

## **STAFF SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY**

It is recognized by management that certain aspects of carrying out caring duties can promote stressful circumstances for some staff. The management of stress amongst staff is recognized as a key responsibility within the Organization's Risk Assessment programme, and it is Policy that vigilance be maintained to identify the symptoms of stress so that appropriate action can be taken.

It is accepted that one of the consequences of progressive stress may be an increasing reliance on mood-altering substances, which can have far-reaching implications for the Care Service. Progressive substance abuse can lead to serious deterioration in the physical and mental health of the staff member and will seriously impair his / her ability to fulfill the required duties.

This Policy sets out the ways in which the abuse of such substances by staff members is addressed and managed.

**THIS POLICY HAS BEEN DEVELOPED IN FULL CONSULTATION WITH ALL STAFF WITHIN THE ORGANISATION.**

1. All staff will be trained to identify, as far as possible, the causes of stress in their immediate working environment. This training will include corrective and / or preventive action that may be needed to remedy the situation, and may extend to external counseling, as appropriate.

2. Supervisory and managerial staff will be trained to identify the symptoms of substance abuse within the workplace environment. These symptoms may include the following:

2.1 Regular / unexplained / prolonged sickness absences.

2.2 Deterioration in time-keeping.

2.3 Changes in appearance / deportment:

- Lack of concern over dress tidiness / cleanliness
- Lack of concern over personal hygiene
- Physical changes in appearance (spots / pallor / eyes, etc.)

2.4 Changes in mental condition / behavior / attitude:

- Depression / over-emotional
- Inability to concentrate / irrational behavior / deterioration in bodily co-ordinative functions

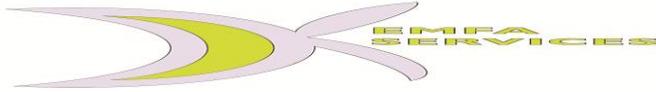
3. The types of substances commonly abused are defined as follows, according to the mental and physical effect on the body:

3.1 Depressants / pain reducers - alcohol / tranquillizers / barbiturates / heroin & heroin substitutes

3.2 Stimulants – cocaine/ nicotine / amphetamines

3.3 Deliriant - solvents! Lighter fuels / glues

3.4 Mind altering / hallucinogens - cannabis resin / LSD



4. It is the Organization's policy not to employ persons who are perceivably actively engaged in progressive substance abuse. However, due to the gradual and insidious nature of such illnesses each case of suspected, or proven, substance abuse will be dealt with on individual merits, which may depend upon circumstances. However, in all cases it will be ensured that neither the services provided by the Organization, or the health and safety of any client or staff member, are compromised in any way.

5. The following procedure will be adopted for employees who actively abuse substances, or are suspected of doing so:

- The employee will undergo an initial interview with the Domiciliary Care Services Manager with the following objectives:
- To ensure that the employee fully appreciates the implications of substance abuse; the risks to his / her physical and mental well-being; the risks to others, and the ability to fulfill his / her duties
- To explain and emphasis the Organization's policy with respect to the employment of persons actively engaged in substance abuse
- To offer the person the opportunity to admit that he / she needs help.

5.2 Depending upon circumstances, the employee that admits a problem and declares a willingness to seek treatment may be offered sick leave to enable this treatment to be given. The length of sick leave granted will be discretionary.

5.3 However, the Organization retains the right to exercise an appropriate Disciplinary Procedure through to summary dismissal in the following circumstances:

- Where the employee denies help / refuses to seek treatment / continues substance abuse.
- Where the employee has "lapsed" back to abuse within a treatment programme.

6. All staff members who have been prescribed "legitimate" drugs by their GPs for existing medical conditions must report this fact to their supervisors to ensure that they are not inadvertently disciplined for taking improper medication.