



Western Cape
Government

Education



People Manager's Handbook

Making your Employee Health and Wellness Programme work for you

ICAS TOLL-FREE NUMBER: 0800 111 011

The Employee Health & Wellness Programme is a completely confidential service provided to the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) by ICAS (Independent Counselling and Advisory Services). The aim of the service is to support the optimal performance of all employees through the provision of professionally managed psychological, social and health advice and counselling services.

As a people manager, you have a responsibility towards the wellbeing of your employees, to show that you value and care for them so that they in turn can be productive in the workplace. This responsibility means that you must not only become knowledgeable of, but pro-actively encourage the use of the Employee Health and Wellness Programme

This handbook outlines the **additional services** available to you as a People Manager, especially when you are faced with new or difficult people management issues, including psychosocial or health matters that could result in poor performance, absenteeism, incapacity or disciplinary problems.

We hope that you will benefit from an understanding of these services and the simple procedures that you should follow to access support for yourself and/or an employee.

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1. Introduction

The Western Cape Education Department has implemented the ICAS Employee Health and Wellness Programme to help employees and their families* address the challenges and problems experienced in modern life. The programme recognises that most problems can be successfully managed if:

- ❖ they are identified in their early stages;
- ❖ referrals are made to appropriate resources;
- ❖ preventative programmes are put in place; and
- ❖ those involved take the required actions.

This applies whether the problem is:

- ❖ physical, mental or emotional illness;
- ❖ financial, legal, marital or family distress;
- ❖ alcohol or drug abuse; and
- ❖ similar concerns.

The purpose of this guide is to provide people managers with information and clear advice on how to use the Employee Health & Wellness Programme (EHW) to support you in your management or supervisory role. The Western Cape Government has agreed that this is an appropriate function of the Employee Health & Wellness Programme because one of its key objectives is to support and facilitate the performance management of your employees.

Employees who have concerns that may affect their job performance and wellbeing are encouraged to voluntarily seek assistance on a confidential basis by contacting their EHW, which is provided as a free benefit to all WCED employees in line with the EHW Contract with ICAS.

If the job performance of employees deteriorates below required standards, and they are unable (or unwilling) to correct the situation on their own or with standard departmental assistance, this could indicate the existence of a problem outside the work environment as the root cause of the situation. These employees should be referred to the EHW for evaluation and assistance as soon as possible.

The EHW provides various counselling and support services that can be accessed telephonically or face-to-face in both work and within the household. The services include:

1. **Telephonic counselling:** Is provided telephonically 24 hours a day in all eleven official languages. This service is unlimited and is provided by qualified psychologists and social workers.

2. **Face-to-Face counselling:** Up to eight counselling sessions may be provided to assist employees and dependents to address more complex personal and work related issues. These sessions are arranged through the call centre and are provided nationally by a network of therapists.

Trauma Counselling: Group Trauma counselling sessions can be provided on site within 24 to 48 hours of any work related traumatic incident. Their aim is to normalise the event and provide coping tools and on-going support to those affected by it.

3. **Life Management:** The Life Management service provides employees with access to legal guidance and in-depth financial assistance. This includes debt management, garnishee reviews, legal guidance and advice, debt counselling, and financial planning. No labour related advice is provided.
4. **E-Care:** The ICAS e-Care service is available to employees with email access and provides them with health and medical information. The service encourages positive lifestyle change and is designed to meet the needs of each and every individual. The personalised service can be activated by profiling yourself once you have entered the eCare portal.

2. The Employee Health and Wellness Programme as Management Support

The EHW provides four additional managerial services to support managers in their role as managers. These are:

- ❖ Managerial Consultancy
- ❖ Absenteeism and Incapacity Guidance
- ❖ Informal Referrals
- ❖ Formal Referrals

2.1 Managerial Consultancy

Managerial Consultancy is a confidential way to get professional help with new or difficult people management issues. It offers managers a sounding board and a chance to discuss difficult people management problems.

Your EHW can help you to:

- ❖ Explore your **options** regarding people management;
- ❖ Consider the **alternatives and outcomes** of any course of action;
- ❖ Develop **contingency plans** and performance enhancement strategies;
- ❖ **Test** ideas;
- ❖ Consider how an employee may **react**.

The EHW is there to help you think through and plan how you should handle people management issues that are:

- ❖ Difficult to get right: e.g. warning about performance that needs to be delivered without demotivating the person.
- ❖ On the border of the work and personal domain: e.g. discussing someone's deteriorating work relationships, which could be related to, the stress of a marriage break-up.
- ❖ New to your experience: e.g. telling somebody that there will be a significant change in his or her role.

2.2 Absenteeism and Incapacity Consultancy

This service is provided telephonically by a team of Incapacity Management Consultants with qualifications in Occupational Therapy, Occupational Medicine and Psychology, as well as extensive experience in the management of workplace absenteeism and incapacity. The service provides an integrated absenteeism and incapacity consultancy function within the EHW Managerial Consultancy Service.

The service includes:

- ❖ Guidance regarding formal referrals and performance enhancement;
- ❖ Legislation and information regarding the employees' and employers' rights;
- ❖ Guidance regarding medical reviews and referrals; and
- ❖ Information regarding incapacity and the management thereof.

2.3 EHW as Performance Partner

Employees who have problems that could affect their job performance or wellbeing are encouraged to voluntarily seek confidential assistance from the EHW. This is the most common way that employees access the EHW service, either through self-initiated referral or through the encouragement of a colleague or family member.

However, it is also appropriate for a manager or supervisor to use the Employee Health and Wellness Programme as an effective resource to address wellbeing issues that interfere with performance, safety, absenteeism or conduct standards.

WHAT IS A MANAGERIAL REFERRAL?

There are two types of manager referrals:

1. **Informal referrals:** Where managers/supervisors motivate employees to use the Employee Health & Wellness Programme although performance, safety and conduct are not an issue.
2. **Formal referral:** Where there is an issue with the employee's job performance, conduct or safety and the efforts of the employee and manager are not achieving the desired result: i.e. addressing the problem and returning the employee to required performance levels. In such situations, the manager or supervisor should formally refer the employee to the said Programme as part of a performance management plan.

In both these situations the employee retains the ultimate right to decide whether or not to utilise the programme. **Referral is always voluntary.** If performance is not an issue, as in the case of an informal referral, no feedback is given to the employee's manager without the written consent of the employee.

If there is a work-related performance, safety, absenteeism or conduct issue and the referral is formal, the manager or supervisor will receive feedback from the programme that is limited to information about managing the situation. This includes the referral process, the attendance of sessions, and level of employee engagement during therapy.

2.3.1 Making an Informal Referral

An informal referral is often made when an employee has a personal or emotional issue that comes to the manager's attention. For you to get involved and provide support, which may:

- ❖ Be outside your skill base;
- ❖ Undermine your management boundaries; or
- ❖ Absorb too much of your time.

This service allows managers to encourage and empower employees to get appropriate professional support to resolve issues prior to deterioration in work performance. Informal referrals are often made to address issues such as personal stress, bereavement, relationship difficulties, HIV and AIDS, and financial problems.

When an issue comes to the manager's attention and an informal referral is warranted, the manager should not attempt to analyse or diagnose personal problems. The manager should rather:

- ❖ Ask the employee what support he or she currently has for the issue;
- ❖ Remind him or her of the programme service and its benefits, and that it would be more appropriate to call for assistance;
- ❖ Tell the employee what support you are prepared to offer.

Please note that you are not required to call the service yourself, but you may ask the employee to tell the EHW counsellor that you have recommended the service.

Provided below are two examples of what you could say to an employee in such a situation:

"These personal problems you are dealing with are of concern to me, and I would like to recommend that you contact the EHW service to get assistance. The EHW can provide the expertise you need to resolve these personal issues." "I have concerns about the difficulties that you are experiencing. I think the EHW can be of assistance to you in resolving your problems. **The number is 0800 111 011.** Let me know how it goes."

2.3.2 Making a Formal Referral

It is the responsibility of management to document performance, attendance, absenteeism and conduct, and to take appropriate steps needed for correction. In some instances of poor performance, the efforts supervisors and management do not achieve the desired effect of addressing the problem and restoring employees to full performance levels. In some instances, personal issues and difficulties that require professional counselling and assistance are the cause of the deterioration in job performance.

In these situations, the manager or supervisor can formally refer employees to the EHW. The manager or supervisor should discuss the performance problems with the employee, and then indicate that, as part of the performance enhancement process, the employee will be formally referred to the EHW service.

The manager may also choose to call the **toll-free [0800 111 011]** to discuss the employee related issue with a managerial consultant first in order to consider all options before together deciding that the formal referral procedure is the best and most appropriate way forward. The most frequent reasons for such referrals are alcohol and drug related problems, workplace conflict due to emotional problems, depression, and relationship issues.

The purpose of the referral is to encourage the employee to seek help for the identified problem, and to ensure that it does not continue to undermine the employee's performance, safety or conduct within the working environment. The formal referral service furthermore supports the manager to assist the employee in maintaining, or returning, to optimal job performance.

Provided below is an outline of the process of making a formal referral:

- 1. Identify the work performance issues** and formally discuss your concerns with the employee. If necessary, include Employee Relations practitioner from the Directorate Employee Relations or the union representative in the discussion to ensure transparency and compliance with internal procedures.
- 2. Contact ICAS via the toll-free [0800 111 011]** to discuss with a managerial consultant the best way forward. The relevant documentation and the completion thereof will also be discussed with you.
- 3. A managerial consultant who will require your details** and some **information about the employee** and the performance concerns will be assigned to your case.

4. If a formal referral is considered the best option inform the employee that as part of the performance process, he or she will be referred to the ICAS EHW service for counselling. Remember to inform him or her that you will receive some feedback from ICAS, but that confidential information not related to the performance issue will not be divulged.
5. Reiterate the fact that the **aim of the referral is to assist** in enhancing the employee's current performance within the department.
6. Upon receipt on the signed formal referral formal, the formal referral process is commenced. The employee is required to sign each page of the document to ensure they understand the reasons for referral. This transparency is to ensure optimal levels of success from the referral.
7. Upon receipt the signed forms the employee will be provided with a courtesy call in order to ensure appropriate referral, for face-to-face counselling. Should the employee need to be referred for medical on inpatient treatment, this will be discussed by the managerial consultant and the relevant internal parties.
8. Once the counselling process has begun, **regular feedback will be provided** to you, as a manager. You are also encouraged to provide the managerial consultant with regular feedback to ensure optimal results are achieved.

Please note: There are instances when a formal referral may not follow the traditional process as outlined above. For example, in severe risk, substance abuse cases, etc. In these cases, the relevant clinical protocol may take precedence and the managerial consultant will guide you accordingly in the expectations and process to follow so that both the employee and employer's needs are taken into consideration.

Remember that it is the employee's decision to make use of the services provided by the EHW. Should the employee not wish to make use of the services, the manager or supervisor needs to adhere to the performance enhancement process and guidelines provided by the department. Provided below are a few examples to illustrate when a formal referral is appropriate, this could be discussed with a managerial consultant via the toll-free [0800 111 011].

Provided below are a few examples to illustrate when a formal referral is applicable:

Absenteeism and poor time keeping	❖ Explained and unexplained periods of absence or lateness
	❖ Regular absenteeism for minor illness
	❖ Absence at work from the assigned or expected work area
	❖ Frequent requests to leave work early or arrive late
Change in Quantity and Quality of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Increased volume of errors or omissions ❖ Late or incomplete assignments ❖ Confusion regarding instructions or details ❖ Procrastination ❖ Errors in judgement ❖ Uneven work pace
Relationship with Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Individual and colleagues' complaints ❖ Avoiding colleagues ❖ Intolerance of other individuals ❖ Disruption in the workplace

Personal Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Individual and colleagues' complaints ❖ Avoiding colleagues ❖ Intolerance of other individuals ❖ Disruption in the workplace ❖ Deterioration in appearance ❖ Smelling of alcohol during work hours ❖ Borrowing money from others ❖ Blaming others ❖ Personal business in the workplace ❖ Irritability ❖ Not following corporate policies ❖ Moodiness
	❖ Preoccupation/distraction from work
	❖ Difficulties in remembering
	❖ Increased accident rate on or off the job
Other Situations	❖ Lack of focus
	❖ Poor decision making
	❖ Reduction in overall performance
	❖ Missed deadlines
	❖ Low motivation

3. Confidentiality and Disclosure

The EHW service is a confidential resource. All information that is shared with the counselling or health professionals remains the privileged information of the employee and the professionals. When making a formal referral, only information pertaining to the management of the employee will be communicated to the Manager. No diagnosis or personal information will be communicated without the written consent of the employee.

This information will not be released without the written consent of the employee, unless the law requires disclosure in the following instances:

- ❖ Suspected child abuse;
- ❖ Threats of physical harm to self or others;
- ❖ Fraud;
- ❖ Risk to organisation safety or property;
- ❖ Sexual harassment in the workplace;
- ❖ For quality assurance and auditing purposes. Here all records are sanitised to ensure that individuals' rights to confidentiality are not compromised.

Taking time off work for face-to-face counselling

The EHW managerial consultant and the employee will attempt to schedule sessions at times that do not require time off from work. However, this may be unavoidable, and it is then up to employees to discuss and negotiate any time off needed with their managers.

4. Conclusion

Your department acknowledges that the world of work has changed significantly in recent years and those employees and their dependents are exposed to significant personal and work stressors. Although the department may be unable to address these stressors and the risks confronting its people, the EHW service provided by ICAS is a service that can support and enhance the lives of those affected by these challenges.

The true value of such a service is measured in the lives of the people who are supported by it, and it is the responsibility of both the department's management and ICAS to ensure that the programme is accessible to all and provided to those in need.

ICAS and your department are committed to provide a service that is both professional and accountable to enhance the lives of those who access the programme. We trust that you will provide your on-going support to ensure the future success of this service.

To access the service, simply contact the ICAS call centre on your dedicated toll-free number to receive the support you need from a highly-qualified psychologist or social worker. * **0800 611 155**

Appendix A: Formal Referral Procedures

