

OVERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICY 2015



Council Resolution No	: M.260
Date	: 27.07.2015
Municipal Manager	: [Signature]
Executive Mayor	: [Signature]
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1. Purpose of the policy

To provide a support service to enable management to build the productive capacity of each individual in the organisation and to prevent (or attempt to prevent) the impact of political, social and economic problems on the individual, organisation and the community.

2. Rational for an EAP

2.1 Productivity

The personal problems of our employees have a dramatic impact on their job performance and productivity.

Personal difficulties, such as work-related stress, marital or family problems, or alcohol and drug addiction, can affect almost anyone. Sometimes, such problems can impair an employee's performance at work, leading to lower productivity, strained relations with co-workers and frequent absences or accidents.

An EAP will help employees sort out the difficulties that may be causing them trouble in the workplace. They will be able to get registered psychological counselling, which will include traditional healers, to help them resolve their problems. The short-term therapy programme focuses on clarifying the problem, implementing solutions and support monitoring progress.

The result is a healthier, more productive employee with improved relations at home and at work.

2.2 Healthy Human Capital

Personal problems do become **personnel** (HR services) problems. This investment in corporate wellness is likely to be the most significant factor that will influence the quality of work, productivity, attendance and retention of our staff. By addressing the personal needs of employees, we can create a healthier corporate environment. An EAP will help both our employees and ODM reach their potential.

Specific problems employees may encounter:

- HIV/AIDS
- Stress
- Marital and Family Problems
- Addiction
- Separation, Divorce, Custody
- Personal Adjustment Problems
- Severe Psychological Disorders
- Deaths in Family
- Sexual Harassment or Abuse
- Gambling
- Rape
- Hijacking
- Trauma
- Relationship problems
- Problems relating to diversity

2.3 Psychological Health Care

Although Medical Aid Plans provide excellent physical health care through doctors and hospitals, some of our employees are not fortunate enough to have such excellent health care for a physical accident or sickness.

If employees therefore face social, emotional, interpersonal or psychological problems, the traditional health care delivery system is not structured to help with every aspect. It is difficult to find a qualified professional and the accessibility and cost prevent employees from getting the help they need.

The health and well-being of our employees is important to Overberg District Municipality) ODM service delivery ethos. This explains how an EAP (Employee Assistance Policy) will satisfy the needs of our employees while helping meet our IDP objectives.

3. Principles of EAP

- 3.1 The Management of ODM believe that the success of the EAP depends on the degree to which Management, employee organizations and employees support the implementation and maintaining the following EAP principles:
- 3.2 The neutrality of the EAP will be respected and as such will not come between Management and employee organizations;
- 3.3 Accessibility to the EAP structure will continually be made possible for all employees and their dependents;
- 3.4 All employees, in terms of the policy directives, will be treated equally;
- 3.5 Participation in the EAP will be voluntary, but on the understanding that disciplinary action may arise as a result of poor productivity / poor performance and refusal of EAP assistance;
- 3.6 All employees who are admitted to the EAP will be treated with dignity and respect and will receive the same consideration as employees with health problems or handicaps.
- 3.7 Participation in the EAP will be treated as confidential;
- 3.8 Participation in the EAP will not threaten an employee's job security or chances of promotion because such decisions are made purely on the grounds of work performance; and
- 3.9 The implementation of the EAP, as set out in detailed written guidelines, will not clash with existing administrative procedures and contractual agreements. All employees and Management are encouraged to read the EAP policy in conjunction with the following policies as they supplement each other:
 - 3.9.1 AIDS Policy
 - 3.9.2 Sexual harassment
 - 3.9.3 Alcohol and Substance Abuse

4. Goals of EAP

- 4.1 Provide support and understanding.
- 4.2 Help identify problems and clarify issues.
- 4.3 Train employees to develop coping skills.
- 4.4 Educate employees in self-management techniques.
- 4.5 Encourage employees to accept personal responsibility.
- 4.6 Refer to the proper community resources when the employee requires more intensive, long term or specialized services.

5. Patterns of Job performance or conduct deterioration

- 5.1 There are a number of indicators that under the proper circumstances, point to deteriorating work performance and poor conduct. In the case of a troubled official, a pattern of continued job performance deterioration or conduct should begin to appear. These patterns are as follows:

- 5.1.1 Absenteeism / frequent sick leave / late coming
- 5.1.2 High Accident Rate
- 5.1.3 Difficulty in concentration
- 5.1.4 Confusion
- 5.1.5 Problem with job rotation
- 5.1.6 Spasmodic work performance- alternate periods of very high and very low productivity
- 5.1.7 Physical appearance deterioration or behavioural changes
- 5.1.8 Frequent mood swings
- 5.1.9 Generally lowered job efficiency
- 5.1.10 Friction in official relationships
- 5.1.11 Work quality or quantity deterioration

6. Role of Supervisor / Line management

- 6.1 When work related problems have been eliminated, the supervisor may accept that the employee's performance is being affected by personal factors.
- 6.2 The supervisor's task is two- fold, namely:
 - 6.2.1 To inform employees about the availability of the EAP, before social problems hamper their functioning;
 - 6.2.2 To refer employees to EAP when necessary, and to motivate officials for self-referral.
- 6.3 Early identification of employee's problems and early referral of such employees to the EAP is essential for success.

7. Practical implementation of EAP

7.1 Counselling

Employees that have been referred or reports voluntary to the EAP Practitioner, Human Resource Service will receive counselling from the EAP practitioner.

7.2 Referrals to Other Specialists

- 7.1.1 On recommendation by the EAP Practitioner, an employee may be referred to a specialist for example a psychologist, psychiatrist or traditional healer. This is necessary for appropriate diagnosis, treatment and assistance and will include follow up services for those employees who utilise the services and return to work.
- 7.1.2 If the employee is not a member of a medical fund, or his/her medical cover is depleted or the scheme does not cover these referrals, Council will be approached to pay for this service.

7.3 Wellness Programs

The wellness programme promotes the employee's health by encouraging them to make lifestyle changes that reduce the risk of illness and injuries. Efforts should focus on controlling blood pressure, weight, nutrition or quitting smoking. A healthy employee is likely to use fewer sick leave. ODM will receive direct benefits from having healthier employees. Programmes of this nature will be conducted by the Occupational Health Section and EAP Practitioner.

7.4 Referral to an Institution for rehabilitation

- 7.4.1 If the EAP Practitioner is of the opinion that an employee that has entered the EAP needs specialised treatment, he/she will be referred by the EAP Practitioner to an appropriate rehabilitation centre. Sick leave will be arranged, and if exhausted, unpaid leave will be approved.
- 7.4.2 The costs for this treatment will be covered by the employee's medical fund. If the employee is not a member of a medical fund, or his/her medical cover is depleted, or the scheme does not cover a specific referral, Council will pay for this service. If payment is done by Council, it will only be for one referral, period of one year.
- 7.4.3 Transport will be provided to the centre of rehabilitation and back. If the treatment period exceeds 3 weeks, Council will arrange transport for one week-end visit home for the official if written permission for leave is granted by the institution.

8. Confidentiality of records and information

- 8.1 All information about any matter regarding the official's problem, as a result of participation in the EA programme, shall apart from the officials working with the official, not be disclosed to anyone without the written consent of the official. The cornerstone to a successful programme is **confidentiality**. The official must be confident that assistance will be provided without fellow officials and peers knowing about the problem or the referral. In this regard, a supervisor who knows an employee is using a programme should not discuss the matter with others.
- 8.2 In the case of a formal management referral, the official must sign a written waiver giving permission for the EAP practitioner/Social Worker to report the official's progress, attendance and prognosis to the designated supervisor. Reports are not to be disclosed to anyone other than those individuals connected directly with the

disciplinary process.

8.3 Officials are assured that participation in the Employee Assistance Programme will not, under any circumstances be held against them.

8.4 As stated above, all client related information is confidential and only in the following **exceptional** cases will information be released:

8.4.1 In compliance with a court order, a subpoena or

8.4.2 With written permission and consent from the client.

8.4.3 Such disclosures, may on rare occasions be required by law and professional obligation e.g. to report on physical / sexual child abuse and child neglect.

8.4.4 Where there is sufficient evidence to raise serious concerns about the physical well-being and safety of the client or about others who may be threatened by the client, shall steps be taken to consult with the Head of Department and inform the appropriate third parties without prior consent.

9. **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy shall come into effect on the first date of the next month after the date Council adopt the policy and shall remain in full force and effect until it is reviewed, revoked or amended by Council.

10. **ROLES:**

All Councillors
All Employees

11. **OTHER POLICIES/LEGISLATION**

Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act No 75 of 1997) [BCEA]; and
Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995) [LRA]
Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure (Collective Agreement)

EXTRACT FROM THE COUNCIL MINUTES HELD ON 27 JULY 2015

Item M260. 27.07.2015

**HR (HUMAN RESOURCES) POLICIES (REVIEW)
(Ref.:9/1/B)**

J C P Tesselaar: Director Management Services/CFO

PURPOSE

To seek Council approval for the proposed review of HR policies.

BACKGROUND

Municipalities are required to review HR policies. All proposed policies tabled and discussed at Local Labour Forum.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Annual review of HR policies

ATTACHMENT

Proposed review of the following HR Policies:

- Overtime
- Smoking
- Employee Assistance Program Policy
- Cellular Phones and Data Card Policy
- Dress Code

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED: (Proposed by cllr I Sileku and seconded by cllr K Tiemie)

The amended reviewed HR Policies is approved with effect 1 August 2015.

- Overtime
- Smoking (Scrap paragraph 4.3)
- ▪ Employee Assistance Program Policy
- Cellular Phones and Data Card Policy
- Dress Code

Handwritten initials