

# EMPLOYEE WELLNESS POLICY

2023/2024



## public works & roads

Department:  
Public Works and Roads  
North West Provincial Government  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



**POLICY TITLE : EMPLOYEE WELLNESS**  
**DEPARTMENT : PUBLIC WORKS AND ROADS**



## Contents

<u>1.</u> PREAMBLE .....	4
<u>2.</u> PURPOSE .....	4
<u>3.</u> MISSION STATEMENT .....	4
<u>4.</u> SCOPE OF APPLICATION.....	4
<u>5.</u> LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK .....	4
<u>6.</u> DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	5
<u>7.</u> DEFINITION OF EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME (EWP), AND EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP):-.....	7
<u>8.</u> PURPOSE OF EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME .....	7
<u>9.</u> THE CORE TECHNIQUES USED IN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP) .....	8
<u>10.</u> GUIDING PRINCIPLES .....	8
<u>11.</u> CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHOS .....	8
<u>12.</u> PROCEDURES .....	9
<u>13.</u> ACCESS TO EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME (EWP) SERVICES.....	12
<u>14.</u> ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	12
<u>15.</u> OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (OHS).....	13
<u>16.</u> REFERRALS TO OTHER SPECIALISTS.....	13
<u>17.</u> DISPUTE RESOLUTION .....	14
<u>18.</u> MONITORING AND EVALUATION .....	14
<u>19.</u> POLICY REVIEW.....	14



## **1. PREAMBLE**

The Department of Public Works and Roads ('Department') acknowledges that challenges, both out as well as within the work context can affect employee wellness, work performance, safety and overall productivity; and

It is therefore to the Department's benefit to assist Employees and their Dependents with their challenges and in so doing, promote employee wellness, employee safety and improved work performance. The foregoing will be addressed through Employee Wellness Program (EWP), Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Occupational Health and Safety Program (OHS).

## **2. PURPOSE**

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to set out guidelines on how the Employee Wellness Program will function;
- 2.2. To provide a consistent and constructive set of guidelines to assist troubled Employees through the provision of confidential and professional counselling services; and
- 2.3. To provide management with a clear system for the early identification and referral of troubled Employees to the EAP program.

## **3. MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Employee Wellness Programme (EWP) is to enhance the wellness of all Employees and their immediate families and/or their dependents.

## **4. SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

This Policy will apply to all Employees appointed in the Department in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994 and their immediate family members/dependents. It also applies to personnel on contract as well as those on internships within the Department.

## **5. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1. This policy is based on the mandate received from the Department of Public Service and Administration;



5.2. There are no EWP specific Acts, numerous Acts however impact on EWP and thus Practitioners must be aware of the following existing pieces of legislation:

- a) The Constitution of Republic of South Africa, 1996;
- b) Public Service Regulations 1999;
- c) Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997;
- d) Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995;
- e) Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 As Amended;
- f) Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993;
- g) Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act 130 of 1993;
- h) Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998;
- i) Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependency Amendment Act 14 of 1999;
- j) Child Care Amendment Act 86 of 1991;
- k) Debt Collectors Act 114 of 1998; and
- l) Medical Schemes Act 131 of 1998.

## 6. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

**'Chemical dependency'** psychological and/or physical dependency from alcohol and/or other drugs;

**'Client'** individual/ group/family/ member utilising the Employee Assistance Program due to personal and/ or work related problems;

**'Consultation'** process of interaction with another professional in order to verify or confirm specific information;

**'Counselling'** therapeutic intervention by a trained professional, i.e. Social Worker, Psychologist or Psychiatrist;

**'Critical incident'** incident causing a crisis to the co-workers, employee and immediate family;

**'Dependants'**

**'EWP'** Employee Wellness Program;

**'EAP'** Employee Assistance Program;

**'EAPA'** Employee Assistance Professionals Association;

**'EAPA S.A Board'** a duly elected Board of the South Africa Chapter of EAPA;

**'EAPA S.A Professional'** a professionally trained person, performing EAP specific related tasks, i.e. therapy, counselling, marketing, evaluating;



**‘EAP Practitioner’** a professionally trained person - performing EAP specific related tasks; i.e. referral, liaison, training;

**‘Employee’** a person legally employed by an employer, whether part-time, full-time or temporarily;

**‘Employer’** anybody having legal status and providing employment to people and providing payment for services delivered;

**‘External Agency’** an agency providing psychological services to an employer and his Employees providing and their Dependants;

**‘External Resource’** any acknowledged resource in the community, providing services;

**‘Immediate Family’**

**‘Intervention’** therapeutic and professional guidance to any employee in order to overcome their problem;

**‘Manager’** person in a position of supervisory power with added status and authority;

**‘Marketing’** promotion of a specific service to potential customers and employees of existing clients;

**‘NWPA’** North West Provincial Administration;

**‘Personally challenged’** an Employee suffering any personal or work related problem, resulting in a lack of optimal economic and social functioning;

**‘PSCBC’** Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council;

**‘Regional Interest group’** a number of EAP Professionals, grouped together in a geographical area with the view to group professionally and to promote;

**‘Service Provider’** an agency providing professional services to clients and customers according to a formal contract;

**‘Supervisor’** a person in a position of authority and who oversees the performance of subordinate staff;

**‘Therapy’** assessment and treatment of a personally challenged employee

**‘Training’** educating and teaching employees through means of didactic lecturing, modelling, interaction and role- plays;

**‘Trauma’** reaction of an employee to a very serious incident, causing psychological and very often physical injury;



**'Treatment'** intervention with a personally challenged Employee by exploring their feelings and guiding them through a process of recovery;

**'User'** any person/company making use of services and facilities according to a contract;

**'Wellbeing'** a positive state of physical and emotional wellness;

**'Wellness'** an employee in good shape, resulting in a high level of productivity.

## **7. DEFINITION OF EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME (EWP), AND EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP):-**

7.1. EWP is a work-based program which has the explicit aim of improving the quality of life of all Employees and their immediate families. It is designed to assist in the identification and resolution of performance for Employees impaired by personal concerns including health, marital and family discord, financial, alcohol and drug related challenges, emotional stress or other personal concerns which may affect the Employee's job performance and adversely impact their productivity; and

7.2. The specific core activities of EAP include professional consultation and training in the identification and resolution of job performance issues related to personal concerns.

## **8. PURPOSE OF EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME**

8.1. The purpose of an Employee Wellness Program (EWP) is to improve the psychological health of all Employees in the Department. It will help Employees to develop coping skills and accept a greater degree of personal responsibility for challenges facing them at various times of their employment in the Department. It will assist them resolve their individual, marital, family and job performance problems. As a result, their productivity and attendance will improve.

8.2. Through interventions at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, EWP will within available and reasonable resources, help Employees deal effectively with challenges in their personal, career and family lives. Managers and Supervisors will be able to focus on work performance. They will no longer feel the need to struggle with personal problems of their subordinates. It is believed



that this focus exemplifies the most current approaches to dealing with challenges that mitigate against productivity and wellness.

## **9. THE CORE TECHNIQUES USED IN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP)**

- a) Consultation and training;
- b) Problem identification;
- c) Constructive confrontation;
- d) Referral, diagnosis, treatment and assistance;
- e) Consultation to work organisation; and
- f) Personality-challenged Employee.

## **10. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- 10.1. The EWP is committed to assisting employees and their immediate families/dependants to achieve and maintain a high level of well-being and wellness in order to achieve the goals of both the Department as well as their personal goals;
- 10.2. The EWP acknowledges that both personal as well as work problems can have a serious effect on the Employee's job performance and safety in the workplace;
- 10.3. EWP will assist in the early identification, counselling and a referral to assist Employees and their immediate families/dependants who are experiencing problems. EWP counselling is offered by qualified and professional staff;
- 10.4. EWP services are voluntary and confidential; and
- 10.5. EWP strives to treat all Employees in a fair, equitable and dignified manner. In-house services are free of charge but the Employee becomes responsible to cover costs when they are referred to an outside independent service provider.

## **11. CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHOS**

- 11.1. The EWP Manager and staff have the moral commitment and the legal duty to retain information regarding individual Employees and their Dependants as confidential in the course of providing Employee Wellness services. The EWP Manager and staff will protect the identity of the Employees who use the





services and assure them that they can be trusted with their most private concerns;

11.2. All communication between an Employee and an EAP Manager and staff is privileged and carefully protected;

11.3. Disclosure of information without written consent from the Employee is prohibited and can be sanctioned through the regulatory framework of the Health Professions Council of South Africa and the South African Council for Social Services Professions;

11.4. It is understood that the Employee's job security will not be undermined by using the program;

11.5. However, within the law the following limitations to the individual's right to confidentiality will apply:-

- a) Section 36 of the Constitution - the Limitation Clause: where child abuse and /or sexual abuse are suspected;
- b) Prevention of Family Violence Act 133, 1993 as amended;
- c) Where an Employee at work is imminently suicidal, or if an individual is perceived to be dangerous to others. Sec 8 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act No 85 of 1993 justifies this breach of confidentiality;
- d) Where an Employee at work needs psychiatric or medical attention;
- e) Where a Court or government agency compels disclosure;
- f) In the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997, Sec 17 and 90 in respect of any work where an Employee must undergo medical examination for health and safety hazards.

## **12. PROCEDURES**

### **12.1. TYPES OF REFERRALS**

#### **12.1.1. Self-Referral / Voluntary Referral**

It is initiated by an Employee when they recognise a problem themselves and can seek help through EAP out of their own accord. It is where the Employee has personal problems which they want to discuss in a private and confidential setting;

#### **12.1.2. Informal Referral / Family Referral**



An Employee seeks help at the suggestion from a Colleague, Family Member or Friend. In some instances, Supervisors assist subordinates by offering the option of EAP to those Employees whose work performance has declined. Employees retain the right to use or refuse the offer. This is an early intervention strategy to help Employees and is usually not documented. No reports will be made back to the referral source without the express written consent of the Employee concerned.

### **12.1.3. Supervisory Referral**

Supervisors have a responsibility to monitor and manage the work performance of their subordinates. It is recommended by a Supervisor when impaired work performance continues after normal supervision practices have been followed. When work performance has declined below an acceptable level and might lead to disciplinary action, the Supervisor makes a formal referral as a constructive alternative to discipline. The offer can be declined, i.e. the EAP is voluntary. Supervisory referral is part of a wider performance management strategy, the Supervisor will be advised whether:-

- a) the Employee has kept the appointment;
- b) the Employee accepted or rejected the offer;
- c) the Employee will or will not need time away from work; and
- d) the Employee is making progress.

### **12.1.4. EWP Workplace Programmes**

The following are core programmes of the EWP and will be reviewed periodically based on a needs analysis:-

#### **12.1.4.1. Counselling**

- a) The purpose of Counselling in the EWP is to identify, prevent and treat personal problems that adversely affect job performance;
- b) Follow-ups are an integral part of the counselling process. It can be conducted telephonically or in person by the Counsellor after the formal brief counselling has ended and before the case is closed. Its purpose is to accomplish the following goals:-
  - i. Support the gains made by the client during counselling;



- ii. Maintain a therapeutic relationship with the client until the client feels strong enough to take the next step in treatment. This is to ensure that the client does not need further clinical intervention.

#### **12.1.4.2. HIV/AIDS Counselling and Support (See Departmental HIV/AIDS Policy)**

- a) A Departmental HIV/AIDS policy has been developed and will be reviewed on a regular basis;
- b) A Departmental study will run at identified intervals to assess personnel's Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Behaviours (KAPB) regarding HIV/AIDS and to identify which programmes should be run for staff in the Department;
- c) Awareness, Education and Prevention workshops and events will be held for staff in the Department;
- d) HIV/AIDS counselling is available to staff who are infected and affected, this includes pre-test and post-test counselling for staff who wish to go for an HIV test.

#### **12.1.4.3. Management Counselling**

- a) EAP provides support and advice to Managers on job related issues of Employees. This entails consultation with Managers. EAP gives advice and support on the EAP Policy.

#### **12.1.4.4. Employee Education and Awareness**

##### **a) Marketing**

Marketing of the EWP services (EAP, HIV/AIDS and OHS) is essential to the programme and this will be done using all available means at the Department's disposal.

##### **b) Supervisory Training**

To have Supervisors regard EAP as a resource available to help them deal with difficult problems.

##### **c) Workshops**

Relating to various needs identified and may include things like stress management, life skills, personal financial management etc.



### 13. ACCESS TO EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME (EWP) SERVICES

13.1. All *bona fide* Employees of the Department;

13.2. Immediate family and dependants of the Employee;

13.3. Managers with concerns about work related challenges facing them or their Subordinate.

### 14. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Person Responsible	Role/Responsibilities/Duties
Head of Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To ensure and support a work environment that encourages employee wellness</li><li>• To promote and support a working environment that is fair and non- discriminatory</li></ul>
Managers/Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To provide support for the EWP program</li><li>• To implement the policy</li><li>• To ensure that there is early identification of troubled employees and prompt referral to EWP</li><li>• To promote and support a working environment that is fair and non-discriminatory</li></ul>
HR Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To cultivate a work environment that affirms Employee wellness</li></ul>
EWP Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To ensure that all cases referred receive attention</li><li>• To ensure that confidentiality is maintained</li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide professional, efficient and quality services</li> </ul>
Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To voluntarily seek assistance</li> <li>• To be responsible for costs incurred if they are referred to an outside service provider</li> <li>• To individually promote and support wellness, health and safety in the workplace</li> <li>• To ensure that they do nothing to harm the wellness, health and safety of others or themselves in the work environment</li> <li>• To ensure that any confidential disclosure by a fellow employee remains confidential unless they provide written consent to disclose information</li> </ul>

## 15. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (OHS)

(See Departmental OHS Policy)

## 16. REFERRALS TO OTHER SPECIALISTS

16.1. Employees might be required to be referred to a more appropriate professional service;

16.2. Employees with serious alcohol or drug problems, psychiatric disorders, or those in need of medical, legal, or financial services are potential referrals;

16.3. The EWP Practitioner will provide supportive counselling until the Employee participates in a treatment programme;



16.4. Most referrals to other professionals and long term care programmes can result in costs not covered by this programme and only then the Employee becomes liable for the costs.

## 17. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

17.1. Should a dispute emanating from the un-procedural application of this policy and not be satisfactorily resolved by internal procedures set out in this policy, either party may within 30 days of the dispute having arisen, refer the matter to the relevant dispute resolution procedure (See Labour Relations Policy).

17.2. Should the dispute remain unresolved, either party may refer the dispute to the Labour Court within 30 days of receipt of the certificate issued by the conciliator.


## 18. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Employee Wellness Sub-Directorate, together with the HIV/AIDS, EAP and OHS Committees (Wellness Committees) should monitor and evaluate policy implementation as well as the education, prevention, treatment, care and support elements of the programme. The Employee Wellness Sub-Directorate Personnel must monitor the attendance levels at training programmes. Human Resource Practitioners must monitor productivity indicators as well as conduct risk assessment and review HR policies and processes to take account of EWP activities.

## 19. POLICY REVIEW

This Policy shall be reviewed every two years where and/or when a need arises.

Approved



MR. M. I. KGANTSI

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

16/10/2023

DATE:

