



Substance Misuse Policy

Autism Mentors Ltd – Neurodiversity Mentoring & Carer Services

Effective Date: 1st September 2025

Next Review Date: September 2026

1. Policy Statement

Autism Mentors Ltd is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and professional environment for all staff, clients, and the wider community.

Substance misuse—including drugs, alcohol, or other harmful substances—can:

- Impact the wellbeing and safety of individuals
- Impair judgment and performance
- Compromise our duty of care

This policy outlines our approach to preventing, identifying, and responding to substance misuse in the workplace or during service delivery.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, self-employed contractors, and volunteers
- All locations where services are delivered, including homes, schools, and community settings
- Any situation in which staff or contractors represent Autism Mentors Ltd

3. Definitions

Substance misuse refers to use of alcohol, drugs (prescription or non-prescription), or other substances in a way that:

- Impairs a person's ability to work safely and effectively
- Poses a risk to clients, especially children and vulnerable adults
- Violates legal or professional obligations

Illegal substances include all Class A, B, and C drugs as defined by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

4. Legal Framework

This policy aligns with:

- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2024)

5. Staff Responsibilities

All staff and contractors must:

- Not attend work under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other substances that impair duties
- Report concerns about colleagues' substance misuse to the DSL
- Disclose prescribed medication affecting work performance to a Director confidentially

- Maintain professional boundaries and avoid inappropriate discussion of substance use with clients

Failure to adhere may result in:

- Removal from the session
- Suspension
- Investigation
- Possible termination of employment or contract

6. Concerns About Clients

If a staff member suspects a client or family member is misusing substances in a way that poses a risk:

- Follow safeguarding procedures immediately
- Report to the DSL or Deputy DSL
- Record concerns factually and securely
- Do not confront the client or family directly

Autism Mentors Ltd works with local safeguarding teams (e.g., MASH, LADO) to address concerns appropriately.

7. Support and Rehabilitation

If substance misuse is disclosed voluntarily by staff or contractors:

- We aim to be supportive and may signpost to GP or addiction services
- A risk assessment may be conducted before return to work
- Paid work may be paused until the individual is fit for duty, potentially requiring medical clearance or management agreement

8. Training and Awareness

- Staff are introduced to this policy during induction
- DSLs and senior staff receive training in recognising and responding to substance-related safeguarding concerns
- The policy will be reviewed annually to reflect legislative or best-practice updates

9. Breaches of Policy

Breaches may result in:

- Temporary suspension
- Investigation under conduct procedures
- Referral to statutory authorities if safeguarding risks are present
- Termination of employment or consultancy agreements

10. Contacts for Concern

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Michelle Wray

 dsl@autismmentors.co.uk

 07707 764876

Deputy DSL:

Beth Carter

 dsl@autismmentors.co.uk

 07979 692297

Emergency Services: 999 (if immediate risk)

Policy Approval

 Signed:

Michelle Wray

Role: Director / Designated Safeguarding Lead

Date: 01/09/2025