

**LEKWA-TEEMANE LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY
“NW396”**



**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE POLICY
REVIEWED AND ADOPTED BY COUNCIL
25 NOVEMBER 2011
RESOLUTION NO. 170/2011**

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1. DEFINITIONS

- [a] **Alcoholism** means the chronic abuse of alcohol, where the employee is unable to control the condition by his/her own ability to resist such abuse.
- [b] **Referral** is any means by which an employee is encouraged to seek professional intervention and includes self-referral and informal referral.
- [c] **Confidentiality** means obligation to refrain from willingly disclosing information that has been received in confidence and not to situations in which a court or statute compels a person to disclose information.
- [d] **Significant Others** means boy friends, sexual partners or people in a relationship with the employee who might have a direct influence on the condition of the employee.
- [e] **Chronic Illness** means illness that is of an ongoing nature and where there is no prognosis for a complete cure.
- [f] **Sexual Harassment** means unwanted sexual attention or any unwanted pressure involving one's sexuality and/or unwanted, unsolicited and unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature which substantially interferes with an employee's work performance, and/or has a detrimental effect on the terms and conditions of employment, and/or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
- [g] **Family Violence** means any physical or psychological abuse that occurs within the family environment.
- [h] **Inadequacy** means that the normal employee benefits as provided for in the HR Policies and Procedure falls short of the requirements to meet the employee's needs.

2. PREAMBLE

Lewa-Teeman Local Municipality (LTLM) is committed to the health and well being of its employees and recognizes that a variety of personal problems can disrupt their personal and work lives. Serious personal or family problems are usually amenable to treatment and rehabilitation. Personal problems like alcoholism, drugs, gambling stress, emotional distress have devastating effects on the health and life of a person. Provision of professional advice to employees will go a long way towards improving the well being of employees in the work place. LTLM further recognizes that EAP is a tertiary form of support to employees. It will be provided once a strong need has been established and when other HR intervention remedies fall short of producing the desired results.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

- 3.1. To offer confidential assistance to employees who have the potential to be adversely affected by personal problems and work related problems.
- 3.2. To lay a foundation for sustainable, participatory and penetrating Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) and Employee Wellness Programmes (EWP).
- 3.3. To Provide a customized, accurate and cost-effective EAP and EWP toolkit.
- 3.4. To improve employee morale and stimulate better performance.
- 3.5. To increase employer care and employee loyalty to the employer.
- 3.6. To provide a general framework for management of EAP and EWP in the Municipality

4 BASIC PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 Early intervention is desirable in dealing with any personal, family or work-related problems.
- 4.2 Management and Unions shall work co-operatively through the Employee Assistance Programme in order to help employees deal with personal problems.
- 4.3 In the event of informal referrals, the employer's concern with employee problems shall be limited to efforts to address deteriorating work performance.

- 4.4 The supervisor or manager shall be responsible for identifying the problem with the employee when job performance is below standard.
- 4.5 The supervisor shall not be responsible for diagnosing the nature of a personal problem and the Employee Assistance Programme shall not be used to interfere with an employee's private and social life.
- 4.6 The Employee Assistance Programme shall apply equally to all employees and the categories of persons mentioned in section 5.
- 4.7 The Employee Assistance Programme is designed to encourage employees to voluntarily seek help (self-referral) for personal problems.
- 4.8 The Employee Assistance Programme shall be strictly voluntary and not mandatory.
- 4.9 Confidentiality shall be the cornerstone of the Employee Assistance Programme.
- 4.10 Employee access to the programme shall be unfettered and not be conditional on a consent to release information to management.
- 4.11 Information shall not be released to anyone without the employee's written consent.
- 4.12 Information pertaining to an employee shall be legally confidential.
- 4.13 An employee's current job and opportunity for promotion or advancement shall not be jeopardized by using the services of the Employee Assistance Programme.
- 4.14 The Employee Assistance Programme shall constitute an additional form of assistance to employees upon realization of disadvantaging inadequacy of the available HR remedies or benefits.
- 4.15 The Employee Assistance Programme shall not alter management's responsibility to maintain discipline or the employer's right to take disciplinary measures within the framework of the disciplinary procedure and code, nor shall it alter the union's prerogatives to seek any desirable remedies in terms of the law.
- 4.16 The Employee Assistance Programme is not designed to assist in "conflict resolution" between employees and/or managers.

4.17 The Employee Assistance Programme may be used to help the employee deal with personal consequences of conflicts which may be work-related.

5. ELIGIBILITY TO USE THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

The following categories of people shall be eligible to participate in the programme

5.1 Employees

5.2 Casuals or temporary employees with over six months of accumulated service;

5.3 Retirees;

5.4 Councillors

5.5 Any of the above who are on long-term disability;

5.6 Other groups might be added, due to mobility of departments, with approval of the EAP committee.

5.7 To be included in the category of family members for the purpose of inclusion in the Employee Assistance Programme are the following:

- ❖ Spouses (including common law spouse and significant others);
- ❖ Dependent children, as defined under the benefits plan.

6. AREAS OF ASSISTANCE

The Employee Assistance Programme shall provide assistance in a broad range of personal concerns, including, but not limited to:

6.1. Marital, family and relationship problems;

6.2. Substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, prescription medication) and other addictive behaviour such as gambling;

6.3. HIV / AIDS Counselling and treatment

6.4. Workplace Violence and Trauma Counselling and after care

6.5. Workplace discrimination or victimization, for example, discrimination against people with disabilities or from designated groups;

- 6.6. Personal debt and financial management problems;
- 6.7. Stress (family, social, job);
- 6.8. Family violence;
- 6.9. Psychological problems;
- 6.10. Sexual harassment;
- 6.11. Injury
- 6.12. Chronic illness
- 6.13. Any other area of personal concern approved by the EAP advisory committee.

7. ELIGIBILITY FOR THE PROGRAMME

- 7.1 The programme is available to all categories of people as outlined in section 5.
- 7.2 Eligibility is subject to having anyone of the personal, social, family or work-related problems cited in section 6.

8. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE AND WELLNESS PROGRAMME OPERATION

- 8.1 The E A P and EWP's shall operate by making an intake of concerns with the use of internal capacity and resources on the basis of voluntary participation.
- 8.2 Referrals will be made to specialized agencies and services in the community to provide ongoing appropriate and required assistance to employees.
- 8.3 Whenever possible, public community services shall be used initially.
- 8.4 Participation in the Employee Assistance Programme shall not be used as an alternative to discipline nor shall it be used by management as a disciplinary measure
- 8.5 All referrals shall be based on voluntary participation in the Employee Assistance Programme.

8.8 Any employee shall be free to consult, on a confidential basis, with the Employee Assistance Programme Practitioner concerning access to the programme and general information.

8.9 There shall be no cost for employees to consult with the Employee Assistance Programme Practitioner.

8.10 If further counseling or any other assistance is necessary, the Employee Assistance Programme Practitioner will outline community and private services available.

8.11 Any costs associated with private or public services are the responsibility of the employee unless otherwise advised.

8.12 Employer funding for any service is not automatic, shall be based on the merits of each case as determined by the EAP advisory committee.

9 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

9.1 General Norms

9.1.1 Maintenance of acceptable job performance shall be a shared responsibility of concerned stakeholders.

9.1.2 Performance goals and targets shall be set by the manager/supervisor along with the employee and achievements measured against these goals.

9.1.3 The employee shall after thorough coaching by the manager, respond by accepting responsibility for maintaining satisfactory job performance.

9.1.4 Declining job performance shall be addressed from a perspective of monitoring performance standards

9.1.5 The Municipality shall use appropriate policy and procedures to set standards for measuring performance and application of both incentives and disincentives

9.1.6 The Municipality shall acknowledge exemplary performance by recognition of individuals and groups of employees for this type of performance in a special way.

9.2 Employee Rights and Responsibilities

- 9.2.1 Personal information concerning employee participation in the Employee Assistance Programme shall be maintained in a confidential manner.
- 9.2.2 No information related to an employee's participation in the programme shall be entered into the personnel file.
- 9.2.3 Access to employee's EAP information shall be limited to Employee Assistance Programme staff.
- 9.2.4 An employee may review his or her Employee Assistance Programme file at any reasonable time.
- 9.2.5 The Employee Assistance Programme file is destroyed after seven years following closure of the case, subject to compliance with the laws.
- 9.2.6. Participation in the Employee Assistance Programme shall not jeopardize an employee's job nor prejudice any opportunity for promotion or advancement or employment benefit.
- 9.2.7 Extended leave of absence may be granted in accordance with the leave policy and/or terms and conditions of employment and such conditions which may be recommended by the EAP Committee and approved by the Municipal Manager for recovery, professional assessment counselling and treatment.
- 9.2.8 It shall be the responsibility of the employee to maintain satisfactory job performance.
- 9.2.9 In the event that personal problems cause deterioration of work performance, the employee has a responsibility to obtain the necessary help to bring job performance up to an acceptable level.
- 9.2.10 The Employee Assistance Programme shall offer a means to obtain this help.

9.4 Union's Responsibilities

- 9.4.1 The Union shall be to keep abreast with the programme and its referral procedure.
- 9.4.2 The Union shall encourage members to use the Employee Assistance Programme, if appropriate.

9.4.5 The Union shall maintain a strict level of confidentiality in all EAP cases.

9.5 Employee Assistance Programme Practitioner's Responsibilities

The Practitioner shall be responsible for:

9.5.1 overseeing the Employee Assistance Programme to ensure effective and consistent application of the policy and procedures.

9.5.2 providing information sessions to management and Union personnel regarding the Employee Assistance Programme.

9.5.3 promoting the Employee Assistance Programme in the workplace.

9.5.4 developing and maintaining an accurate, current data bank on "helping" resources and services in the community including a brief description of services available and the cost, if any, of the service.

9.5.5 liaising with service providers to assure service standards are acceptable and meet the requirements of clients.

9.5.6 conducting screening and preliminary assessment for persons contacting the Employee Assistance Programme for assistance.

9.5.7 providing full information to employees regarding participation in the programme.

9.5.8 making referrals to a professional counselor or/and service agencies for detailed assistance, assessment and treatment as appropriate.

9.5.9 making follow-ups as may be desirable with the individual to assure assistance was beneficial.

9.5.10 assisting the employee on his or her return to the work environment as appropriate.

9.5.11 providing consultation to managers regarding the Employee Assistance Programme services.

9.5.12 organizing and/or facilitating, on an ongoing basis, educational programs for employees about the Employee Assistance Programme's services.

9.5.13 maintaining all information on employees participating in the Employee Assistance Programme in a confidential and secure manner.

9.5.14 providing feedback to management on areas where special attention or training is required.

9.5.15 Providing statistics of participation in the programme without identifying the personal details of participants.

9.6 Establishment and Responsibilities of the EAP advisory committee

9.6.1 There shall be an inter-departmental Employee Assistance Programme Advisory Committee composed of one staff member from each Department, Two members from both SAMWU, and IMATU, and one dedicated Councillor.

9.6.2 The committee shall review established policy to ensure agreement and understanding of procedures and practices.

9.6.3 develop and recommend changes in programme policy as necessary after receiving input from interested parties.

9.6.4 develop strategies in conjunction with the Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator to ensure that employees are aware of the Employee Assistance Programme.

9.6.5 oversee the evaluation of the programme.

9.6.6 shall prepare a report on the activities of the committee as deemed necessary or required.

10 ACCESS, REFERRAL AND OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE

10.1 Participation in the Employee Assistance Programme shall either be self initiated or employer initiated.

10.2 The decision to seek assistance through the Employee Assistance Programme shall always be voluntary.

10.3 When an offer of assistance is made by the employer, it shall not be mandatory for the employee to accept the offer.

10.4 The contact details of the designated Employee Assistance Programme Practitioner and Committee members may be obtained from the Director: Human Resources.

11. SELF INITIATED EAP PARTICIPATION

- 11.1 An employee who recognizes that a problem exists and seeks assistance shall call the Employee Assistance Programme practitioner directly.
- 11.2 The realization of the problem may have resulted from a process of self realization or from a family member, friend, co-worker or supervisor sharing concern for the employee and informally suggesting the use of the employee Assistance Programme.
- 11.3 The self referrals shall be treated with strict confidentiality.
- 11.4 The employee's supervisor shall not necessarily be informed of the nature of the problem unless the employee requests this to happen.
- 11.5 The employee shall be responsible for obtaining approval for any required time off associated with the use of the Employee Assistance Programme.

12 EMPLOYER INITIATED PARTICIPATION

- 12.1 The manager shall be responsible for addressing with the employee deteriorating work performance and providing guidance to help the employee improve work performance.
- 12.2 An employee shall accept responsibility for keeping job performance at a pre-established acceptable level.
- 12.3 If job performance does not improve or shows continuing deterioration, then the manager shall initiate a formal offer of assistance and it shall not be mandatory/obligatory for the employee to accept this offer.
- 12.4 Prior to initiating a formal offer of assistance, the supervisor /manager shall consult with the Employee Assistance Programme Prctitioner concerning the appropriateness of the offer.

13 INFORMAL OFFER OF ASSISTANCE

- 13.1 The supervisor/manager shall ensure that the employee receives an informal offer of assistance prior to initiating a formal offer of assistance.
- 13.2 Such offers shall be documented.
- 13.3 Certain workplace behaviour could result in an employer-initiated formal offer of assistance without there being previous informal offers.

14 FORMAL OFFER OF ASSISTANCE

14.1 The formal employer-initiated offer of assistance shall be in writing on the prescribed form ("Appendix 1").

14.2 The employee shall reserve the right to refuse the offer.

14.3 A formal offer of assistance shall be delivered confidentially to the employee, with a confidential copy to the Employee Assistance Programme practitioner and a copy retained in a confidential HR master personnel file.

15 REFERRAL BY THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME PRACTITIONER

15.1 Assessment

15.1.1 The employee shall be responsible for making contact with the Employee Assistance Programme Practitioner.

15.1.2 During the initial contact, the Employee Assistance Programme Practitioner shall explain the Employee Assistance Programme, including confidentiality of the programme and the exceptions, the employee's rights and responsibilities and full information about participation in the programme.

15.1.3 The Employee Assistance Programme Practitioner and the employee will conduct a preliminary assessment of the problem.

15.1.4 The Practitioner shall provide information and, if appropriate, encourage the employee to accept referral for counselling and treatment.

15.1.5 Upon completion of the preliminary assessment, the Practitioner and the employee shall discuss the options which appear to be most realistic and attainable for the employee in resolving the problem.

15.1.6 The employee shall choose the treatment service and a referral will be facilitated by the EAP Practitioner.

16 REFERRAL

16.1 The Employee Assistance Practitioner shall conduct a preliminary assessment of the problem with the employee.

16.2 The Employee Assistance Practitioner shall be knowledgeable about the appropriate services in the community and will assist the employee with making referral arrangements.

17 CO-ORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP

17.1 The Employee Assistance Practitioner shall maintain an informal but planned follow-up procedure.

17.2 The Employee Assistance Practitioner shall work with the employee to ensure appropriate services are received in a timely manner.

17.3 Contact with any service agency or the employer, shall only be at the request of the employee.

18 CONFIDENTIALITY

18.1 Maintenance of discipline and confidentiality shall be primary principles of participation in the Employee Assistance Programme.

18.2 The Employee Assistance Programme interaction shall be a matter of privacy.

18.3 An Employee Assistance Programme practitioner who is subpoenaed to surrender records or to testify in court shall not be in breach of his or her confidentiality obligations.

18.4 An Employee Assistance Programme practitioner shall not be in breach of confidentiality obligations by complying with the mandatory reporting provisions of the child abuse legislation or the obligation to warn the intended victims of violence.

18.5 The Employee Assistance Programme Staff shall maintain the minimum amount of information required to assist the employee.

18.6 Access to files for review by the employee shall be made at any reasonable time.

18.7 The Employee Assistance Programme Practitioner shall issue identity codes to participating employees for the purpose of enhancing confidentiality.

18.8 Notwithstanding clause No.11.8 Personal particulars may be required for legal identification purpose.

18.9 All persons employed within the Employee Assistance Programme shall be bound by conditions of strict confidentiality, and shall sign a document to this effect.

19 SUMMARY

19.1 The Employee Assistance Programme shall be for the benefit of eligible person.

19.2 Employees shall obtain help with personal problems which may be affecting their well being, family life or work performance.

19.3 The employer shall benefit from the implementation of the programme by boosting the morale and retaining employees with valuable skills and knowledge.

19.4 Early use of the programme shall contribute to the prevention of serious problems for the individual employee, family and employer.

20 FORMS

Appendix 1 Formal Offer of Assistance (Company Initiated)

Appendix 2 Formal Request for Assistance (Employee Initiated) 18

DEPARTMENT	CORPORATE SERVICES (HRM)
DATE OF APPROVAL	
RESOLUTION NUMBER	
SIGNED MAYOR	
SIGNED MUNICIPAL MANAGER	

Form 1 CONFIDENTIAL FORMAL OFFER OF ASSISTANCE

TO:

DATE:

On _____ we discussed your job performance and the opportunities available with the EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME.

If you decide to accept this offer, an appointment is scheduled for you at

_____ (time) on _____ (date).

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR

Date

Read and Understood

SIGNATURE OF EMPLOYEE

This is not a mandatory referral and the employee is not obligated to attend. A copy of this form is to be delivered to the Employee Assistance Practitioner who will maintain a separate, confidential file for each case.

Form 2
CONFIDENTIAL REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

TO: Employee Assistance Programme Coordinator

DATE:

I, _____ hereby request an interview with the Employee Assistance Programme Coordinator.

I acknowledge that the matter I wish to address falls within the scope of the Employee Assistance Programme. I further undertake to make the necessary arrangements directly with my supervisor for time-off from work to attend the interview.

SIGNATURE OF EMPLOYEE DEPARTMENT

DATE SUPERVISOR'S NAME

A copy of this form is to be delivered to the Employee Assistance Practitioner who will maintain a separate, confidential file for each case.