

Agenda Item No: 10 **Report No:** 112/14
Report Title: Employee Assistance Provider Report – Employee Wellbeing
Report To: Employment Committee **Date:** 21 July 2014
Cabinet Member:
Ward(s) Affected: All
Report By: Jill Yeates
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Purpose of Report:

To report the statistics on use of, and access to, the employee assistance provider for counselling, and website information, between 5 May 2013 and 4 May 2014, and the Forum's comments on them.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 1 To note the report.
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Reasons for Recommendations

- 1 Our employee assistance provider has provided assistance to LDC since 5 October 2012. The services are available to full time and part time employees at all times. Staff are offered face to face or telephone counselling, and access to a website with wellbeing information. It is a self-referral service, completely confidential, and can access telephone or face to face counselling for work-based or other problems.
- 2 **Information**
 - 2.1 During the period from 5 May 2013 to 4 May 2014, 15 cases accessed the counselling services and two people accessed the website. One person can access counselling for different reasons, so this doesn't mean necessarily that 15 separate people used the counselling service. This is a utilisation rate of 3.26% for counselling.
 - 2.2 Because it is a confidential service, we do not get detailed reports on the use. However, we do have some feedback from employees, most of

which is positive, but some of which is negative. The negative feedback seems to be the result of people being told to seek help elsewhere because the clinical manager's decision is that the case is not appropriate for face to face or telephone counselling. The Council is satisfied that these decisions are made in the best interests of the individual. For example, if someone is suicidal, a more urgent and ongoing intervention is needed.

- 2.3** Of the 15 cases, one (telephone) accessed the service between May and July, one (telephone) between August and October, two telephone and three face-to-face between November and January and five telephone and three face-to-face between February and April.
- 2.4** Five of the cases were about work stress and changes in work role. Two about redundancy (actual or threatened) and one about job dissatisfaction.
- 2.5** Seven cases were for anxiety, three for 'psychological' reasons and one for depression.
- 2.6** Four were about family, three about life events, and three about couples which suggests that at least seven – and possibly ten – were about issues outside work. One was also about prescribed medication abuse, which may or may not be linked to work.

We are told how many were at work for their first session, and how many were at work for their last session. ALL cases were at work during their first session AND their last session, which suggests that those accessing counselling remained at work.

- 2.7** One of those accessing the website was the Health and Safety Officer to see what was available, and to take some of the information for LDC News. The other person looked at the 'under pressure' factsheet.
- 2.8** For reasons of confidentiality, no demographic information is shown, as there have been fewer than five cases in at least one of the reporting periods.

3 Financial Appraisal

If one member of staff were to be able to stay at work by using the counselling service instead of being absent due to stress, the council saves that salary. Typically people off with stress are off for one to four weeks; multiplied by 14 that could be a year's salary. This more than pays for the service, and staff are also reassured that the council is an employer who cares enough to provide this service.

4 Legal Implications

This report has not been offered to the Legal Services Department for comment as this is an 'information-only' report with no key decisions attached.

5 Sustainability Implications

I have not completed the Sustainability Implications Questionnaire as this Report is exempt from the requirement because it is a progress report/budget monitoring report/development control report.

6 Risk Management Implications

Risk Management implications are not required as this is an 'information-only' report with no key decisions attached. Equality Screening

7 Equality Screening

Equality analysis is not required as this is an 'information-only' report with no key decisions attached.

8 Background Papers

None

9 Appendices

None