



## **Substance Misuse Testing** **Standard Operating Procedure**

Printed copies must not be considered the definitive version.

| <b>DOCUMENT CONTROL</b>           |  |                             |               |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Policy Group:</b>              |  |                             |               |
| <b>Lead Author:</b>               | Specialist Practitioner in Occupational Health and<br>Senior Occupational Health Advisor |                             |               |
| <b>Scope:<br/>(Applicability)</b> | Board wide   | <b>Version no.</b>          | 1.0           |
| <b>Status:</b>                    | Final  | <b>Implementation date:</b> | March 2026    |
| <b>Last review date:</b>          | December 2025  | <b>Next review date</b>     | December 2028 |
| <b>Approved by:</b>               | Area Partnership Forum   | <b>Approval date:</b>       | February 2026 |

# Procedure on a page

| Summary & Aim  | Key Requirements  |
|--|---|
| The purpose of this procedure is to provide a clear, consistent and safe process for testing individuals for substance misuse, supporting the Once for Scotland Alcohol and Other Substances Policy. | Ensuring Managers and Employees are aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding Substance use and misuse within NHS D+G |
| Target Audience  | Previous Names  |
| All staff  | Previously, it was NHS Dumfries and Galloway Substance Misuse Policy  |

| Equality and Diversity Statement  |
|---|
| <p>NHS Dumfries and Galloway recognises that some communities within society are more likely than others to experience discrimination, prejudice and inequalities. The Equality Act 2010 specifically recognises the protected characteristics of <b>age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership</b>. The Fairer Scotland Duty also requires NHS Dumfries and Galloway to actively consider how socio-economic disadvantage can be reduced when making strategic decisions.</p> <p>The New Armed Forces Covenant Statutory Duty places an expectation on NHS Dumfries and Galloway to consciously consider the Armed Forces Covenant when developing, delivering and reviewing policies and decisions which may impact the Armed Forces community and help improve their access to public services.</p> <p>Consideration of all protected characteristics, the Fairer Scotland Duty, and the Armed Forces Covenant is included in the Equality Impact Assessment process and documentation, which must be completed as part of the Policy Development Process.</p> <p>NHS Dumfries and Galloway is committed to promoting and advancing equality, removing and reducing discrimination and harassment and fostering good relations between people that hold a protected characteristic and those who do not. This applies both in the provision of services and as our role as a major employer. NHS Dumfries and Galloway believe that all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and is committed to the elimination of unfair and unlawful discrimination practice.</p> |

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## 1. PURPOSE

To provide a clear, consistent, and safe process for the testing of individuals for substance misuse (including Drugs Controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, prescribed and over the counter medication, solvents, all synthetic and herbal products, previously known as new psychoactive substances (NPS), 'legal highs', included under the Psychoactive Substances Bill 2016 and alcohol) within NHS Dumfries and Galloway, ensuring compliance with legal, ethical, and clinical standards. This is in support of The Once for Scotland Alcohol and Other Substances Policy.

## 2. SCOPE

This SOP applies to all NHS Dumfries and Galloway staff involved in the testing, management, and support of employees where substance misuse is suspected to be impacting on functionality and safety at work, is part of a support plan following disclosure to a manager, Occupational Health, or Human Resources, or needs to be monitored.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

**Substance:** Includes alcohol, controlled drugs (Misuse of Drugs Act 1971), prescribed and over-the-counter medication, solvents, synthetic/herbal products, and psychoactive substances.

**Misuse:** Use of a substance in a way that impairs job performance, is illegal, damages the organisation's reputation, or adversely affects relationships.

**Testing:** The process of collecting and analysing biological samples (sweat and breath) to detect the presence of substances.

**Alcolmeter:** a device used to measure alcohol content in a breath sample

**Fingerprint Drug Screening:** a non-invasive, rapid method for detecting recent drug use by analysing sweat residue from fingerprints.

## 4. ROLES / RESPONSIBILITIES

**Employee:** should avoid intoxicants before or during work or when on call, be required to be fit for duty, seek support if concerned about their own substance use, report concerns if worried about a colleagues' substance use and be familiar with NHS Scotland's Once for Scotland Alcohol and Other Substances Policy and NHS Dumfries & Galloway's SOP. Notify managers if they are prescribed medications or take over-the-counter preparations that may cause side effects or impair their ability to undertake their duties safely and effectively.

**Managers:** Assess risk, manage the situation, initiate testing where appropriate, ensure staff support, liaise with Occupational Health and your area's Human Resources Adviser, and maintain confidentiality at all times.

**Competent Tester:** Within normal working hours, this will generally be a member of the Occupational Health team; however, out of hours, it will be a person deemed competent to perform the test. They would provide information and support, conduct testing, document results (to be stored confidentially within the Occupational Health notes) and escalate concerns as needed.

**Occupational Health:** Support with testing within normal hours, support, advise and signpost the employee appropriately, manage the results, and perform random tests. Supporting employees through recovery and return-to-work plans.

**Human Resources:** Support staff and managers through the appropriate NHS Scotland Workforce Policy, ensure training and guidance for managers and staff on recognising signs of misuse and handling cases appropriately.

## 5. INDICATIONS FOR TESTING

**For Cause:** Where there is reasonable suspicion of substance misuse through observed behaviour (e.g., erratic behaviour, smell of alcohol, slurred speech), suspicion of consumption at work, relapse, incident, or disclosure.

**Routine Monitoring:** As part of a supportive work plan or at the employee's request.

## 6. PROCEDURE

### 6.1 Pre-Test Process

- **Risk Assessment:** Assess immediate risk to self/others and ability to give informed consent.
- **Consent:** Explain the purpose (i.e., the reason for testing), the testing process (method of testing), and the implications (e.g., the manager or organisation may be informed of the result if there is concern for patient, staff, or public safety). Obtain informed, explicit, written consent before any testing.  
Alcohol breath test results levels actionable: -
- **Random** non-negative test => 0.00 mg during the programme of abstinence
- **For Cause** non-negative test = > 0.22mgs /1 breath note is **above Scottish driving limit**
- **Confidentiality:** Maintain strict confidentiality throughout, ensuring that test results and data are handled securely and in line with NHS Scotland data protection policies.
- **Refusal of testing:** Refer to the manager and HR to support through disciplinary procedures in line with relevant policy.

## 6.2 Sample Collection

- **Secure Environment:** the process must be undertaken in a suitable, private area, free from interruption
- **Competent Personnel:** Samples should be collected only by competent testers who have received specific training for that testing method. All staff involved in substance misuse testing must complete relevant training on procedures, consent, confidentiality, and support pathways.
- **Sample Types:** Use appropriate sample as per clinical indication and policy- see work instruction
- **Documentation:** Use appropriate paperwork as per clinical indication and policy – see work instruction
- **Chain of Custody:** Follow strict procedures and documentation to ensure sample integrity from collection to analysis.

## 6.3 Laboratory Analysis (not for alcohol)

- **Quality Control:** Ensure that the fingerprint drug screening device has been calibrated and that the slides are in date, intact, and in tamperproof packaging before use.
- **Non-negative result:** following a non-negative result, a laboratory analysis is required to confirm a negative or positive result. Until the sample result is classed as non-negative, further written informed consent must be obtained, with an explanation that the result will be shared with the employee, their manager, and the HR Adviser upon receipt from the laboratory.
- **Accredited Labs:** Samples must be sent, as per the work instruction, to the accredited laboratory affiliated with the fingerprint drug screening system.

## 6.4 Results Management and Record Keeping

- **Laboratory Results:** received securely by Occupational Health and stored in Occupational Health records.
- **Follow-Up:** the employee, the Occupational Health Case Manager, the employee's manager, and the HR adviser are informed of the results. Further assessment, support, and, if necessary, disciplinary or safeguarding procedures can then be instigated.
- **Documentation:** Maintain accurate, confidential records in line with NHS Scotland data protection policies.

## 7. LOCAL SUPPORT

- **Specialist Drug and Alcohol Service (SDAS)**  
**Tele** 01387 244555 Mon-Fri 8.30am - 5.00pm.  
Dumfries Lochfield Primary Care Centre, 12-28 Lochfield Rd, DG2 9BH  
Lochside, Focus, Wellness and Recovery Hub. Shirley Rd, DG2 0ED  
Masonfield Centre, Newton Stewart Health Centre, Creebridge DG8 6NR

Stranraer Innistaigh, Dalrymple Rd, DG9 7DQ

- **WITH YOU Drug and Alcohol Support**  
Dumfries: - tele 0800 035 0793  
Stranraer: - tele 01776 705 907
- Drinkline: - tele 0800 731 4314
- Know the Score: - tele 0800 587 5879

## **8. MONITORING**

This procedure will be monitored and reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if the overarching NHS Scotland Alcohol and Other Substances Policy changes.

The procedure will also be reviewed should any processes need to be changed, or any non-conformances be raised regarding the procedure.

## **9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

The Board is committed to meeting the following duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the nine protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation) to: -

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity by removing or minimising disadvantage and taking positive steps to meet the needs of those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

There may be situations in which an employee's protected characteristics require that specific provisions or procedures outlined in this policy be altered to meet the employee's needs. This will be examined on a case-by-case basis, and where a reasonable adjustment is required based on an employee's protected characteristic(s), this will be considered appropriately.

NHS Dumfries and Galloway has a responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees to enable them to carry out their job roles and avoid being placed at a disadvantage compared with other employees.

## 10. DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

### 10.1 Document Amendment History

| Version | Section(s) | Reason for update   |
|---------|------------|---|
| 1.0     |            | New Procedure Document replacing the previous Policy as now a Once for Scotland Policy. |
|         |            |   |
|         |            |   |

### 10.2 Distribution

| Name | Responsibility | Version number |
|------|----------------|----------------|
|      |                |                |
|      |                |                |
|      |                |                |
|      |                |                |

### 10.3 Associate Documents

- [NHS Scotland Alcohol and Other Substances Policy](#)
- [Responding to Substance Use Amongst Inpatients on Mental Health Wards \(2024\)](#)
- [Medication Assisted Treatment \(MAT\) Standards for Scotland](#)

### 10.4 Action Plan for Implementation

| Action | Lead Officer | Timeframe |
|--------|--------------|-----------|
|        |              |           |
|        |              |           |
|        |              |           |