UK CAA Guidance Material: Alcohol/Substance Misuse Assessment Process

Medical Diagnosis of Alcohol or Substance Misuse

Positive Test whilst on duty

Any alcohol/drugs criminal offence charge, positive test or clinical suspicion (Note 1)

3rd Party Notification (Note 1)

Further enquiries

Unfit

Consider Unfit

Unfit

Reasonable suspicion

Consider Unfit

No reasonable suspicion

Period of unfitness and/or restriction may be required by CAA Medical (Note 3)

Specialist Assessment and testing within 2 months (Note 2)

Does not meet criteria for an alcohol or drug misuse or disorder

Some criteria/risk for an alcohol or drug use disorder

Meets criteria for an alcohol or drug use disorder

Unfit

Appropriate in-or outpatient treatment

18 months of 3-monthly follow-up

Fit Class 1 OML SIC / Class 3
Class 2/LAPL OSL/OPL
Follow-up as specified (Note 4)

No Further Action

Fit Class 1 / 2 / 3 LAPL unrestricted
Follow-up as specified by CAA Medical (Note 5)

NOTES
1) If diagnosis, use or misuse is uncertain (e.g. first drink driving conviction and has had a clinical review by AME) fitness may be maintained after discussion with a Medical Assessor at the CAA. A 3rd party notification or allegation should be investigated - discussion with the individual/informer/AME/GP may help to verify. The applicant should be reviewed by specialist if reasonable suspicion or allegation can be reasonably substantiated.

2) Class 1 and 3 Applicants/holders must attend CAA Clinic for assessment and testing within 2 months (Local Addictions specialist within 2 months for Class 2/LAPL and clinical testing which is UKAS accredited, ISO/IEC 17025, and chain of custody collection) Failure to attend when specified and/or provision of adequate sample(s) for testing, will normally be managed as if it were a positive test and the applicant will be made unfit. Testing for alcohol includes blood for: Full Blood count to include MCV, Liver Function Tests including GGT, % axis CDT and PEth Testing for drugs should include cannabis, amphetamines, metamphetamine, cocaine, opiates and benzodiazepines for substance misuse. Other tests may be indicated.

3) Depending on the individual case and at the discretion of a CAA Medical Assessor (Class 1,3), or AME in consultation with a CAA Medical Assessor (Class 2/LAPL), the applicant may be assessed as fit (+/- multicrew limitation) subject to ongoing periodic assessment and testing +/- multicrew restriction.

4) A fit assessment may be considered after a period of two years documented sobriety or freedom from alcohol or substance misuse (Minimum 18 months for Class 1 OML). For Class 1, SIC – specific regular medical examination(s) - should also be added to the medical certificate and renewal will be determined by a Medical Assessor. 3-monthly blood and/or hair testing is mandatory to demonstrate abstinence.

5) Periodic review and testing shall be required to demonstrate absence of use/misuse. All cases of diagnosis of misuse disorders shall require long term follow-up at least annually. Applicants with non-diagnostic risk criteria will be followed on a case by case basis. Once returned to flying consideration of removal of any restriction may be made after at least 1 year of satisfactory follow up and compliance. If relapse occurs, a further period of grounding will be required, pending further assessment/treatment. More than one episode of relapse is disqualifying.

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