

## **Freedom of Information – Response – 27481**

*Freedom of Information Request — Drug Testing Safeguards in Substance Misuse Services*

*I am writing to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

*Please could you provide the following information:*

*1. Does your local authority currently provide substance misuse and/or addiction recovery services — whether delivered in-house, commissioned from external providers, or a combination of both? If commissioned externally, please identify the provider(s) and the contract reference(s) where possible.*

Yes, Suffolk County Council commission Turning Point (Services) Ltd to provide the drug and alcohol treatment service across Suffolk under contract reference CD1395

*2. Whether services are delivered in-house or by an external provider, does the applicable drug and alcohol testing policy for staff working in those services include the following safeguards:*

*(a) Engagement of an independent Medical Review Officer (MRO) or equivalent qualified professional to review positive drug test results before any disciplinary action is taken;* Suffolk County Council does not hold this information. Responsibility for employment policies and procedures relating to provider staff rests with the provider.

*(b) Obtaining an independent toxicological opinion when a positive result may be attributable to legal substances (such as over-the-counter CBD products, prescription medication, or dietary sources);*

Suffolk County Council does not hold this information.

*(c) Offering confirmatory re-testing or independent analysis following a disputed positive result;*

Suffolk County Council does not hold this information.

*(d) Referral to Occupational Health before disciplinary proceedings are initiated on the basis of a drug test result;*

Suffolk County Council does not hold this information.

*(e) Maintenance of a written drug and alcohol testing policy that meets the standards recommended by the ACAS guidance on managing drug and alcohol misuse at work?*

Suffolk County Council does not hold this information.

*If commissioned externally, please confirm whether these safeguards are specified in the commissioning contract or service specification, and provide the relevant clauses where possible.*

No. Suffolk County Council has reviewed the contract and service specification and has not identified any clauses that specifically prescribe staff drug and alcohol testing arrangements, including the safeguards listed above. Responsibility for employment policies and procedures relating to provider staff rests with the provider.

*3. Has your authority received any complaints, concerns, or whistleblowing disclosures from service users, staff, or members of the public regarding the drug testing practices of substance misuse service providers (or in-house services) in the last five years? If so, how many and what was the general nature of those complaints?*

Following searches of records held by the Public Health, Communities and Public Safety directorate who hold responsibility for commissioning this service, Suffolk County Council has not identified any complaints, concerns or whistleblowing disclosures relating specifically to drug testing practices during the last five years.

*4. Does your authority's contract monitoring or quality assurance process include any review of drug testing procedures or outcomes — whether delivered in-house or by a commissioned provider?*

No. Suffolk County Council's contract monitoring arrangements do not require the provider to routinely report on staff drug testing procedures or outcomes. However, relevant matters may be discussed as part of wider safeguarding, incident management, workforce governance or quality assurance processes where appropriate.