

# **Unit 56: Testing for Substance Use**

**Unit reference number: R/616/7427**

**Level: 3**

**Unit type: Optional**

**Credit value: 5**

**Guided learning hours: 30**

---

## **Unit summary**

Within care settings, the testing of individuals to see if they have been using substances, including alcohol and controlled drugs, may be carried out for various reasons. Testing may happen at intervals, depending on the individual's treatment plan, their progress and their agreement to engage with the plan.

This unit will enable you to test individuals to see if they have been using substances such as alcohol and controlled drugs. You will learn how to prepare to test for substance use, take samples for testing and record and communicate the results of tests and other related issues. As part of this process, liaison with colleagues, individuals and other practitioners is key in relation to the outcomes of tests and related implications. You will learn about the importance of your role in the wider sharing of information, ensuring that agreed ways of working and policies and procedures are adhered to at all times.

## Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

To pass this unit, the learner needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria outline the requirements the learner is expected to meet to achieve the unit.

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
1 Be able to prepare to test individuals for substance use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.1 Identify those individuals to be tested for substance misuse and make arrangements for tests to be witnessed, where required, and in line with agreed ways of working</li><li>1.2 Demonstrate that the environment in which the tests are to be carried out, and the procedures to be used, comply with health, safety and security policies, and afford privacy and dignity</li><li>1.3 Demonstrate that the individuals being tested understand the purpose of the tests, their rights, and any consequences of not submitting to the testing procedures, in line with agreed ways of working</li><li>1.4 Demonstrate that opportunities have been provided for individuals to describe their substance use and explain possible false positives before they are tested</li><li>1.5 Demonstrate that the individual's consent has been obtained for testing procedures, in line with agreed ways of working</li><li>1.6 Explain clearly and precisely to individuals what they have to do to provide their samples</li></ul>

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
<p>2 Be able to test for substances</p>	<p>2.1 Demonstrate that samples have been taken in accordance with clinical and organisational policies and procedures</p> <p>2.2 Demonstrate that samples have been tested or referred for testing, in accordance with clinical and organisational policies and procedures</p> <p>2.3 Demonstrate that suppliers'/manufacturers' instructions have been followed when using equipment</p> <p>2.4 Demonstrate that samples and equipment have been safely disposed of, in accordance with clinical and organisational policies and procedures</p> <p>2.5 Explain possible causes of false readings in the types of test carried out</p>
<p>3 Be able to communicate outcomes of testing for substances</p>	<p>3.1 Communicate the outcomes of the tests to individuals and their carers or guardians where required, and ensure they understand the consequences</p> <p>3.2 Demonstrate that individuals' informed consent has been obtained when test results are to be shared with other practitioners</p> <p>3.3 Demonstrate that accurate records of tests and associated reports have been completed in accordance with organisational policy and procedures</p>

### What needs to be learned

#### Learning outcome 1: Be able to prepare to test individuals for substance use

##### Preparation of testing for substance misuse

- Voluntary/compulsory requirement.
- Tested according to need.
- Level of substance use.
- Legal obligation.
- Part of rehabilitation programme.
- Ongoing testing and review.

##### Health, safety and security procedures

- Privacy afforded through agreed ways of working.
- Secure area.
- Safe disposal of testing equipment.
- Safe environment.
- Duty of care.
- Infection prevention procedures.
- Staff awareness of mechanisms for calling for help or assistance.
- Confidentiality in relation to testing outcomes.

##### The purpose of the tests

- Use of drug/alcohol screening tools.
- Assess drug/alcohol use.
- Impact on individual and others.
- Social situation.
- General and psychological health.
- Risk assessment.
- Identification of risks.
- Risk management.
- Review of assessment.
- Resource, support and legal implications of not submitting to testing.
- Potential withdrawal of support.
- Implementation of legal proceedings due to breach of treatment agreement.

## What needs to be learned

### Enable individuals to describe their substance use

- Individual understanding of use.
- Reasons for use.
- Use of interpersonal skills.

### Obtain the individual's consent for testing procedures

- Agreed ways of working
- Informed consent.
- Implied consent.
- Written consent.
- Verbal consent.
- The role of advocates.

### Explain to individuals what they have to do to provide their samples

- Breath.
- Urine.
- Blood.
- Hair.
- Saliva.
- Privacy.
- Amount of sample required for testing.
- Provision of appropriate sample containers.
- Testing kits.

## Learning outcome 2: Be able to test for substances

### Take samples

- Personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Provision of appropriate sample containers.
- Testing kits.
- Recording and reporting of process.

### Test samples or refer them for testing

- Following manufacturers' instructions.
- Adherence to clinical and organisational policies and procedures.
- Ensure samples are authentic and not contaminated.
- Refer to relevant people if suspected that samples are not authentic or have been contaminated.
- Safe disposal of samples.

## What needs to be learned

### **Follow instructions for use of equipment**

- In relation to use.
- Storage of equipment.
- Cleaning and maintenance of equipment.
- Safe disposal of equipment.

### **Dispose of samples and equipment**

- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Sharps boxes.
- Colour-coded disposal system.
- Reporting of accidents and incidents.
- Storage of waste.

### **Causes of false readings**

- Incorrect testing method.
- Faulty procedures.
- Previous/recent use of substances.
- Potential false positive test.
- Prescription medication.
- Test unable to detect certain substances.

### **Learning outcome 3: Be able to communicate outcomes of testing for substances**

#### **Communicate the outcomes of the tests to individuals and their carers or guardians**

- Method of communication.
- Ensuring understanding.
- Supporting individuals to raise concerns or make complaints.
- Whistleblowing.
- Implications in relation to treatment programme, social life, health and wellbeing.
- Legal implications in relation to a possible breach of agreed treatment programme.

## What needs to be learned

### **Obtain individuals' informed consent**

- Where one person receives personal or sensitive information from another person, this information should not be passed on to anyone else without the consent of the person from whom the personal or sensitive information was received; meaning of confidentiality as contained in principles of current legislation, e.g. the Data Protection Act 1998.
- The need for consent to share information.
- Understanding when information may be shared without consent.
- Concept of 'need to know'.
- The need for transparent policy and protocols for information sharing.

### **Records of tests and associated reports**

- Own responsibility in relation to reporting and recording procedures.
- Importance of good communication.
- Appropriate sharing of information.

## Information for tutors

---

### Suggested resources

#### Books

Dorling Kindersley – *BMA New Guide to Medicine and Drugs*, 5th Edition  
(Dorling Kindersley, 2015) ISBN 9780241201015

Roberts G W and Machon A – *Appreciative Healthcare Practice: A guide to compassionate, person-centred care* (M&K Publishing, 2015)  
ISBN 9781905539932

Sanderson H and Lewis J – *A Practical Guide to Delivering Personalisation: Person-centred Practice in Health and Social Care*  
(Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2012) ISBN 9781849051941

White T – *Working with Drug and Alcohol Users: A Guide to Providing Understanding, Assessment and Support* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2012)  
ISBN 9781849052948

#### Websites

<a href="http://www.drugwise.org.uk">www.drugwise.org.uk</a>	DrugWise provides advice, research and information.
<a href="http://www.eata.org.uk">www.eata.org.uk</a>	European Association for the Treatment of Addiction (UK) provides support for aftercare and ongoing recovery.
<a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a>	Department of Health – drug and alcohol addiction, and obesity: effects on employment outcomes.
<a href="http://www.nice.org.uk">www.nice.org.uk</a>	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence –alcohol-use disorders: diagnosis, assessment and management of harmful drinking and alcohol dependence.
<a href="http://www.who.int">www.who.int</a>	World Health Organization provides guidance on substance abuse.

## **Assessment**

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the associated qualification specification for this unit.

This unit is internally assessed. To pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment must demonstrate that they have met the required standard specified in the learning outcomes and assessment criteria, and the requirements of the assessment strategy.

To ensure that the assessment tasks and activities enable learners to produce valid, sufficient, authentic and appropriate evidence that meets the assessment criteria, centres should follow the guidance given in *Section 8 Assessment* of the associated qualification specification and meet the requirements from the assessment strategy given below.

Wherever possible, centres should adopt an holistic approach to assessing the units in the qualification. This gives the assessment process greater rigour and minimises repetition, time and the burden of assessment on all parties involved in the process.

### **Unit assessment requirements**

This unit must be assessed in accordance with the assessment strategy (principles) in *Annexe A* of the associated qualification specification.

Assessment decisions for all learning outcomes (competence) must be made based on evidence generated during the learner's normal work activity. Any knowledge evidence integral to these learning outcomes may be generated outside of the work environment, but the final assessment decision must be within the real work environment. Simulation cannot be used as an assessment method for all learning outcomes.