



Service Procedure

ALCOHOL MISUSE

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ABSTRACT –

The purpose of this Service Procedure is to deter alcohol misuse by police officers, police staff and non police personnel in safety critical roles by the introduction of an alcohol tolerance threshold and a “with cause” testing regime.

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1. AIM OF SERVICE PROCEDURE

- (1) The purpose of this Service Procedure is to deter alcohol misuse and to ensure that police officers, police staff and non police personnel in safety critical roles are not at risk of impairment from alcohol and can carry out their full range of duties.
- (2) An alcohol threshold level has been introduced and a “with cause” testing programme is in place to test all police officers, police staff and non police personnel in safety critical roles.
- (3) This Service Procedure applies in its entirety to **all student officers, probationer constables and serving police officers. It also applies to police staff and non police personnel in roles designated as safety critical as per Appendix ‘A’.**

2. INTRODUCTION

(1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- (a) Alcohol misuse by Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) personnel has the potential to impair judgement, and in turn negatively impact upon service delivery, public safety and the reputation of the service.
- (b) To provide a safe and healthy work environment for all police officers, police staff and non police personnel.
- (c) To assist in maintaining public confidence in the PSNI and to deter alcohol misuse by PSNI personnel which may affect their ability to carry out their duties safely and effectively.
- (d) To enable police officers, police staff and non police personnel to perform their duties in a manner that does not bring risk to themselves, colleagues or members of the public.
- (e) To ensure that appropriate, effective and legitimate processes are in place to test officers and staff subject to the alcohol tolerance threshold.
- (f) Therefore anyone who reports to work incapacitated as a result of alcohol will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary and/or criminal proceedings as per the PSNI’s Policy Directive 01/12 - Professional Standards in the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the NICS staff handbook which applies to all serving police officers and police staff.

(2) ORIGIN

- (a) Under the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 the PSNI has, as an employer, responsibility to ensure a safe working environment and safe systems of working for both employees and those who are not in our employment but who we come into contact with.
- (b) As a Police Service our personnel are involved in many high-risk activities and have high levels of contact and interaction with the public. We have a moral as well as statutory duty to ensure that police officers and police staff are fit to carry out their duties safely and effectively.
- (c) There is a legacy of alcohol misuse within our society and, as Police Service police officers, police staff and non police personnel working on behalf of the PSNI are recruited from this group, we must recognise that this is a culture that has the potential to impact upon the PSNI as an organisation.

(3) IMPLICATION OF SERVICE PROCEDURE

- (a) To ensure that where individuals arrive at/report to work 'unfit' as a result of alcohol they are dealt with appropriately both within the PSNI and in accordance with criminal legislation.
- (b) The PSNI seeks to maintain the highest professional standards. Consequently, all personnel are actively encouraged to report any concerns they have about their colleagues. The procedure for dealing with and reporting any such concerns will be in accordance with Service Procedure 8/12 - Service Confidence Procedure (SCP), Service Procedure 9/12 - Misconduct Procedures for Police Officers and the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Handbook for police staff.
- (c) To provide appropriate support mechanisms for police officers and members of police staff who have declared alcohol dependence and are prepared to undertake / accept assistance in dealing with the issue.

(4) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BEST VALUE/CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/EFFICIENCY

- (a) The aim of this Service Procedure is to help ensure the integrity of the organisation and its resources. The organisation has identified an annual budget to cover the cost of drug and alcohol testing procedures being undertaken on police premises by an approved, qualified external contractor.

In addition there may be some cost implications in terms of extraction time for staff in safety critical roles that are identified as in breach of the alcohol tolerance level. This will need to be managed locally.

- (b) The award of a contract for the collection, sampling and analysis of samples is subject to a tender process and will be reviewed on an annual basis from the date the contract is awarded.

(5) HUMAN RESOURCES/TRAINING

- (a) The introduction of this Service Procedure will require an organisational education programme to raise awareness of the issue of alcohol misuse and to encourage staff to self-declare and obtain appropriate treatment. Occupational Health and Well-being (OHW) will both oversee and implement the organisational education programme for raising awareness within the PSNI.
- (b) The alcohol misuse contract will be managed by AC&V on behalf of the PSNI. The remit of this role will be to act as liaison with the contractor, monitor the effectiveness of the contractor, ensure payments are made on time and ensure that the Police Service are utilising the contractor correctly.

(6) RISKS

- (a) All risk assessments should be documented. Those subject to risk assessments should be made aware of their content unless this would frustrate a criminal investigation.
- (b) Individuals who have self-declared an alcohol misuse issue will be subject to a risk assessment to ensure that the duties being performed during the period of any rehabilitation contract with OHW are suitable. In addition, as per section 8 (m), a risk assessment can be carried out when a line manager considers a member of their team is impaired and testing has provided a negative result. In all cases the risk assessment should take into account medical advice from OHW.
- (c) The risk assessment will determine whether the police officer/member of police staff is capable of remaining at work or whether they should be instructed to go home.

(7) BUREAUCRACY

- (a) Implementation of this Service Procedure will result in extra administration across the organisation. This is necessary to ensure compliance with legislative requirements.

(8) APPLICATION

- (a) Those working within the PSNI who are alcohol dependent have a personal responsibility to acknowledge their condition and seek assistance. The PSNI aims to support individuals who are prepared to accept and deal with issues arising from alcohol misuse or dependency. However, any police officer, police staff or non police personnel who report for duty and is incapacitated (see Appendix B for Guidance on Behavioral Characteristics Associated with Alcohol Misuse) as a result of alcohol will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary procedure. Where a criminal offence is suspected the appropriate action should be taken as per the relevant legislation i.e. Drink Driving and Drunk In Charge of a Firearm offences.

Police officers and police staff are therefore encouraged to voluntarily self-declare any alcohol misuse issues to their line manager. See Appendix 'C' for procedure for self-declarations. Likewise, non police personnel working in security critical roles should also speak to their employer.

- (b) "With Cause" alcohol testing will be introduced. For 'cause' to be established, the test of 'reasonable belief' must be satisfied. The method for "with cause" alcohol testing will be breath.
- (c) Alcohol testing may also be introduced as part of investigative protocols for incidents involving police officers, police staff and non police personnel in safety critical roles where it is considered by the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) that the incident warrants such action. It may also be introduced as part of investigative protocols for incidents involving police officers and police staff that would be subject to investigation by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI).
- (d) Refusal or failure to provide a sample in accordance with this Service Procedure will be dealt with in the same way as a positive test. Section 17 details the steps to be taken after any positive tests.
- (e) Referrals will also be made to the Superintendent S5/relevant Human Resource Strategic Lead where there is evidence to suggest that individuals have attempted to frustrate the testing process.
- (f) Police officers or police staff who have a reasonable belief that a colleague who is subject to the alcohol threshold level is in excess of it, should inform line management. Any individual who reports a colleague will not be subject to victimisation of any kind. Malicious reporting, however, will be dealt with under code of ethics/disciplinary procedures.
- (g) Derogations – In some cases when a police officer puts themselves on duty or there are other exigencies of duty, the alcohol threshold may be waived by a senior officer. Additionally a senior officer can authorise an officer on special operations to work outside the scope of this Service Procedure where the officer or the operation may be put in jeopardy otherwise. In all instances, the senior officer must discuss the detail with the Human Resource Strategic Lead.

3. LEGAL BASIS

- (a) Under the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, it is an employer's duty to ensure a safe place of work and safe systems of work. The Police (Health and Safety) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 extends this legislation to the PSNI.

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- (b) There is also an employee's duty, which in this context includes police officers and police staff, to:
- (i) take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others affected by their acts or omissions while at work;
 - (ii) co-operate fully with their employer with regard to any requirement imposed under relevant statutory provisions;
 - (iii) inform the employer of defects and/or serious and imminent danger;
 - (iv) use all equipment, substances and systems in accordance with the training and instructions provided to them.

This "duty of care" extends to the individual police officer or member of police staff. Consequently, should an employer knowingly let an employee, who is under the influence of alcohol to the extent that they are liable to expose themselves or others to risk, commence work or continue to work, the employer would be in breach of his legal duties and liable to prosecution.

- (c) As indicated above, employees are also required to take reasonable care of themselves and of others who could be affected by their actions or omissions. Specifically, they must act responsibly by not exposing themselves or others to safety risks due to impairment caused by alcohol. Breach of this duty could lead to prosecution and dismissal.
- (d) The Police (Testing for Substance Misuse) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 is the enabling legislation for the introduction of alcohol testing as part of PSNI procedures.
- (e) The PSNI (Amendment) Regulations 1 September 2008 is the enabling legislation for the implementation of alcohol testing as part of PSNI procedures.
- (f) The implementation of this Service Procedure may involve an interference with a person's rights as protected by Article 8(1) of the European Convention on Human Rights. However, any such interference is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in pursuit of the legitimate aims of public safety, the prevention of disorder and crime and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others, as set out in Article 8(2) of the Convention.

4. POLICY LINKS

- (a) Where a police officer/police staff member is on sick leave due to alcohol misuse related issues, this absence should be managed, as per guidance on PoliceNet in the HR Guidance Centre, under Attendance Management.
- (b) Where a police officer/member of police staff's performance is impacted upon due to alcohol misuse related issues, this should be managed using the appropriate unsatisfactory performance procedures. Where a pattern of poor performance is identified and is triggered or exacerbated by alcohol misuse, it may warrant immediate and robust managerial intervention.

5. CONSULTATION

The following have been consulted in preparation of this Service Procedure:

- (a) Senior Executive Team;
- (b) Occupational Health and Well-Being (OHW);
- (c) Health and Safety Branch;
- (d) Service Improvement Department;

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- (e) Police Federation for Northern Ireland (PFNI);
- (f) Superintendents' Association;
- (g) District Commanders;
- (h) HR Strategic Leads;
- (i) Human Rights Legal Adviser;
- (j) Employment Rights Legal Adviser;
- (k) Equality and Diversity Officer;
- (l) NIPSA.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS/UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)/EQUALITY/CODE OF ETHICS/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

- (1) This Service Procedure is deemed to be in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998.
- (2) This Service Procedure has been screened for Section 75 considerations and meets integrity standards.
- (3) Section 75 screening has identified that this Service Procedure has the potential to impact upon specific areas covered by equality legislation. To counteract this the methodology for testing will be altered where the proposed standard methods of testing would conflict with an individual's religious beliefs.
- (4) This Service Procedure is suitable for Public Disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

7. GUIDANCE

- (a) Under the Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000 the PSNI has, as an employer, responsibilities to ensure a safe working environment and safe working systems for both employees and those who are not in our employment but who we come into contact with.
- (b) In addition, given the high risk activities undertaken by employees of the PSNI and the statutory requirement to provide safe systems of working, the PSNI has, with effect from 1 September 2008, introduced a new alcohol tolerance threshold of over 13 micrograms alcohol in breath for police officers, police staff and non police personnel in safety critical roles.
- (c) The adoption of this alcohol tolerance threshold reflects the level that has been adopted by other Police Services in England and Wales and is defined by ACPO in line with experimental observations as the threshold to be adopted in relation to safety critical posts where any risk of impairment is unacceptable.
- (d) The introduction of this tolerance threshold means that the PSNI will require police officers, police staff and non police personnel in safety critical roles to be below this threshold whilst they are at work.
- (e) This Service Procedure details actions to be taken where it is suspected that staff subject to the alcohol tolerance threshold are in excess of the agreed tolerance threshold.

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- (f) Any police officer or member of police staff who refuses to give a sample for testing will be deemed unfit for work. They will also be dealt with under the Code of Ethics/Disciplinary Procedure and will be treated as if a positive test had been recorded. Similarly any police officer or member of police staff who behaves in an inappropriate manner to their line manager when asked for a sample may be dealt with under the Code of Ethics/Disciplinary Procedure.
- (g) Anyone who reasonably believes that a colleague in a safety critical role is in excess of the PSNI alcohol tolerance threshold should inform line management. Any individual who reports a colleague will not be subject to victimisation of any kind. Malicious reporting, however, will be dealt with under disciplinary procedures.
- (h) Any line manager who believes that a member of another team who is subject to the alcohol tolerance level is impaired or in excess of the tolerance threshold must inform the individual's line manager or, in their absence, they must assume the responsibility of that line manager for the specific purpose of this Service Procedure.
- (i) Those reporting staff as in excess of the alcohol tolerance level must be able to demonstrate that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that an individual is in excess of the PSNI alcohol tolerance threshold. Appendix 'B' provides guidance that may be of assistance in determining if individuals are impaired as a result of alcohol. Where a police officer or member of police staff self-reports that they may be in excess of the PSNI alcohol tolerance threshold they will automatically be tested. Self-declaring will be regarded as acting responsibly and should be actively encouraged by managers.
- (j) Testing for alcohol will only take place when a line manager can show that they have reasonable grounds for considering the police officer/member of police staff as being in excess of the PSNI alcohol tolerance threshold. Where any manager believes that there are reasonable grounds for suspicion they must follow this procedure. There is no discretion available for any manager outside the derogations listed.
- (k) Those non police personnel working in or on behalf of the PSNI who are not deemed as performing a safety critical role and are considered to be in excess of the PSNI tolerance threshold will be asked to leave the site immediately. In all cases the individual's employer will be notified that the PSNI had reasonable grounds for suspecting the individual was in excess of the PSNI tolerance threshold and that they were asked to leave the site.
- (l) In the case of Grafton Associates, the line manager will be responsible for asking the individual to leave the premises.
- (m) In the case of all other non police personnel, the Premises Officer or the person responsible for the contractor will be responsible for asking the individual to leave the premises.

8. SAFETY CRITICAL ROLE ALCOHOL TESTING PROCESS

- (a) Where line managers can demonstrate reasonable grounds for suspecting an individual is impaired or in excess of the tolerance threshold, they will ascertain from the police officer, police staff or non police personnel whether there are any medical reasons for their observed behaviour. The line manager may seek guidance from OHW before deciding on whether to proceed with alcohol and/or substance testing.
- (b) Should they proceed with requesting a test, they must advise the individual that they require them to undergo an alcohol breath test outlining to them why the test is taking place.
- (c) Where the line manager has reasonable grounds to suspect that the individual is impaired but is unsure of the cause of the impairment they may require the individual to undergo an alcohol breath test and substance misuse test. The process for drug testing is outlined in Service Procedure 21/11 - Substance Misuse and is not therefore replicated here. In these circumstances the decision to carry out both tests must be made in advance. It is not appropriate to await the results of the breath test before determining if a drug test is required.

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- (d) The line manager should arrange for the attendance of the approved, qualified external contractor via the 24hr telephone call out number and advise the individual that they are required to remain on site and undergo the test. The approved, qualified external contractor will advise on an estimated time of arrival which will be at an agreed site no later than 2 hours from the time of request.
- (e) Where the individual fails to remain on site until the collection agent arrives or refuses to take the test, this will be reported to the Superintendent S5/Head of HR and treated as a positive result. The individual must be informed of this at the time the line manager requests a test.
- (f) The individual will take a breathalyser test in a private room free from contamination using appropriate industry standard testing equipment Drager 6810. The test will be conducted by the external contractor and will take place no sooner than 20 minutes after the individual has been advised of the requirement to undergo the test and no later than 2 hours from being informed of the requirement to undergo the test. The results of the test will be printed on site.
- (g) In the event of a zero test, the individual will be advised that they can return to work.
- (h) If the results are not a zero test, the test will be repeated between 15 and 20 minutes later. Where two tests are conducted the lower result is the one that will be used for the purpose of this Service Procedure.
- (i) Where the individual has a level of more than 13 micrograms but less than 39 micrograms, they will be deemed to be in excess of the PSNI alcohol tolerance threshold.
- (j) When an individual has been tested and has a level more than 39 micrograms in breath or above, they will be advised that they are in breach of the PSNI Code of Ethics/NICS Handbook and deemed incapacitated for duty. The individual will be instructed to go home - this will not be paid time off, however the police officer/member of police staff will, if applicable, be given the option of taking TOIL, or go home without pay.
- (k) This will then be dealt with as per the appropriate disciplinary process. The line manager is responsible for reporting such incidences to the Superintendent S5 for police officers or to the Human Resource Strategic Lead for police staff. The Area Commander/Head of Branch will be notified for both police officers and police staff.
- (l) If an individual's test is negative on the breath/drug test and line management still has reasonable grounds for suspecting they are otherwise impaired, it may be appropriate to seek the advice of OHW.
- (m) If the individual remains at work, the line manager will be responsible for carrying out a risk assessment to ensure that they can carry out their full range of duties.

9. SELF-DECLARATION

- (a) Alcohol misuse will be regarded primarily as a medical condition that may require expert advice, guidance and treatment. Where an individual self-declares an alcohol dependency, Occupational Health and Well-Being (OHW) will provide support through identifying the assistance that is available internally and through external appropriate agencies. In addition, those who declare a dependency will be subject to a risk assessment to ascertain the suitability of their current role. Recourse to disciplinary proceedings will only be considered when OHW assistance is rejected, the problem remains unresolved or the individual's behaviour is unacceptable and/or lack of efficiency warrants such proceedings.
- (b) Individuals who are in posts that are deemed safety critical will be subject to an alcohol tolerance threshold of above 13 micrograms in breath and will be subject to "with cause" breath testing. It should be recognised that this threshold is the level at which the PSNI considers those in safety critical roles need to be at or below to carry out their duties without any risk of impairment. "With cause" breath testing for alcohol may only be carried out on personnel who are in a safety critical role. Staff in safety critical roles who are found to be in breach of the alcohol threshold level will not automatically be deemed as misusing alcohol.

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- (c) The PSNI aims to support individuals who are prepared to accept and deal with issues arising from alcohol misuse or dependency. However, any police officer or member of police staff who reports for duty and is incapacitated as a result of alcohol will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary procedure. Police officers and police staff are therefore encouraged to voluntarily self-declare any alcohol misuse issues to their line manager. See Appendix 'D' for procedure for self-declarations.
- (d) Where a police officer or member of police staff makes a self-declaration to OHW, the appropriate managers will be made aware of the need to carry out risk assessments in relation to the officer's duties. OHW will ensure appropriate referrals are made to assist the individual in managing their condition and the individual will be required to agree to a rehabilitation contract.
- (e) Where an individual fails to co-operate or is found to have breached the agreed rehabilitation programme, this may be regarded as a disciplinary offence.
- (f) If there is an agreed rehabilitation programme in place individuals may not be eligible for promotion or transfer (except where the risk assessment identifies that the individual should be transferred).
- (g) Police officers and members of police staff may not self-declare a dependency, either at the time of an alcohol test or after notification that they are to be subject to an alcohol test, in order to avoid the consequences of the test.
- (h) Those who have entered into an agreed rehabilitation programme with OHW may be subject to regular alcohol testing.

10. NOTIFICATION FOLLOWING A POSITIVE TEST

- (a) Where an individual records a reading of 13 micrograms in breath or below there is no need to notify anyone of the result of the test. Negative tests will be recorded by the external contractor and forwarded to AC&V.
- (b) Where a police officer or individual in a safety critical role records a level of 14 micrograms - 39 micrograms in breath, the line manager must notify the following:
 - (i) Area Commander/Head of Branch;
 - (ii) Human Resource Strategic Lead;
 - (iii) OHW (for information purposes only);
 - (iv) Operational Planning (applicable to police officers only);
 - (v) In the case of non police personnel, the relevant Contract Manager;
 - (vi) Anti Corruption & Vetting.
- (c) Where a police officer or individual in a safety critical role records a second test within two years of their first test indicating an excess of the PSNI alcohol tolerance threshold, the line manager must notify the following:
 - (i) Area Commander/ Head of Branch;
 - (ii) Human Resource Strategic Lead;
 - (iii) Operational planning (applicable to police officers only);
 - (iv) OHW by way of referral;
 - (v) Anti Corruption & Vetting.

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- (d) Where within 2 years of the initial positive test a third test indicates a police officer or individual in a safety critical role is in excess of the PSNI alcohol tolerance threshold as defined in this procedure, this becomes a disciplinary matter and the District Commander/Head of Branch will request the Superintendent S5/ Human Resource Strategic Lead to initiate a formal disciplinary investigation. The line manager will make a further referral to OHW for support and record.
- (e) At each stage AC&V will record the result of any positive tests on the individual's SAP/HR record.
- (f) No police officer or police staff member will be subject to disciplinary procedures at the time of a first or second positive test unless they react in an inappropriate manner towards their line manager at any stage in this process. The Superintendent S5/ Human Resource Strategic Lead will consider whether investigation and/or disciplinary proceedings based on that individual's behaviour are warranted.

11. OHW/LINE MANAGER ROLE FOLLOWING NOTIFICATION

- (a) Following the first positive test for a police officer or member of staff, the line manager will make a referral to OHW. In some instances OHW may be aware of ongoing issues for the individual concerned and may advise the line manager that a referral is required. If there is no such pre-existing information, no referral will be made unless requested by the police officer/member of police staff via the line manager.
- (b) On notification of a second positive test for a police officer or member of staff within a two-year period, OHW will be asked to schedule a referral for the member by the line manager as soon as reasonably practicable.

12. APPEALS

- (a) Where a police officer or member of police staff considers that the process was not correctly applied, they may appeal. The appeal must detail how they believe the process was not applied correctly, has been based on an error of fact or law, or is irrational and how they have been treated less favourably as a result.
- (b) All appeals must be in writing to the District Commander, Head of Department / Human Resource Strategic Lead via the HR Service Centre within 7 calendar days of the notification of the test result.
- (c) Police officers and police staff have the right to be accompanied at any appeal hearing by a "misconduct friend", staff association representation or a work colleague. The appeal for police officers will be heard by Superintendent rank or above. In cases of police staff the appeal will be heard by the Human Resource Strategic Lead.
- (d) Where an appeal is upheld the positive result may be expunged.

13. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Anti Corruption & Vetting will be responsible for reviewing this Service Procedure on an annual basis.

14. CANCELLATION

Policy Directive 10/08 - Alcohol Misuse, is hereby cancelled.

This Service Procedure applies in its entirety to **all student officers, probationer constables and serving police officers. It also applies to police staff and non police personnel in roles designated as safety critical.**

Any police officer, member of police staff or non police personnel working on behalf of the PSNI who reports for work and is deemed to be unfit for work as a result of alcohol will be dealt with under the appropriate Code of Ethics/Disciplinary Procedure.

All police staff and non police personnel who are in designated safety critical roles are subject to a lower tolerance threshold. They are all subject to the PSNI alcohol tolerance threshold of 13mg in breath.

Safety Critical

- (1) Police staff who use or come into contact with firearms;
- (2) Police staff drivers/pilots;
- (3) Police staff working at height;
- (4) Police staff involved in maintenance activities for buildings, equipment or vehicles;
- (5) All non police personnel with designated powers.

1. GUIDANCE ON BEHAVIOURAL CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH ALCOHOL MISUSE

Whilst these characteristics may be found in varying combinations in association with a drinking problem, it should not be assumed they only occur in the context of alcohol misuse.

- (a) A noticeable decline in work performance;
- (b) Reluctance to accept responsibility;
- (c) Moodiness, behaviour that is out of character, sensitivity to criticism;
- (d) Irrational or aggressive behaviour;
- (e) Deliberately seeking isolation from colleagues;
- (f) Unexplained absences during the working day;
- (g) Frequent absences explained as minor illnesses;
- (h) Trembling hands/shakes;
- (i) Slurred speech;
- (j) Smell of alcohol at unusual times of the day;
- (k) Inability to focus;
- (l) Frequent accidents at work, at home or travelling to work.

Alcohol misuse or excessive drinking is a serious health problem that can result in progressive mental and physical deterioration unless it is identified and treated. It is essential that, where alcohol is affecting work performance, the issue is drawn to management's attention. OHW should be contacted at the earliest possible stage to ensure that individuals receive appropriate support and treatment in dealing with this issue.

2. GUIDANCE ON ALCOHOL ABSORPTION

- (a) An alcohol threshold of 13 micrograms in breath does not preclude moderate drinking, for example during the evening before a period of duty that commences the following morning. The relationship between alcohol consumption and blood alcohol consumption will depend on many variables, such as the pattern of consumption, the type of beverage consumed, and the individual's body mass, metabolism and gender.
- (b) An average 70kg male consuming 2 units of alcohol (e.g. one pint of lower strength beer, 3.5% v/v) could achieve a theoretical maximum blood alcohol level of 30 mg. (The actual concentration is likely to be lower, as the alcohol is not absorbed instantaneously.) The body eliminates alcohol at about the rate of 15mg per hour; thus an average person might expect a blood alcohol concentration of 30mg to fall to zero over a period of approximately 2 hours. It must be emphasised that these figures are only illustrations and provide broad indications of alcohol levels for the average individual.

ALCOHOL MISUSE SELF-DECLARATION PROCESS

1. THE INDIVIDUAL

- (a) Where individuals are concerned that they may have a dependency to or be misusing alcohol, they should in the first instance speak with line management.
- (b) In making a self-declaration individuals are indicating that they recognise the need to address the issue and get the appropriate help and assistance.

2. LOCAL MANAGEMENT

- (a) Line management will adopt a sympathetic approach and ensure a non-hostile environment.
- (b) Line management will discuss with the individuals any concerns regarding alcohol misuse and ascertain from the individual if there are any vulnerabilities in relation to the work that they have been undertaking before the decision to seek assistance.
- (c) Line management will request that an OHW appointment is arranged.
- (d) Line management, in conjunction with other relevant local managers, will assess the suitability of the individual remaining in their current posts, examining the risk in terms of the individual's safety and health, the safety and health of colleagues and the public and the impact on the organisation.
- (e) Where OHW have become involved and have drawn up a rehabilitation contract with the individual, line management will meet with OHW on a quarterly basis to discuss the progress of the individual and identify what local management action may be required to assist in recovery.

3. OHW

- (a) OHW will meet with individuals to assess the extent of the alcohol problem and to determine the appropriate medical intervention. This may range from in-house counselling to recommending in-hospital treatment.
- (b) OHW will liaise with external agencies to assist the individual in securing appropriate treatment.
- (c) OHW will draw up a rehabilitation contract with the individual detailing the action that has been recommended/agreed, mechanisms that will be used to monitor progress (including alcohol testing if appropriate) and the timescale in which pro-active OHW action is required.

It is recognised that progress will not always be without setbacks but recurrent relapses or deliberate failure to cooperate by individuals will not be acceptable indefinitely.

DEFINITIONS

(a) **Alcohol Misuse**

The inappropriate use of any form of alcohol.

(b) **Safety Critical Roles**

Roles where those in excess of the PSNI alcohol tolerance threshold would be regarded as a risk to the health and safety of themselves, colleagues and/or the public. Appendix 'A' details the roles that PSNI has deemed as Safety Critical.

(c) **Alcohol Testing**

The collection and screening of breath samples through recognised protocols, by suitably qualified staff.

(d) **Disciplinary or Criminal Proceedings**

The use of internal disciplinary procedures and/or criminal law as appropriate.

(e) **Treatment and Support**

Treatment and action plans prescribed by qualified medical practitioners.

(f) **Risk Assessment**

A formal analysis of risk carried out by management when a member of personnel has self-declared an alcohol dependency or when, as a result of compulsory alcohol testing, an alcohol dependency has been identified. All risk assessments will be documented. Those subject to risk assessments will be made aware of their content unless this would frustrate a criminal investigation.

(g) **PSNI Alcohol Tolerance Threshold**

The PSNI alcohol tolerance threshold is applicable only to those in posts deemed to be safety critical and is breached when a reading greater than 13 micrograms in breath is recorded. An alcohol level in excess of this is considered to be above the PSNI tolerance threshold.

(h) **Failure to Provide a Sample**

A police officer or member of police staff in a safety critical role who does not provide a sample within one hour of the contractor arriving on site will be deemed to have failed to provide a sample. Failing to provide a sample will be dealt with in the same way as a positive test.