**Mearns Kirk Helping Hands**

**Substance Use Policy**

Mearns Kirk Helping Hands (MKHH) is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of our volunteers, paid staff and those taking part in our activities. MKHH will take all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of injuries or incidents occurring due to individuals under the effects of alcohol or drugs.

This policy outlines MKHH’s policy on alcohol and drugs and the potential disciplinary consequences of unacceptable behaviour.

MKHH prohibits the drinking of alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol by volunteers and paid staff whilst on duty.

MKHH also expressly prohibits the use of any illegal drugs or any prescription drugs that have not been prescribed for the user. It is a criminal offence to be in possession of, use or distribute an illegal substance. If any such incidents take place during MKHH activities, they will be regarded as serious and will be reported to the Police.

MKHH will take all reasonable steps to prevent volunteers and paid staff undertaking activities if they are considered to be unfit or unsafe to do so as a result of alcohol or drug consumption.

***Breaches of the policy***

No volunteer or paid staff member shall, whilst undertaking any MKHH related activity:

* consume or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst on duty, unless, in the case of drugs prescribed for the individual or over the counter drugs, they are used in accordance with instructions from the pharmacist or manufacturer.
* store illegal drugs or any alcohol in the Halls (unless, with the agreement of line management, alcohol for the purposes of official activities).
* attempt to sell or give drugs to any other person on MKHH premises, in MKHH vehicles, at an MKHH activity or whilst undertaking MKHH business.

***Responsibility to inform***

Volunteers and paid employees must inform their line manager (Group Leader, Volunteer Coordinator or Project Manager) of any prescribed or over the counter medication that may have an effect on their ability to carry out their activities safely, and must follow any instructions subsequently given. If they are taking prescribed or over the counter drugs that may cause drowsiness, they should seek advice and/or instructions as it is possible that they should not be carrying out their duties whilst taking the drugs.

Any volunteer or paid employee with a drug or alcohol dependency should speak with their line manager (Group Leader, Volunteer Coordinator or Project Manager) in confidence. MKHH will provide reasonable assistance and support, maintain confidentiality, and treat absences for treatment and/or rehabilitation as any other sickness absence. However, failure to accept help or continue with treatment may mean following absence management procedures and consequences.

Under Health and Safety legislation all volunteers and paid employees have a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of their colleagues, and to raise with their Group Leader or Project Manager any health and safety issues or concerns. Any paid employee or volunteer who has concerns about possible alcohol or drug use by a colleague must report their concerns to their own Group Leader or the Project Manager and should not knowingly cover up such concerns.

***Social functions***

Although it is unreasonable to expect paid employees and volunteers at a social function to remain completely sober, alcohol should be consumed in moderation and all should behave in an appropriate, mature and responsible manner. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action, including possible dismissal if the offence is one of gross misconduct. Unacceptable behaviour that would constitute gross misconduct would include excessive drunkenness, the use of illegal drugs, unlawful or inappropriate harassment, violence, serious verbal abuse, or assault of another person.

***Vicky Attwood***

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