



Keeping Excellence
in Training Standards

MARCH 2022



EQUALITY MATTERS

KEITS Training Services Ltd

THIS ISSUE:

Drug and Alcohol Misuse at Work



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- **Help yourself & others**
 - **Volunteer this year**

Your employer has a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act to protect employees' health, safety and welfare. Employees must also take reasonable care of themselves and anyone who could be affected by their work. By your understanding the signs of drug and alcohol misuse (or abuse), it will help you to be more aware of health and safety risks in your workplace.

What the issues are and what to look out for:

Misuse is not the same thing as dependence. Drug and alcohol misuse is the use of illegal drugs and misuse of alcohol, medicines and substances such as solvents.

Consider these warning signs, which could indicate drug or alcohol misuse:

- unexplained or frequent absences
- a change in behaviour
- unexplained dips in productivity
- more accidents or near-misses
- performance or conduct issues

It is very important to recognise that these can also be signs of other things, like stress or illness.

Safety-Critical work activities

Do your colleagues undertake safety-critical work activities? e.g:

- using machinery
- using electrical equipment or ladders
- driving or operating heavy equipment

Think about the kind of work you do and any safety-critical elements where drug or alcohol misuse could have a serious outcome.



Most Recent Statistics

358,000 admissions to hospital in 2018/19 where the main reason was due to drinking alcohol. (6% higher than 2017/18 and 19% higher than 2008/09)

5,698 alcohol-specific deaths in 2018
2% lower than 2017 and an increase of 7% on 2008

In 2016 there were 2,593 registered deaths in England and Wales related to drug misuse. This is an increase of 5 per cent on 2015 and 58 per cent higher than 2006

Deaths related to drug misuse are at their highest level since comparable records began in 1993

In 2016/17, around 1 in 12 (8.5 per cent) adults aged 16 to 59 in England and Wales had taken an illicit drug in the last year.

In 2016, 24 per cent of pupils reported they had ever taken drugs. This compares to 15 per cent in 2014.

(<https://digital.nhs.uk/>)

Drugs & Alcohol Misuse Policy

All organisations can benefit from an agreed policy on drug/alcohol misuse. Does your health and safety policy at work cover drugs and alcohol? The [HSE](#) offers guidance on Health, work and wellbeing.

Some organisations may also opt to use Screening and testing for drugs and alcohol, do you know anyone that has to have these for work?