

# **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**

### **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – SHEENAGH REES**

#### **Matter for Information**

**Wards Affected: All wards.**

#### **Employee Assistance Programme**

##### **1. Purpose of Report:**

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the introduction of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) accessible to all employees across the Council.

##### **2. Executive Summary:**

Having prompt access to mental health and other support services is an invaluable wellbeing measure for employees, and an integral component towards embedding a healthy and safe working culture.

Life events most often occur outside the working hours of Occupational Health and GP services and so for employees to be able to access timely support would help to reduce matters reaching a crisis point for that individual.

Accessing an EAP directly provides discretion and confidentiality to an individual who may not wish to share personal matters with their line manager or work colleagues.

##### **3. What is an Employee Assistance Programme (AEP)**

EAPs are designed to assist employees with personal, or work-related, concerns and matters that may impact their job performance or well-being, such as difficulties with mental health. The service operates as a separate

body to the employer, offering free and confidential assessments, short-term counselling, referrals and follow-up services for employees.

Their primary aim is to help guide employees through situations in a way that provides the individual with the necessary support to avoid a negative impact on their work life and health.

An EAP service is widely regarded as one of the most popular core employee benefits that organisations can provide.

Research has shown that organisations that use EAPs realise the following benefits: -

- a decrease in absence levels
- a decrease in staff turnover
- overall increase in productivity
- identification of areas that are affecting employee performance, such as personal matters or bullying.
- an increase in employee engagement
- improved recruitment and retention

#### 4. Vivup Employee Assistance Programme

The [Vivup](#) Employee Assistance Programme is part of the Welsh Government Commercial Delivery Framework. It provides a comprehensive set of services designed to help employers provide a balanced and healthy working environment.

The Vivup offer includes: -

- Telephone counselling (6 x 60-minute sessions)
- Face to Face and Virtual Counselling Support enabling employees to talk confidentially with a sympathetic professional (6 x 60-minute sessions)
- **Your Care** – a leading health management platform that delivers effective, evidence-based interventions to help people live happier, healthier lives.
- A personalised portal offering further help and information to enable employees to find everything in one place.
- 24/7 access to telephone support with qualified counsellors and support specialists to discuss any emotional, personal or work-related issue in confidence.

- Triage and assessment at initial phone call enabling the right support to be offered for the issue at hand.
- Self-help Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) workbooks offering advice and guidance on a number of topics including anxiety, bereavement, depression and more.
- Domestic Abuse App and resources offered via Bright Sky for anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or concerned about someone they know.
- A wide range of online resources including podcasts, blogs, debt advice and more.

For employers they provide: -

- Full and dedicated EAP marketing resources both printed and digital, including regular health and wellbeing articles and webinars.
- A dedicated Account Manager
- Management Information reports each quarter (or monthly if required) on EAP usage.
- An Implementation Team to help launch the EAP.

## **5. Financial Impacts:**

The cost of providing an EAP to all Council employees is shown below: -

£2.01 per employees x 6,500 employees = £13,065 per annum

The above price is the maximum amount the Council would pay as Vivup is part of the Welsh Government Commercial Services Framework Agreement, and as such, when other organisations join Vivup's Employee Assistance Programme through the Framework, the price reduces based on the total number of employees utilising the Framework.

Funding for the first year of operation is provided from the Organisational Development Reserve. This will enable us to monitor and review the take up of the EAP platform. If, as a result of this monitoring, there is evidence that the EAP is a valued employee benefit supporting well-being, recruitment and retention, a business case will be developed to fund on a more permanent basis.

## **6. Integrated impact assessment:**

A full impact is not required as this report is for information only.

**7. Valleys Communities Impacts:**

No Impacts.

**8. Workforce Impacts:**

By introducing an EAP for all of our employees the Council is providing a service to help guide employees through situations in a way that provides the individual with the necessary support and guidance in order to avoid a negative impact on their work life and health. This in turn can improve recruitment and retention across the Council as well as reduce sickness absence levels.

**9. Legal Impacts:**

No impact.

**10. Risk Management Impacts:**

No impact.

**11. Crime and Disorder Impacts**

No impact.

**12. Counter Terrorism Impacts**

No impact

**13. Consultation:**

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item. However, the trade unions have been informed of our implementation of an EAP and fully support the initiative.

**14. Recommendations:**

It is **RECOMMENDED** that this report is NOTED.

**15. Appendices:**

None.

**16. List of background papers:**

None.

**17. Officer Contact**

Sheenagh Rees, Head of People & Organisational Development, Email: [s.rees5@npt.gov.uk](mailto:s.rees5@npt.gov.uk) or tel. 01639 763315.

Diane Hopkins, Principal HR Manager, email [d.b.hopkins@npt.gov.uk](mailto:d.b.hopkins@npt.gov.uk) or Tel 01639 763012.