

THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

- ✓ Nearly 300,000 adults accessed drug and alcohol services in 2022-2023
- ✓ Addiction costs the UK economy billions in lost productivity annually
- ✓ Many employees suffering from addiction remain unidentified
- ✓ Addiction issues increased following the pandemic and cost of living crisis

WARNING SIGNS OF ADDICTION

- ✓ Noticeable behavioural changes
- ✓ Deterioration in personal appearance
- ✓ Increased absenteeism or lateness
- ✓ Declining work performance
- ✓ Unexplained errors or near-misses
- ✓ Unusual odours or physical evidence
- ✓ Financial problems or workplace theft
- ✓ Mood swings or personality changes

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✓ Legal duty of care to all employees
- ✓ Obligation to maintain workplace safety
- ✓ Responsibility to handle addiction cases confidentially
- ✓ Need to balance support with disciplinary requirements
- ✓ Requirement to consider reasonable adjustments

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- ✓ Implement a clear substance misuse policy
- ✓ Train managers to recognise addiction signs
- ✓ Document all incidents objectively
- ✓ Hold confidential discussions with affected employees
- ✓ Offer support before resorting to discipline
- ✓ Consider suspension if safety is compromised
- ✓ Refer to occupational health when appropriate

SUPPORT OPTIONS

- ✓ Employee Assistance Programmes EAPs
- ✓ Temporary adjustments to working hours/duties
- ✓ Phased return after treatment
- ✓ Referrals to external support organisations
- ✓ Regular check-ins during recovery
- ✓ Confidential mentor or workplace buddy system

PREVENTION APPROACHES

- ✓ Create a healthy workplace culture
- ✓ Review alcohol-centred work events
- ✓ Address workplace stressors
- ✓ Implement appropriate testing protocols
- ✓ Establish strong financial controls
- ✓ Promote wellbeing initiatives
- ✓ Provide education on addiction risks

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ✓ While addiction itself is not typically considered a disability under the Equality Act 2010, underlying conditions may qualify for protection
- ✓ Dismissal should only be considered after support options have been explored
- ✓ Ensure all processes follow proper procedures with thorough documentation
- ✓ Seek professional HR advice before taking disciplinary action

For personalised support with managing addiction in your workplace, including policy development and confidential advice, contact Tick HR Solutions.