions for individual / small group / large group exercises and detailed information on the topic area. Powerpoint slides and further information are available in the members area of the MEPMIS website [www.alcoholdrugsandwork.eu](http://www.alcoholdrugsandwork.eu). References and suggestions for further reading are provided in Annex 1 on page 76.

## Module titles

- 1. General introduction**
  - a. Definitions and terms used
  - b. The rationale for a proactive approach – the business case
- 2. The best corporate approach**
  - a. Alcohol and drug policies – general principles
  - b. Alcohol and drug policies – essential provisions
  - c. Alcohol and drug policies – recommended provisions
- 3. Legal principles**
  - a. Alcohol and drugs specifically
  - b. Health and safety law
  - c. Human rights law
  - d. Data protection law
  - e. General employment law
  - f. Specific employment law such as equalities and discrimination
- 4. Managerial knowledge, skills and competencies**
  - a. Recognising the signs and symptoms of problematic and inappropriate use of alcohol and drugs
  - b. Getting the right balance – discipline and / or support
  - c. Referral and rehabilitation
- 5. To test or not to test**
  - a. The pros and cons of testing
  - b. The legal basis for testing
  - c. General issues to be considered
  - d. When might testing be carried out?
  - e. How is testing carried out?
- 6. The problem**
  - a. Substances of concern, their use and the legal implications
  - b. Understanding the underlying reasons for drug use
  - c. Workplace influences
  - d. The nature of drug use
  - e. Characteristics of alcohol and drug use
- 7. Putting theory into practice**
  - a. Meeting the challenge
  - b. Acting as change champions
  - c. Next steps and action planning

Annex 1	References
Annex 2	A model policy
Annex 3	Forms of support
Annex 4	Case study material

## **Alcohol, drugs and work**

### **Sample agenda for a one day workshop**

#### **9.30 Module 1 - General introduction**

- a. Definitions and terms used
- b. The rationale for a proactive approach – the business case

#### **9.50 Module 6 - The problem**

- Substances of concern, their use and the legal implications
- Understanding the underlying reasons for drug use
- Workplace influences
- The nature of drug use
- Characteristics of alcohol and drug use

#### **11.00 COFFEE**

#### **11.15 Module 3 - The legal principles**

Considering all the aspects of law relating to alcohol and drugs

- Alcohol and drugs specifically
- Health and safety law
- Human rights law
- Data protection law
- General employment law
- Specific employment law such as discrimination

#### **12.45 LUNCH**

#### **1.30 Module 4 - Managerial knowledge, skills and competencies**

- a. Recognising the signs and symptoms of problematic and inappropriate use
- b. Getting the right balance – discipline and / or support
- c. Referral and rehabilitation

#### **3.00 COFFEE**

#### **3.15 Module 5 - To test or not to test**

- a. The pros and cons of testing
- b. The legal basis for testing
- c. General issues to be considered
- d. When might testing be carried out?
- e. How is testing carried out?

#### **4.0 Module 7 - Putting the theory into practice**

## Next steps and action planning

**Note:** the modules listed above are only suggestions; any modules can be included to suit participants' needs. The modules covered may need to be reduced in depth of content in order to complete the workshop in one day and only a few of the activities can be included.

Each module of this training is made up of:

- The aims and objectives of the module
- Activity sheets for exercises
- Additional case study material in Annex 4
- Information on the module topic

It is suggested that the participants of any workshop take part in the activity or activities at the outset of each module, followed by trainer input and feedback. This is available from the Power point slides which you will receive when you have attended the workshop or from contacting your local project partner. A sample of the slides is also available via the members section of the website [www.alcoholdrugsandwork.eu](http://www.alcoholdrugsandwork.eu).

It is advised that the participants work through modules of the training material with the trainer so specific issues can be raised and discussed as a group. Feedback from the pilot workshops of this training course has emphasised the benefit for delegates of good robust discussion; participants indicated that they learned a lot from each other's experiences as well as from the trainer.

The activities, training pack and Powerpoint slides provide all the information necessary for running the training workshop. Additional information may also be available via the website.

References are provided in Annex I.

The content of this pack is intended to be flexible and experienced trainers may vary the contents of the modules to suit the needs of a particular group. Timings for the modules on the suggested agendas are approximate and can be altered to suit the size of the group and the depth in which the material is covered.

## **Module 2 Alcohol and drug policies - the best approach**

### **Session outline**

#### **Aim**

To enable participants to have a greater appreciation of the issues surrounding the development of workplace alcohol and drug policies

#### **Objectives**

- To identify the general principles of alcohol and drug policies
- To understand the reasoning behind the development and introduction of alcohol and drug policies
- To enable participants to gain experience of how policies work in practice

Face to face training only – Activity sheet 2

Exercise to demonstrate what constitutes a 'good' alcohol and drug policy

## **a. Alcohol and Drug Policies – general principles**

Organisations need to develop policies to suit their individual requirements. There is no such thing as a standard policy. Policy content will depend largely on the type of employer and the nature, size, structure and culture of the organisation involved. The underlying rationale for having the policy will also determine the type of policy adopted. Even if your organisation already has an alcohol and drug policy, you may use the sections below as guidance for reviewing your policy. An example of a policy template is provided in Annex 2. There are some general principles that apply to most policies. These are:

- **A formal written document**

All the organisation's policies should be in a written format and have the same structure.

- **Contains a clear statement of intent**

An alcohol and drug policy should clearly lay down the organisation's parameters, rules and procedures for dealing with the issue of alcohol and drug use.

- **Compliments and is consistent with other organisational policies**

The alcohol and drug policy needs to be in keeping with other policies and procedures of the organisation, for example, sickness absence procedures, the Equal Opportunities Policy, disciplinary protocols and Health and Safety practice. The wording of the policy needs to reflect the wording of other policies. For example, if an organisation uses words such as 'employees should not present for work having consumed any alcohol and / or drugs' in their alcohol and drug policy, similar words should be used if alcohol and drugs are referred to in the disciplinary or health and safety policy. Using another different term such as 'under the influence' may send out contradictory messages.

- **Senior management support and commitment**

There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that overt senior management support and commitment are essential prerequisites for the successful development and implementation of any organisational policy. Health related policies are no exception to this rule.

- **Accountability**

To ensure that the policy is developed, implemented and established fully it is essential that accountability and ownership of the process are clearly defined. This can be done by including the policy's implementation, monitoring and review as an objective in the portfolio of responsibilities of a senior manager. Alternatively, a working or steering group could have responsibility for it.

- **Applicable to all**

The policy should be applicable to all members of the organisation irrespective of grade, experience and role. The policy should not discriminate at any level.

- **Communication**

The detail of the policy should be disseminated to all employees, who in turn should be able to pose questions, raise concerns and seek additional information before the policy is implemented. It is also important to continue the communication process on an ongoing basis so that the impetus of the implementation phase is not lost over time. Extensive, thorough and on-going communication of the policy is vital to its success.

- **Confidentiality issues are addressed**

When dealing with alcohol and drug problems confidentiality is paramount. Confidentiality is one of the foundation principles of the policy. (For specific details refer to Essential Provisions)

- **Developed and agreed through consultation**

Consultation and / or joint negotiation are essential processes in the development of the policy. Research clearly shows that where this does not take place the policy is less acceptable and less workable. It is recommended that if there is a trade union representative, staff council / forum representative and / or a health and safety representative in the business, that they too be involved at the consultation and development stage of the policy.

- **The policy objectives are clearly stated**

The objectives of the alcohol and drug policy generally fall into five areas:

- Prevention
- Health, safety and welfare
- Fair and consistent procedures
- Employee support
- A commitment to education, training and monitoring

- **Health and Safety obligations are fulfilled**

The policy needs to endorse all aspects of health and safety legislation – both UK and European. (For specific details refer to Essential Provisions).

- **Education & training are an integral component of the policy**

In order to obtain successful implementation of the policy all employees need to be educated and trained in its provisions. Communication and understanding are pivotal to its success.

- **Data protection regulations**

It is imperative that procedures used to record any information about employees conform to the requirements of the most recent data protection regulations

- **The policy is constantly monitored & reviewed**

Constant monitoring and review will help to ensure that the policy is sustainable and up to date. Reviewing the policy annually or every two years is ideal.

- **Implementation timetable**

The organisation needs to be conscious of the fact that a suitable period of time needs to elapse between the announcement of the policy and its implementation. The consultation period will need to take into account the number of individuals employed i.e the greater the number of employees, the longer the consultation period.





