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## DIRECTORATE: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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**POLICY TITLE : EMPLOYEE WELLNESS POLICY**

**POLICY Ref. No. : S1/P/EWP**

### 1. PREAMBLE

- i. The Department of Public Works and Roads (herein after referred to as the Department) acknowledges that problems out of the work context as well as within the work context can affect employee wellness, work performance, safety and overall productivity.
- ii. Thus it is to the Department's benefit to assist employees and their dependants with their problems and in this way promote employee wellness, employee safety and improved work performance.
- iii. The foregoing will be addressed through: EWP, EAP and OHS

### 2. PURPOSE

- i. The purpose of this policy is to set out guidelines on how the Employee Wellness Programme will function.
- ii. To provide a consistent and constructive set of guidelines to assist troubled employees through the provision of confidential and professional counselling services by the EAP.
- iii. To provide management with a clear system for the early identification and referral of troubled employees to the EAP programme.

### 3. MISSION STATEMENT

- i. The mission of the Employee Wellness Programme (EWP) is to enhance the Wellness of all employees and their immediate families and/or their dependants.

### 4. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

- i. This policy will apply to all employees appointed in the Department in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994 and their immediate family members/dependants. It also applies to staff doing internships and learnerships within the Department.

## **5. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

- i. This policy is based on the mandate received from the Minister of the Department of Public Service and Administration.
- ii. Whereas, there are no EWP specific Acts, numerous acts however impact on EWP and thus practitioners should be aware of the following existing legislations:
  - a. South African Constitution
  - b. Public Service Regulations 1999
  - c. Basic Conditions of Employment Act
  - d. Labour Relations Act
  - e. Skills Development Act
  - f. Occupational Health and Safety Act
  - g. Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act
  - h. Domestic Violence Act
  - i. Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependency Amendment Act
  - j. Child Care Act
  - k. Debt Collectors Act of 1998
  - l. Medical Scheme Act

## **6. DEFINITION OF AN EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME(EWP) AND EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME(EAP):**

- i. A work-based programme 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 problems for employees impaired by personal concerns including; health, HIV/Aids, marital & family discord, financial, alcohol & drug related challenges, emotional stress or other personal concerns which may adversely affect employee's job performance and adversely impact their productivity.
- ii. The specific core activities of EAP include:  
Professional consultation and training in the identification and resolution of job performance issues related to personal concerns.
- iii. The purpose of an Employee Wellness Programme (EAP) is to improve the psychological health of all employees in the Department. It will help

employees 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 help them resolve their individual, marital, family and job performance problems. As a result, their productivity and attendance will improve.

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 the personal problems of their staff. We believe that this focus exemplifies the most current approaches to dealing with challenges that militate against productivity and wellness. To this end, a needs assessment was developed and administered and from its results, EWP has formulated this policy. EWP will help employees deal with a wide range of personal problems.

iv. The Core approach methods used in EAP are as follows:

- a. Consultation & training
- b. Problem identification
- c. Constructive confrontation
- d. Referral, diagnosis, treatment and assistance
- e. Consultation to work organization

### **6.1 Personality- challenged employee:**

- i. An employee whose behaviour in the workplace causes reduced productivity or performance deficiencies on the job and lower morale for self, co-workers or supervisors as a result of impairment resulting from the scope of problems referred to 6.1.1 above.

### **6.2 DEFINITIONS**

- **Chemical dependency** – psychological and/ physical dependency from alcohol and/or other drugs
- **Client** – individual/ group/family/ member utilizing the Employee Assistance Programme due to personal and/ or work related problems
- **Consultation** – process of interaction with a professional in order to verify or confirm specific information
- **Counseling** – therapeutic intervention by a trained professional, i.e. Social Worker, Psychologist or Psychiatrist
- **Critical incident** – incident causing a crisis to the individual or family

- **EWP** – Employee Wellness Programme
- **EAP** – Employee Assistance Programme
- **EAPA** – Employee Assistance Professionals Association
- **EAPA S.A Board** – Duly elected Board of the South African 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 and their dependants
- **External Resource** – any acknowledged resource in the community, providing services
- **Intervention** – therapeutic and professional guidance to any employee in order to overcome his/her 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 create a professional support group and to promote EAP
- **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 his/her feelings and guiding him/her through a process of recovery

- **User** – any person/company making use of services and facilities according to a contract
- **Well-being** – a positive state of physical and emotional wellness
- **Wellness** – an employee in good shape, resulting in a high level of productivity.

## 7. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The EWP is committed to assisting employees and their 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.
- The EWP acknowledges that personal problems as well as work problems can have a serious effect on both the employee's job performance and safety in the workplace.
- EWP will assist in the early identification, counselling and a referral to assist employees and their families/dependants who are experiencing problems.
- EWP counselling is offered by qualified and professional staff
- EWP services are voluntary
- EWP services are confidential
- 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 service provider.

## 8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHOS

- The EWP Manager and staff have the moral commitment and the legal duty to retain as confidential all information regarding individual employees and their dependants in the course of providing employee wellness services. Confidentiality is critical to the success of EWP. The EWP Manager and staff will protect the identity of the employees who use the services and assure them that they could be trusted with their most private concerns.
- All communication between an employee and an EAP Manager and staff is privileged and carefully protected.
- 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 Service Professions.
- It is understood that the employee's job security will not be undermined by using the programme.

- 8.1 However, within the law the following limitations to the individual's right to confidentiality will apply:
- a. Sec 36 of the Constitution-Limitation of rights of clause
  - b. Where child abuse and /or sexual abuse are suspected, in the Prevention of Family Violence Act 133 of 1993
  - c. If an employee at work is imminently suicidal, or if an individual is perceived to be dangerous to others. The Sec 8 of the Occupational Health and Safety, Act no 85 of 1993 justifies this breach of confidentiality.
  - d. If an employee at work needs psychiatric or medical attention.
  - e. If a court or government agency compels disclosure.
  - f. In the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997, Sections 17& 90 in respect of night work where an employee must undergo medical examinations for health and Safety hazards.

## **9. PROCEDURES**

### **9.1 TYPES OF REFERRALS**

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

It is initiated by an employee when they recognize a problem themselves and can seek help through EAP out of her/his own accord. It is where the employee has personal problems which they want to discuss in a private and confidential setting.

#### **b. Informal Referral/ Family Referral**

An employee seeks help at the suggestion from a colleague, family member or friend. In instances where supervisors assist staff 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 concern of the employee concerned.

#### **c. Supervisory Referral:**

Supervisors have a responsibility to monitor and manage the work performance of their staff. 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:

- the employee has kept the appointment
- the employee accepted or rejected the offer
- the employee will or will not need time away from work
- whether the employee is making progress

## **10. WHO MAY ACCESS THE EWP SERVICES**

- i. All bona fide employees of the Department
- ii. Immediate family and dependants of the above
- iii. Employees who voluntarily seek counselling for work related concerns
- iv. Managers with concerns about work related challenges facing them or their subordinate

## **11. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Role/Responsibilities/Duties</b>
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 programme</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>

Person Responsible	Role/Responsibilities/Duties
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To provide professional, efficient and quality services</li> <li>▪ To ensure implementation of the EWP and policy</li> <li>▪ To refer clients to an outside service provider if the service is not available in-house</li> <li>▪ Coordinating all EWP activities</li> </ul>
EWP Committees(OHS,HIV/AIDS &EAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To assist with implementation of the EWP</li> <li>▪ To provide inputs into the EWP</li> </ul>
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To comply with the recommendations &amp; treatment plan provided</li> <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 workplace</li> <li>▪ To ensure that any confidential disclosure by a fellow employee remains confidential unless they give you written consent to disclose the information</li> </ul>

## 12. EWP Workplace Programmes:

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

### 12.1 Counselling

- i. The purpose of the Counselling in the EWP is to prevent, identify and treat personal problems that adversely affect job performance.



- ii. Follow-ups are an integral part of the counselling process. It is 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:
- ✓ Support the gains made by the client during counselling
  - ✓ 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.

## **12.2 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 KAPB study will run at identified intervals to assess staff's knowledge, attitude, practice and behaviours regarding HIV and 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.

## **12.3 Management Counselling**

- i. EAP provides support and advice to managers on job related issues of employees. This entails consultation with managers. EAP gives advice and support about EAP Policy.

## **12.4 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 our disposal.

### **b. Supervisory Training**

To have supervisors regard EAP as a resource available to help the supervisor 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. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (See Departmental OHS policy)**

### **14. REFFERALS TO OTHER SPECIALISTS**

Employees might be required to be referred to a more appropriate professional service. Employees with serious alcohol or drug problems, psychiatric disorders, or those in need of medical, legal, or financial services are potential referrals. The EWP Practitioner will provide supportive counselling until the employee participates in a treatment programme. Most referrals to other professionals and long term care programmes can result in costs not covered by this programme and then the employee becomes liable for the costs.

### **15. DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

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

### **16. 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 should monitor the attendance levels at training programmes. HR Practitioners should monitor productivity indicators as well as conduct risk assessment and review HR policies and processes to take account of EWP.

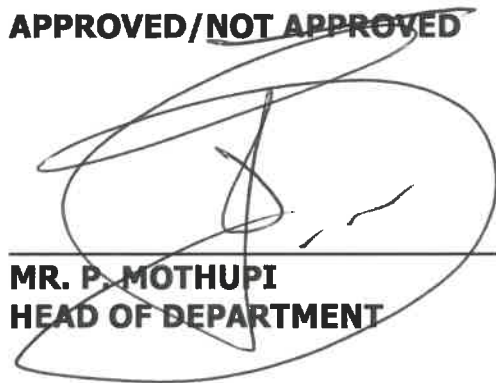
### **17. POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis when the need arise.

## 18. EWP POLICY DISCLAIMER:

The use of EWP does not negate the employee or his/her supervisor the responsibility of adhering to policies and procedures of the Department. Normal conditions of employment will apply for all those participating in EWP. EWP will not necessarily prevent disciplinary action for serious offences or continued unsatisfactory work performance. It is expected that an employee will make every effort to successfully complete counselling within reasonable time period and that the work performance will improve.

**APPROVED/NOT APPROVED**



**MR. P. MOTHUPI**  
**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**



**DATE**