****

**Governance Code for Sport**

**Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol Charter**

Guidance Notes

Disclaimer

Sport Ireland is making available a range of resources including guidance notes, policy documents and templates for selected areas aligned to the Governance Code for Sport which will support sport organisations, boards, management and staff in the development of relevant governance processes and procedures particular to their own organisation.

For the avoidance of doubt, the final decision on the nature, type, extent and format of approved governance policies, procedures and processes for each organisation is a matter for the board / highest governing structure of the organisation and the resources and material provided may assist the approval process.

This document is not, nor is it intended to be, a definitive statement of the law and it does not constitute legal advice.

This document is not a substitute for professional advice from an appropriately qualified source and it is recommended that sport organisations consult their governing document or obtain their own independent legal advice where necessary. Sport Ireland does not accept any responsibility or liability for any errors, inaccuracies or omissions in this document.

**Why an organisation needs a misuse of drugs and alcohol charter?**

Welfare means the general care and support of participants, members, staff and volunteers within a sport. Everyone involved in sport and activity, whether they are a volunteer, staff member, participant, spectator or an elite athlete, should feel that the sport is one that cares about their health, safety and welfare. Welfare policies include those around mental health, alcohol and drugs, and gambling - as much detail as possible on these should be included in the employee handbook, with this document being a guide to sources only. Having a misuse of drugs and alcohol charter demonstrates to the sports stakeholders that the organisation cares about the welfare of its participants. Good welfare policies within an organisation will seek to understand, support and prevent addictions such as those to alcohol and drugs before they become a problem.

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare Act 2005, employers have a legal duty of care to manage risks in the workplace including the management of risks associated with intoxicants in the workplace. Under the Act an intoxicant is defined as alcohol or illicit drugs, and any combination of illicit drugs or of illicit drugs and alcohol. It includes both prescribed and non-prescribed drugs. An intoxicant policy/misuse of drugs and alcohol charter is a good step in managing the use of drugs or alcohol in the workplace as under the Safety, Health and Welfare Act employees have a legal responsibility not to attend work under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol.

Having a misuse of drugs and alcohol charter speaks to a number of the principles of the Code, especially:

* Principle 1: Leading our organisation
* Principle 2. Exercising Control Over Our Organisation
* Principle 5. Behaving With Integrity

Having a misuse of drugs and alcohol charter is important because:

* It protects the welfare of staff, volunteers, athletes and coaches
* It underpins the culture and values of the organisation
* It protects the organization against reputational and other risks
* It supports the legal duty of care of employers

Whose responsibility is it to develop a misuse of drugs and alcohol charter?

It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that all the principles of the Code are being upheld and delivered. The executive lead / Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is tasked with ensuring that the principles of the Code are being implemented in the organisation and thus will be responsible for ensuring there are welfare policies, including a misuse of drugs and alcohol charter in use in the organisation. In larger Type C organisations there may be a Head of Human Resources whose role will include producing welfare policies, including those around drugs and alcohol.

What should a misuse of drugs and alcohol charter include?

* Explanation of the aim of the charter, e.g.:
  + To support the health and wellbeing of its members;
  + To protect the integrity of the sport and its players/athletes;
  + To explain the dangers of intoxicants in a workplace setting
* Explanation of what addiction is and how to spot the signs of addiction (*Note this document is for guidance only. For further detail on this area please refer to the HSE and further links and resources listed below*).
* Explanation of what supports the organization may offer or recommend to its club network and members e.g., how to make the club aware of issues around drug and alcohol abuse and support any athletes/members who may be showing symptoms of an addiction to seek professional help.
* Explanation of why a policy around drugs and alcohol is essential to manage and maintain safety in the workplace e.g. being under the influence of intoxicants can lead to accidents, poor performance, behavioural difficulties and a danger to the employee, their colleagues and others in safety critical roles.
* Workplace related detail, specifically:
  + What is an intoxicant
  + Employee and employer responsibilities
  + The procedure in managing an employee who appears to be intoxicated
  + Support for employees with addiction if this is disclosed
  + Testing (if this is used) and much more
* Explanation of the broader supports that can be made available within the sport e.g., confidential discussions, mental health support, charity partnerships, etc.
* Athlete specific requirements re Anti-Doping
* Any detail of activities around addiction awareness and prevention e.g., addiction awareness educational opportunities for young athletes/players
* Whether or not the organization allows any alcohol sponsors, or any alcohol related communications on any of its social or other media channels

Implementing a mis-use of drugs and alcohol charter: how and when to use it

Board, staff and volunteers can be given a copy of the Charter on their induction, and it should be included in the employee handbook and into the documentation shared with volunteers. A copy could be on the organisation’s website, and on display at the company’s offices. The organisation should also share it though the membership and seek to ensure that it is in place (perhaps through workshops) at club and athlete level, where it may have greatest impact.

Further links and resources

[National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol](https://www.nacda.ie/)

[HSE National Social Inclusion Office - Drugs.ie](http://www.drugs.ie/)