

December 1999

Presentation on "Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace" by Dr. Helena Nixon, Consultant Occupational Physician, Performance Through Health..

Helana started by identifying the extent of the problem, as follows:-

Alcohol linked

about 4% of the population in England and Wales

8% of the population in Scotland

are "problem drinkers" with alcohol having an adverse effect on their health, home or job. "Alcopops" have been **designed** to appeal to the young.

Drug abuse

Estimating illegal is difficult. In the UK in the six months to the end of March 1998 there were 30,000 drug misusers presenting for treatment. The number of "recreational" users who never have treatment is estimated (from self reporting) at 10% by 16 to 59 year olds;

30% of 16-30 year olds are users.

Probably 50% of 15 and 16 year olds have tried illegal drugs.

High risk occupations (especially for alcohol abuse)

- Publicans and brewery workers
- Catering trade
- Armed forces and seamen
- Sales representatives and journalists
- Medical practitioners, Dental and Veterinary surgeons, Pharmacists

Risk factors (especially alcohol)

- Easy access to alcohol or drugs
- Freedom from supervision
- Confined social network,
- Boredom

Warning signs

- Absenteeism
- Accidents
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Excessive confidence
- Odour of alcohol or solvents or cannabinoids
- Tremor

- Conjunctival injection
- Pupil dilatation
- Weight loss
- Injection scars
- Theft from colleagues

Choice of substances

- Heroin 55% of self reported users
- Methadone 13%
- Cannabis 9%
- Amphetamines 9%
- Ecstasy
- Cocaine

Morbidity and Mortality

- Alcohol Cirrhosis, Varices, Encephalopathy, Neuropathy
- Injectables AIDS, hepatitis
- Ecstasy Heat stroke and dehydration
- Cocaine Nasal septal damage
- Solvents Arrhythmia

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HSE Approved First Aid Training

We have received recently several requests for suitable providers of Basic First Aid courses, which are approved by the HSE. The HSE no longer produce printed lists locally, because these get out-of-date, so we have prepared the following notes for guidance.

The department responsible is the **First Aid Training and Monitoring Service (FAMS)**, under the **L74, First Aid at Work - ACOP**, which monitors training organisations and their delivery of the following courses:-

First Aid at Work

Basic 4-day course

Refresher 2-day course - to be taken every **3 Years**, within **3 months PRIOR** to the expiry date.

Appointed person Course - 4 hours (approx.); - HSE approval **not** required.

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You can contact FAMS for **about three** organisations in the area, free of charge by 'phone. Printed listings will be charged for. FAMS will search on a Post Code basis for training organisations in the location of an employers base address. Alternatively, if working away from base, in the area of a current contract if more convenient.