

## Drug & Alcohol test refusals

For the attention of ALL sponsors

Issue Date: 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023

The Sentinel Scheme Rules are clear that if an individual leaves site to avoid a Drug and Alcohol (D&A) test 'post incident' or 'for cause' that it is classed as a refusal. This refusal should result in a 5 year suspension from Sentinel, in line with Network Rail's zero tolerance policy.

From December 2022 to February 2023 ten people have left site following an incident without being tested for Drugs and Alcohol (D&A) by the medical provider.

Unfortunately, in all ten cases the medical provider was not called to site. This means that a D&A refusal could not be registered. The testing provider cannot add a refusal if not called, or only informed at a later date.

**The 10 cases were referred to the Sentinel Review Panel to review. The panel applied the 5 year ban in all cases.**

It is essential that all contractors (sponsors) ensure that a D&A test is requested through their medical provider. Where possible, it would be better to do this prior to telling the subject as this reduces the chances of the individual leaving site.

Recent experience shows that we need a more robust approach to this aspect of D&A by all organisations working on the railway.

The Drug and Alcohol Standard contains the following clause, applicable to all staff working on the Network Rail Managed Infrastructure:

### **9 For-cause testing**

9.1 Where the behaviour of an employee or contractor gives cause to suspect that they are unfit to work due to drugs or alcohol misuse, the responsible manager shall suspend the employee or contractor from all duties and escort them to a safe waiting area. They shall be continuously supervised until the test sample collection is completed. The employee shall remain suspended until a negative result is received.

