



INGQUZA HILL LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

POLICY

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EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME POLICY

1. PREAMBLE

Ingquza Hill local Municipality recognizes that its employees are the most important and valuable resources and holds a view that these resources should be well cared for and well developed. This was done by introducing the Employee Assistance Programme. The Employee Assistance Programme is a short-term counselling service for employees with personal problems that affect their work performance. This programme started back in the 1940s as an early programme focusing on individuals whose alcohol abuse affected job performance but now the programme has grown and is more focused on individuals holistically.

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

2.1 Employer according to this policy is the head of the institution

2.2 Council a member of the local government council

2.3 Employee means a person employed within the institution in terms of the Public Service Act of 1994.

2.4 Immediate family for the purpose of this policy means nuclear family members e.g. spouse, children and parents of both partners of the employee.

2.5 Confidentiality means information strictly captured in the EAP office without anyone having access to it

2.6 EAP Officer someone trained and registered with the professional body who is responsible for the EAP programme.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act of 1996

3.2 Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997

3.3 Labour Relations Act 66 of 2003

3.4 Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1993

3.5 Employment Equity Act of 1998

3.6 Manual on Managing HIV & AIDS in the Workplace of 2002

3.7 Mental Health Care Act of 2002

3.8 Skills development act of 1998 (act no. 97 of 1998)

4. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

The policy is applicable to all Management, councillors and employees of Ingquza hill local municipality.

5. OBJECTIVE OF THE POLICY

To encourage and maintain the wellbeing and productivity of employees by providing confidential assistance or short term counselling to those who are experiencing personal or work related problems.

6. THE PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

6.1 To provide guidance and ensure consistency regarding the implementation of the Employee Assistance programme.

6.2 To offer counselling and support to all employees who encounter personal, emotional, psychological or behaviour concerns that detrimentally affect their work attendance and job performance.

6.3 To ensure that employee personal and work related problems do not escalate to the extent of voluntary termination of services by an employee.

6.4 To promote healthy working relationships and to improve productivity in the workplace.

7. PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

In terms of its commitment to Ingquza Hill Local Municipality's EAP initiative, council accept the basic principles which are generally internationally accepted in the support of successful EAP intervention

7.1 The accessibility principles is committing the employer to make the service available to all employees including the contractual employees employed by the council

The principle of confidentiality the EAP office of IHLM will ensure confidentiality of information given by the employee during the consultation and keeping the records safely. The municipality cannot dismiss or victimize the employee on the basis of information revealed during consultation.

7.2 Neutrality

The IHLM shall ensure that EAP office is not asked to testify or witnessing in any Labour disputes or Labour disciplinary hearing. EAP office must not be used as a disciplinary proceeding.

7.3 Voluntarism is the most common form used by employees in terms of seeking treatment so the IHLM at no stage shall force the employee to participate in EAP programme the employee must access it voluntary.

7.4 Constructive Coercion

After everything has been done that is training, implementation of the programme and interventions made the supervisor or manager can now persuade the troubled employee to seek help from EAP office.

7.5 Permanency

The IHLM shall ensure the survival and sustainability of the programme by providing visible support. The Corporate services department must ensure thorough advocacy through consultation with all department with in the municipality.

8. COUNCIL COMMITMENT

8.1 Council undertake through its Employee Assistance programme(EAP) to offer employee short term diagnostic, curative and referral services for all psychosocial problems experienced by its employees.

8.2 Council warrants that the assistance and services offered by employee assistance programme will be available to all employees irrespective of position.

8.3 Council encourage voluntary employee participation in this programme

8.4 Council recommends union participation and promoting of this programme through its involvement.

8.5 Council will oversee supervisory, managerial and union representative training in respect of objective, benefits or promotional opportunities.

8.6 Council accepts that alcoholism / drug dependence is a treatable condition

8.7 Participation in the employee Assistance Programme does not replace standard disciplinary procedure nor does it constitute a de facto exemption from such procedure but assists by providing professional assistance in the management of impaired job performance where personal or social factors are causal factor.

9. REFERRAL PROCEDURE

There are 3 type of referral procedure in which employees can use in accessing employee assistance office as follows

9.1 VOLUNTARY OR SELF REFERRAL

Through marketing and promotion of the EAP programme people are able to come to the office voluntary. Should the employee require proof of attendance for his / her employer proof will be given to him or her.

9.2 INFORMAL REFERRAL

Any person within the workplace excluding the direct supervisors who is of the opinion that an employee could benefit from the services offered by EAP office can effect a referral with an employee consent. This category refer to peers, union, colleagues or any staff member who by virtue of specific and specialist contact in the course of duty with the employee is of the opinion that referral to EAP will be beneficial to the employee.

9.3 FORMAL REFERRAL

Managers and supervisors who will become aware that an employee's work performance is substandard or impaired can through process of job action, encourage or suggest to the employee to consult the EAP office. The focus of the manager or supervisor is on the employee's work performance and not the personal problem which may be the cause of poor performance. A job action is validated by keeping a record of the employee's job performance which will also serve as the only basis where by the employee can be counseled by his or her management. If the employee at the time of counseling acknowledges experiencing a personal problem and accepts the suggestion that the EAP be consulted, an interview should be arranged. If the person does not wish to participate in the EAP his job performance should be continued to be monitored and the normal procedure followed.

12.1 Emotional / behavior problems may indicated by the following symptoms

12.2 Absenteeism, frequent unplanned leave, late coming and early departures. The employee will create various reasons for staying away from work

12.3 Frequent sick leave with no evidence of a latter from medical doctor

12.4 Work quality or quantity deterioration. Lowered productivity, carelessness, forgetfulness and absentmindedness

12.5 Lastly physical appearance deterioration.

13. ACCESSING EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

Employee assistance programme can be access through one of the following

13.1. Face to face counselling

13.2. Telephonic counselling

13.3. Completion of formal referral form

14. TYPE OF SERVICES THAT EMPLOYEE ASISTANCE PROGRAMME OFFERS

Employee assistance programme services include assessment, counselling, referral (if indicated) and follow-up. The EAP initial appointment will be as soon as reasonably possible after a request is made. EAP services include but are not limited to counseling in these areas.

14.1 PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

- Alcohol dependency
- Behavior problems
- Impaired relationships
- Financial difficulties
- Legal problems
- Communication problems

14.2 MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

- Anxiety problems
- Depression
- Suicide tendencies
- Dealing with HIV / AIDS and other terminal illnesses
- Trauma

14.3 WORK RELATED PROBLEMS

- Adjustment problems
- Harassment
- Ill-health retirement
- Retrenchment
- Work relations
- Work stress.

15. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME TREATMENT PROCESSES

A professional assessment of the employee's problem is done by the EAP practitioner. If necessary, additional input may be sought from the occupational health and safety service or human resources unit. If the employee does not agree with the assessment or feels that she / he does not wish to participate in the treatment she / he is referred back to the referral person by means of a feedback report from EAP. Depending on the nature and complexity of the problem the employee may also be referred to specific outside stake holder for assistance. If services provided by the EAP result as positive outcome, services will be terminated and referral person (where applicable) informed accordingly. Should the employee not co-operate with the services offered by EAP or should the treatment not result in a positive outcome the employee will be referred back to referral person when applicable. In such cases job performance must continue to be monitored and normal disciplinary procedure followed.

16. DEFOLTING IN TREATMENT

In the event in which the employee default in treatment programme voluntary or due to poor participation and motivation, then any payment paid by the municipality on behalf of the employee shall be recovered from the employee. Should an employee who has successfully completed the treatment and suffer a relapse, then a full report must be submitted to the delegated authority by EAP professional recommending further action.

17. PAYMENT OF THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME SERVICES

17.1 IHLM shall pay for services rendered by external services providers in line with national rates as per prescribed by professional bodies.

17.2 Payment shall only be made for number of sessions conducted and invoices shall be accompanied by attendance register for each EAP services provided

17.3 In cases of substance and alcohol abuse the municipality will only pay for the initial treatment. Should the employee relapses cost of further treatment will be done by the employee.

17.4 If the member of the employee's family is associated with the employee's personal or social problem, the family member may access EAP services, provided there are no additional cost to the Municipality for further referral

17.5 Counselling costs will be limited to six session. Medication prescribed as part of treatment will be paid for by the organization, subjected to the above mentioned provisions. Employee requiring anti-retroviral treatment will be formally referred to health by EAP professional. This is to ensure the municipality resources are not duplicated

18. MORNITORING AND EVALUATION OF EAP PROGRAMME

The EAP shall be continuously monitored. It shall be evaluated once in three years by the EAP practitioners and the management.

19. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME EDUCATION

Council recognizes that EAP education is an important component of successful EAP intervention. The education and orientation of key persons who will act as referral agents to the nature and function of the EAP is paramount to ultimate effectiveness of the programme. The correct identification of the troubled employee and steps that have to be taken to encourage the employee to seek professional help will be the primary focus of this education, the EAP shall be responsible for ongoing preventive and educative mental health education programs.


J. P. Mdingi
The Mayor

01/08/2017

Date