



## **DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY**

### **1. Aim**

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to explain The New Life Church, Woking CIO (NLC) policy on the use of alcohol and the taking of drugs whilst in the church, on church related business or leading/taking part in any church related activity. It applies whether on church premises, hired premises or visiting at another location.
- 1.2. Illegal drug taking and the increasing levels of alcohol being consumed by many individuals in society, and young people especially, is a cause for genuine concern. In this Policy, NLC outlines its commitment to a positive handling of those found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, whilst staying within the bounds of the law and helping to support those wishing to receive support in leaving this way of life behind. NLC is also committed to protecting and safeguarding staff, volunteers and other users of the Church, and the activities it runs, from those under the influence of either drugs or alcohol.

### **2. Biblical Principles**

- 2.1. The Biblical teaching about alcohol is limited. The Bible is clear that drunkenness is to be avoided but gives no definite indication about the moderate use of alcohol. It is likely that the Jewish culture and relatively weak wines of Bible times resulted in a low level of alcohol related harm, particularly when compared to the situation today.
- 2.2. There is no direct Biblical teaching about tobacco or any other drug except alcohol. General principles that apply to excessive alcohol use and all drug use, legal or illegal, include:
  - The need to care for God's creation and acknowledge that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.
  - The need for clarity of mind.
  - The need to care for others, including by example.
  - Helping those who are hurting.
  - Obeying the law of the land.
  - Being in the world but not of it.

### **3. Alcohol Policy**

- 3.1. Whilst NLC does not call for abstinence (in the case of alcohol), it recognises the effect consistent drinking and the taking of illegal substances can have on an individual's relationship with God, their health, work and personal relationships.
- 3.2. NLC recognises an individual's right to drink alcohol in a sociable and measured way, whilst staying within one's own limits, the confines of the law and being able to conduct oneself in a positive and worthy manner. However the following stipulations do apply:
  - Alcoholic drinks will not be allowed at any church related event on or off the premises unless agreed beforehand by one of the Trustees.
  - We will continue to use non-alcoholic wine for Communion.



- We will foster links with support organisations in order to be able to provide pastoral care to those who may need it.

3.3 Where 'church events' are held in people's homes, organisers should consider carefully the situations, ages and attitudes of those present and take appropriate action.

#### **4. Drugs Policy**

4.1 NLC does not condone the use of illegal substances. The use of illegal substances, 'Party Drugs', 'Legal Highs', solvents and the misuse of prescription drugs is not permitted.

4.2 The taking or supplying of illegal substances whilst at work or in one's own social time is not appropriate for those working for or on behalf of NLC.

#### **5. Staff and Volunteers Commitment**

5.1 Staff and volunteers must not drink alcohol whilst on duty.

5.2 Staff and volunteers must not take young people under their care to an establishment whose sole purpose is to sell alcohol, buy alcohol for young people, or encourage the consumption of alcohol.

5.3 Staff and volunteers should take every opportunity to offer a good role model of Christian discipleship within the freedom given us (1 Corinthians 10:23).

5.4 Staff and others representing the Church at functions or conferences, either within or outside normal working hours, have a duty of care to act appropriately. Therefore they are expected to be moderate in drinking alcohol and to take specific action to ensure they are well within the legal limits if they are driving themselves or others.

5.5 A breach of any of the provisions of this policy by an employee of NLC is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with in accordance with the NLC disciplinary procedure. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, it may amount to gross misconduct and could result in the employee's summary dismissal.

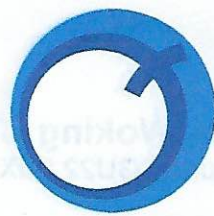
5.6 If a breach of any of the provisions of this policy is committed by a volunteer, church member or person connected with NLC, a consultation will take place in accordance with Biblical principles.

#### **6. Positive action**

6.1 Staff, leaders and volunteers **MUST** take positive action if they find anyone:

- Using, supplying or attempting to supply illegal drugs on the premises.
- Consuming alcohol on, or bringing alcohol onto, the premises without prior permission, or having alcohol on their person with intent to supply to a young person under the age of 18.

***Failure to take action to stop any of the above could result in prosecution.***



- Action may include calling the police.
- You must inform your line manager or (for non-staff) a Trustee of the incident with 12 hours and complete an incident report.

6.2 On coming across, or suspecting someone to be under the influence of, alcohol or drugs the following decisions should be considered before taking further action:

- a. Is the individual/ or could the individual endanger themselves or others?
- b. Are there adequate staff/leaders to deal with this situation and create a safe environment for the individual and other members?
- c. Is the team confident in handling the situation?

**You should (in addition to the above):**

- Contain the situation to the best of your ability.
- Ensure that individuals in the group are protected and removed to a safe environment.
- Remove the individual from public gaze, and deal with them in a caring and sympathetic manner.
- Put the person in the recovery position if unconscious.
- Telephone emergency services, if appropriate.
- Ensure that a responsible adult remains with the person at all times.
- Try to establish what the person has taken and the amount.
- Inform the emergency services what the person has taken.
- Contact and inform parents/carers/next of kin.

## **7. Contacting the Police**

7.1 Staff/leaders/volunteers do not have a legal obligation to report drug users to the police. It is essential that staff/leaders/volunteers consult the Minister or (in the case of staff) their line manager prior to contacting the police. Staff/leaders/volunteers should co-operate with police investigations and answer any questions truthfully. However, if a member of staff/leader/volunteer believes that to do the above would not be beneficial to the person in question, they may refuse to answer the question and state they wish to say nothing – however, see Obstruction (point 8 below).

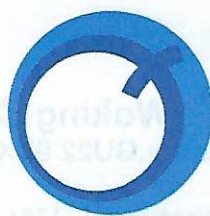
## **8. Obstruction of the Police**

8.1 Failure to co-operate with police investigations may amount to obstruction, which is in itself a serious offence. Any action taken or statement made with the intent of obstructing the police may amount to obstruction, e.g.:

- Concealment of illegal drugs or a person who possesses them
- Helping such a person to escape the police
- It is expected that workers will normally co-operate with a police request to search the premises.

## **9. Advice and Counselling**

9.1 If a member of staff, placement student, or volunteer has an alcohol or drug related problem, they should seek appropriate help immediately. Their supervisor will be able to provide confidential advice and guidance on how to seek suitable treatment.



If the person refuses the opportunity to receive help, the matter will be referred for action under the disciplinary procedure.

- 9.2 NLC aims to deal constructively and sympathetically with an employee or volunteer's alcohol or drug related problem whenever possible, as long as the care and safety of staff, volunteers and members is not compromised in any way.
- 9.3 NLC will offer prayer and support to those affected by the misuse of alcohol and drugs.

**10. Young People**

10.1 Young people are at particular risk of experimenting with and then regularly using various substances. NLC will:

- ensure that those who work with young people have the knowledge to provide both information and support.
- ensure that there are common procedures to be followed if illegal drugs are found on the premises or used at or near a church youth event.
- consider what should happen if a young person comes to a church youth event under the influence of any substance.
- apply our Child Protection policy as appropriate where, for example, a young person needs counselling.

**11. Knowledge and Information**

11.1 The first step is to ensure a good level of knowledge and sufficient training (to include details of how to handle someone using or carrying drugs, or under the influence of alcohol, in a safe and sensitive way) will be arranged for all leaders and volunteers and re-run as necessary.

11.2 The Trustees will review this policy annually.

Policy adopted by The New Life Church, Woking on ..... 21st October ..... 2020

Signed.....  
Guy Cosnahan Chair of Trustees