



Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy

February 2023

Purpose

This policy sets out Totterdown Baptist Church's position with regard to drugs and alcohol within the fellowship and the church building, and the approach to be taken when the consumption of alcohol or drugs affects the fellowship or other users of the building.

Scope

The policy applies to all the fellowship and those visiting or using the church buildings

Biblical Basis

- Everything that God created is good when used for its proper purpose (Psalm 24:1, Psalm 104:15)
- Alcohol is acceptable and even beneficial when used correctly (1 Timothy 5:23)
- Abuse of the good gifts of creation is sin against the creator and harms our own bodies and relationships. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 5:18)
- God's desire is to set everyone free from addictions and abuse. (John 8:36, Romans 6:18)
- It is not our place to condemn, but to help restore people who struggle with addictions and other sin (Galatians 6:1)

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To foster safe and positive attitudes to the use of alcohol and other drugs
- To safeguard individuals and ensure health and safety compliance within the building
- To help those with an alcohol or drug related problem to be restored to health quickly, for the benefit of themselves, their family and the rest of the fellowship.
- To offer friendship and pastoral support to all those undergoing problems relating to alcohol/drug misuse, whether by them personally or someone else connected to them.

Policy position

Alcohol on the premises:

- Users of the building are not permitted to consume alcohol under normal circumstances. However, it is acknowledged that from time to time social events may occur in the buildings at which adult users may wish to consume small amounts of alcohol.
- People under 18 may not possess or consume alcohol on the premises at any time.
- The church should be made aware of any intention to consume alcohol on church premises and all users should obtain prior permission to do so from the church.
- In simple situations, the Hall Bookings Secretary is authorised to grant permission, but the Deacons shall have the final authority and if there is any doubt, should be consulted before a booking is accepted.

- Alcohol may only be consumed if alcoholic drinks are consumed in small quantities as part of a meal or an organised function, such as a wedding reception.
- *A bar to sell alcohol may be granted permission, provided all legal requirements are met, the gaining of licences are the responsibility of the hall hirer. This policy must be followed at all times.*

Drugs on the premises:

- No one is allowed to bring or use illegal drugs on the premises under any circumstances.
- It is recognised that users of the premises may need to bring prescribed or non-prescribed medications into the premises for their own personal use.
- Smoking is not permitted in any part of the building

Dealing with Alcohol and Drug related problems:

Whilst recognising that it has little control over external factors, the church will seek to prevent alcohol/drug related problems by:

- Promoting positive attitudes to sensible drinking, and by discouraging excessive consumption of alcohol.
- Raising awareness of the possible harmful consequences to the user (and their family/friends) of the abuse of drugs and alcohol
- Recognising that addiction to alcohol and drugs may in some cases be considered a medical condition and should be treated as such.
- Assisting all the fellowship to identify potential alcohol or drug-related problems and encouraging people to seek help and prayer at an early stage.

Fellowship members who consider they may have a problem will be encouraged to seek prayer support and appropriate treatment voluntarily.

No-one may work on the premises if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The Health and Safety Executive guidance states that knowingly allowing someone to continue their duties under the influence of excess alcohol or drugs could result in prosecution if this places anyone under risk of harm.

Deacons/Stewards in charge of activities are responsible for evaluating risks for circumstances under their control. Any risk assessments must address the issue of whether those doing voluntary work are competent to carry out the work safely and without risk to themselves or others. (Examples may include: Working with young people or using ladders or dangerous tools.) Therefore immediate action is necessary.

Dealing with someone on the premises who appears to be under the influence of, or in possession of alcohol or drugs.

- The action taken will depend on the circumstances but could include sending the person involved home, with an accompanying adult if necessary.
- Any alcohol found in the possession of an underage person will be confiscated and parents/guardians informed.

- If it is suspected that illegal drugs have been brought into the premises, the Police will be called. After the police have finished dealing with the person concerned, appropriate pastoral care will be offered to the offender.
- Someone in the fellowship who appears to have an alcohol or drug related problem, whether by observation or by their own voluntary admission will be offered pastoral, prayerful and practical support and advice. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.
- In serious cases of addiction, people will be urged to seek expert therapy or medical treatment.

This policy was adopted by the Church Meeting on March 17th 2009 and revised by the deacons on 8th January 2024.