

Drugs Policy

2025–2026

1. Purpose

This policy outlines Shockout's approach to preventing, managing, and responding to drug misuse within its community. It supports the health, safety, and wellbeing of students, staff, and visitors, while ensuring compliance with legal obligations under the **Misuse of Drugs Act 1971**.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Protect the health and welfare of all members of the Shockout community.
- Enable Shockout to fulfil its duty of care to students and staff regarding drug use.
- Ensure compliance with UK legislation on the possession, use, and supply of controlled substances.
- Promote education, awareness, and access to support for those affected by drug misuse.

2. Legal Framework

The **Misuse of Drugs Act 1971** makes it a criminal offence to:

- Possess, use, or supply controlled drugs.
- Permit premises to be used for the production, supply, or consumption of controlled drugs.

As a landlord and education provider, **Shockout** is legally obliged to:

- Prevent the possession or supply of illegal substances on its premises.
- Notify the police of any incidents involving illegal drugs.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students, staff, contractors, and visitors.
- All Shockout-controlled premises, including those of partner institutions such as the **University of Greater Manchester** and **Bolton College**, as well as any hired or temporary facilities used by Shockout.

4. Policy Statement

Shockout is committed to maintaining a **safe, healthy, and law-abiding environment** by:

- Actively discouraging the use or possession of illegal drugs and psychoactive substances (e.g., nitrous oxide).
- Promoting awareness of the risks and consequences associated with drug misuse.
- Providing education, training, and harm minimisation support.
- Offering confidential advice, counselling, and referral services to students seeking help.

Shockout will not condone:

- The possession, use, or supply of illegal drugs.
- The misuse of legal or prescription drugs, including drugs in sport.
- The possession, use, or supply of psychoactive substances (formerly known as "legal highs") such as **nitrous oxide**.
- Any behaviour that is unacceptable, unsafe, or unlawful as a result of drug misuse.

5. Prohibited Conduct

It is strictly prohibited to:

- Possess, use, distribute, or be under the influence of illegal substances on any Shockout premises or those of partner institutions.
- Supply or attempt to supply controlled drugs to others.
- Bring psychoactive substances or unprescribed medication onto the premises.

Any such incident will be regarded as **serious misconduct** and may result in:

- **Immediate disciplinary action**, including suspension or exclusion.
- **Police notification and investigation**, where appropriate.

Convictions for possession or trafficking of illegal substances can result in criminal records, fines, or imprisonment, and may seriously affect future employment or educational opportunities.

6. Support and Welfare

Shockout recognises that drug misuse may be a health and wellbeing issue. Students who are concerned about their own drug use are encouraged to seek support. Those who voluntarily seek help will be treated with **confidentiality and compassion**, not punishment.

Support options include:

- Confidential advice and signposting via **Student Services**.
- Access to counselling or external treatment services.
- Encouragement to self-refer to appropriate health professionals.

If a staff member or student believes someone is struggling to control their drug use, they should:

- Encourage that individual to seek support.
- Report any immediate safety concerns to a member of academic staff or **Student Services**.

7. Disciplinary Action

Any individual found:

- Using, supplying, or possessing illegal substances; or
- Being under the influence of drugs on Shockout premises

will be considered to have committed **gross misconduct** (see **Disciplinary Policy**).

Shockout reserves the right to:

- Ban any person involved in drug misuse from its premises immediately.
- Consider disciplinary action against any student who permits or enables such activity.

8. Education and Prevention

Shockout is committed to:

- Promoting awareness of the dangers and consequences of drug misuse.
- Providing harm reduction information and resources.
- Offering staff and student training on drug-related risks and prevention strategies.

9. Definition of Terms

Illegal Substances

Any substance controlled under the **Misuse of Drugs Act 1971**, including but not limited to:

- Cannabis
- Cocaine
- Heroin
- Amphetamines
- Ecstasy (MDMA)

Psychoactive Substances

Substances that affect mental functioning or perception, such as **nitrous oxide**, alcohol, and synthetic stimulants.

Drug Misuse

The use of any drug or substance in a manner that causes harm to the individual or others, including misuse of:

- Prescription medications
- Over-the-counter drugs
- Substances used for performance enhancement (“drugs in sport”)

10. Reporting and Review

Shockout will:

- Report all relevant drug-related incidents to the police in line with legal obligations.
- Review this policy annually or following any legislative change.
- Continue to provide education, awareness, and welfare initiatives in support of a drug-free environment.

Summary of Key Principles

- Drug misuse is not tolerated under any circumstances.
- The safety and wellbeing of the Shockout community are paramount.
- Support is available for those seeking help.
- Legal compliance and disciplinary action will be enforced where required.