



# VICTOR KHANYE

LOCAL MUNICIPALITY – PLAASLIKE MUNISIPALITEIT

## EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME

Policy Number: EWP -01	Approved by Council: August 2012
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## **RATIONALE**

EPWP is designed to provide employees with professional assistance in dealing with a broad range of human problems. This is done by identifying and resolving productivity problems associated with employees who are impaired by personal and work-related concerns.

### **1. PREAMBLE**

#### **1.1 Policy Statement**

The Victor Khanye Local Municipality (VKLM) values the vital contribution that all employees make to the success of the organisation. The employee Wellness Programme (EWP) is a practical way of demonstration that the VKLM has a sincere interest in and Commitment to the health and well-being of its employees.

The VKLM views personal problems as conditions, which can impact on the workplace, but can be overcome. Hence, the EWP is a programme through which employees may receive appropriate professional and confidential assistance for a wide range of problems.

#### **1.2 Purpose**

It is recognised that personal problems may interfere with job performance. Regardless of how disruptive such problems may be in the life of an employee, external motivation is usually needed before an employee can make necessary changes or seek professional assistance. The availability of a professionally staffed resource for assessment, counselling and referral of employees with declining job performance is a cost effective way of retaining employees and restoring them to full or increased production. The rationale for the existence of EWP is to encourage and assist employees to seek professional assistance, since many difficulties can be resolved through professional assistance.

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problems associated with employees who are impaired by personal and work-related concerns.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The objectives of the EWP are to—

- a) Provide constructive assistance to every employee who is experiencing any of personal problems. This includes physical illness, mental disorders (such as alcohol or other substance dependencies, depression, etc), emotional problems, family distress, financial, legal or any other problems.
- b) Provide a confidential service;
- c) Help employees to improve their efficiency and quality of life by providing preventative and remedial services;
- d) Identify promptly, assess and refer employee who are experiencing personal problems, work-related problems or poor work performance to specialist treatment, either in the VKLM or to an external service, with the aim of successful reintegration into the work environment;
- e) Prevent a decline in work performance from employees who normally perform well and with potential;
- f) Establish and maintain a holistic (all-round) approach aimed at remedying the problems identified in paragraph (a) above;
- g) Increase the level of interpersonal skills within the VKLM;
- h) Provide employees with a healthy, safe and satisfying working environment;
- i) Regulate the establishment and set out the functions, duties and obligations of the EWP Representative Forum; and
- j) Give employees better access to assistance through the EWP Representative Forum

### **1.4 Relevant legislation, agreements and policies**

The following legislation, agreements and policies are relevant to this Policy:

- a) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996).
- b) The Local Government Structures Act, 1998 (Proclamation No. 117 of 1998).

- c) The Regulations: Local Government Structures Act, 1998 (Proclamation No. 117 of 1998)
- d) The Local Government System Act, 2000 (Proclaiming No. 32 of 2000).
- e) The regulations and Guidelines: Local Government System Act, 2000 (Proclamation No. 32 of 2000).
- f) The Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act No.55 of 1998)
- g) The Basic Conditions of Employment ACT, 1997 (Act No. 75 of 1997)
- h) The Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No.66 of 1995)
- i) The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993(Act No. 85 of 1993)
- j) The Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993 (Act No. 130 of 1993).
- k) The Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act No. 56 of 1974)
- l) Collective Agreements signed in the SALGBC.
- m) The Performance Management Policy.
- n) The Training and Development Policy.
- o) The Employee Relations Policy.
- p) The Smoking Policy.
- q) The Substance Abuse Policy.
- r) The Sexual Harassment Policy

## **1.5 Scope**

The EWP must deliver comprehensive, quality services to everybody in the VKLM. This includes management, supervisors, employee representatives / unions, employees and their immediate family members (spouse and children or partner and any dependant who lives in the same household as an eligible employee).

## **2. EWP KEY PRINCIPLES**

### **2.1 Confidentiality**

- a) Confidentiality is a cornerstone of the EWP. Personal information about employees using the service must be treated in a confidential manner. In this way, employees can be sure that participation in the programme will not have negative implications for job security or future advancement.

- b) No information obtained from, or about an employee as a result of participation in the programme may be made available to be used for any purpose. To this end, the employee`s right to privacy and confidentiality must be strictly protected.
- c) EWP professionals must be sensitive to the difference between “confidentiality” and “shared confidentiality”. Shared confidentiality refers to confidential information that is shared by the people involved with the employee`s problems-solving strategy. The employee must know about and approve the sharing of information with others involved in the problem- solving strategy. Shared confidentiality may occur only if it towards solving the employee`s problem;
- d) Only trained and experienced professionals (registered with their respective professional boards) may provide professional assistance to employees, this is to ensure professional and ethical behaviour and protection of employees who make use of the EPWP programme these professional bodies, means that if they behave in an unethical manner they will be held responsible for the consequences of their own actions;
- e) The EWP recognises employee`s right to privacy Management aim is to assist employees without interfering in h private lives. A manager has a right to know where his or her employees are during working hours. However he or she does not have the right to know what the problem is, or which psycho social support services employee is attending or even that he or she receiving such support services;
- f) The employee must waive confidentiality in cases where the employee and the employer have entered into a voluntary EWP participation agreement such an agreement comes about when the employer agrees to defer (postpone) discipline because of employee participation in the EWP treatment programme. However, the employer will be informed only about the employee`s compliance or non-compliance with the EWP treatment programme.
- g) Subject to the law privilege an EWP practitioner may be required to provide information in certain cases for example:

- (i) Where public life and safety of the employee or other employees is in danger (Suicidal or homicidal risk);
  - (ii) Where crime is involved, for example fraud, child and partner abuse.
- h) Unless paragraph (g) above applies, written consent from employee is required in situations where confidentiality needs to be breached, because of the nature of the problem, if the employee is formally referred for treatment, only feedback the manager will receive will be about the progress of the employee (i.e. the person is attending sessions, making progress etc) however no information about the nature of the problems may be provided.

## **2.2 Accessibility**

The EWP is accessible to all eligible employees and their immediate family members or dependants. Employees experiencing problems must be encouraged to seek advice from the EWP. The toll-free number ensures that all VKLM employees can access EWP services.

## **2.3 Voluntary participation**

Participation in the programme is voluntary. Although managers and supervisors may refer employees to the EWP, employees must decide whether or not they will make use of it.

## **2.4 Neutrality**

- a) The EWP must maintain neutrality (not take sides) in relation to the interests of both management and staff. It must represent the interests of both sides at all times.
- b) EWP staff members are advisors. Their primary concern is to safeguard and improve the well-being of employees, while improving organisational effectiveness at the same time.

- c) The EWP programme must avoid traditional management-employee relationships, and will not clash with the existing administrative procedures.
- d) The EWP may not be involved in staff selection or evaluation. It is concern with employee well-being and enhancing the relationship between the employer and employees in order to maximise productivity.
- e) The EWP is not designed to assist with conflict resolutions between employees and/ or managers. These matters must be resolved through establishment administrative procedures or collective agreements. However, the EWP can assist the employee to deal with personal consequences of a conflict, which may be work-related.
- f) The EWP is not designed to interfere with an employee`s private and social life. Its aim is to offer confidential assistance to employees who have the potential to be adversely (badly) affected by personal problems.

## **2.5 Impartiality**

The focus of the EWP is on the timely identification, assessment and referral of troubled employees / underachievers to specialist treatment (internal or external services) for successful reintegration into the work place-and not the termination of employment. Participation in the EWP does not endanger an employee`s current employment, promotional opportunities, career development and job security. It is also not a basis for discipline. The rationale of the EWP is to identify troubled employees when they first begin to perform less well- whether due to lack of training, wrong placement or development of personal and social problems.

## **2.6 Equal and dignified treatment**

Employees making use of EWP services must be treated equally and with dignity. The programme treats members and deals with their problems whilst their cultural, religious, spiritual, etc, affiliation into account. Employees participating in the programme will be treated with the same consideration as employees with physical medical conditions. The EWP recognises the need to

grant leave for the purpose of counselling and /or treatment. Therefore, the existing agreements covering employee health benefits apply.

## **2.7 Timely intervention**

Early identification and intervention is desirable in dealing with any problems. Early identification of employee problems and early referral to the EWP could result in a better prognosis, improved work performance, increased productivity and happier employees.

## **2.8 A balanced programme**

A balanced programme will be implemented to ensure that the EWP is not only reactive but proactive as well. A healthy balance between rehabilitative and preventative services must be maintained.

## **2.8 Preventing abuse of the programme**

- a) Employees and participating as well as management must not abuse the programme. No employee may manipulate the EWP service by—
  - (i) Trying to avoid disciplinary action;
  - (ii) Using the EWP as an excuse to attend to personal matters during working hours;
  - (iii) Justifying inappropriate (unsuitable) work conduct or insubordination (defiance or failure to follow);
- b) Supervisors and managers must not under any circumstances prevent employees from using the services of the EWP.
- c) The EWP is not intended to replace or bypass any disciplinary procedures. Also, the programme will not alter or substitute (replace) procedures for correcting unsatisfactory performance.
- d) Employee's participation in the programme will not protect them from disciplinary action for continued poor work performance or misconduct.
- e) The traditional rights of employees to grievance procedures, and the traditional rights of an employer to maintain discipline, will not be waived by the EWP.



### **3. CORE FUNCTIONS OF EWP**

The essential components of the EWP combine to create a unique approach to addressing productivity issues and employee concerns affecting job performance.

The specific core activities of the EWP include the following:

- 3.1 Consultation with, training of and assistance to managers, supervisors and union stewards seeking to manage the negative effect of stress on employees.
- 3.2 Improving the work environment and work performance.
- 3.3 Outreach to and education of employees and their family members about the availability of EWP services.
- 3.4 Providing services so address employees` personal concerns that may affect work performance.
- 3.5 Use of constructive confirmation, motivation and short-term intervention with employees to address problems that affect their job performance.
- 3.6 Appropriate referrals of employees for diagnosis, treatment and assistance, case monitoring and follow- up services.
- 3.7 Building links between the work-site EWP, community resources, and individual Practitioners who provide appropriate EWP-related services;
- 3.8 Encouraging the availability of, and employee access to, health benefits that cover medical and behavioural problems, including, but not limited, to alcoholism, drug dependency, mental disorder and emotional problems.
- 3.9 Follow-up services for employees who make use of the EWP.

### **4. AREAS OF ASSISTANCE**

4.1 The Employee Wellness Programme provides assistance with a broad range of Personal concerns, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a) Marital, family and relationship problems;

- b) Substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, prescription medication) and other addictive behaviour (e.g. gambling).
- c) HIV and AIDS counselling.
- d) Workplace violence and trauma counselling.
- e) Workplace discrimination or victimisation.
- f) Personal debt and financial management.
- g) Stress (family, social, job).
- h) Family violence.
- i) Psychological problems.
- j) Sexual harassment.
- k) Work –related conflict.
- l) Legal problems.
- m) Health –related Problems.

4.2 The following issues are dealt with in conjunction with relevant policies

SITUATION	POLICY
Sexual Harassment	Sexual Harassment Policy
HIV AND AIDS	Employee Relations Policy; Local Government System Act and related Regulation
Grievance complain	Employee Relations Policy with Sexual Harassment Policy.
Appeals in disciplinary hearings	Employee Relations Policy; Local Government System Act and related Regulation
Illness temporary disability	Leave policy
Medical Boarding	Employee Relations Policy; Local Government System Act; related

	Regulations and Leave Policy
Death of a spouse, child or relative , illness of a spouse / child	Family Responsibility Leave
Injury on duty	Health and Safety Policy and Leave Policy

## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Maintenance of acceptable job performance is a shared responsibility. The manager must, along with the employee, set performance goals. Achievements must be measured against these goals. The employee, coached by the manager, responds by accepting responsibility for maintaining satisfactory job performance.
- 5.2 Declining job performance must be addressed from a number of perspectives. VKLM policies and procedures for setting standards and measuring performance (as well as documented procedures to respond to the results both positively and negatively) should be consistently applied.

### 5.3 The EWP Action Committee

The EWP Action Committee represents all the business units in the VKLM. Its Purpose is to ensure a highly effective Programme. The functions of the EWP Action Committee are to-

- a) Contribute to the formulation of policies and strategies of the EWP and sub- programmes;
- b) Advise on the implementation process;
- c) Assist directly with the marketing and promotion of the EWP Programme and sub-programmes;
- d) Contribute to the evaluation processes; and
- e) Manage and direct the EWP Representative Forum.

### 5.4. EWP Representative Forum

- a) EWP Representative Forum members must be selected to be representative of clusters within units as determined by Unit heads.

- b) EWP Representative Forum members are primarily responsible for the development, implementation and ongoing monitoring of key aspects of the EWP within their clusters or business units. Specific functions included the following:
- (i) Assisting with the implementation of the EWP strategy.
  - (ii) Implementing EWP initiatives.
  - (iii) Increasing awareness of the EWP.
  - (iv) Establishing and maintaining internal and external relationships.
  - (v) Coordinating and developing initiatives.
  - (vi) Assisting with consultancy and training activities when and where required.
  - (vii) Bringing to the attention of the Action Committee or the EWP Representative Forum any EWP needs experienced within a particular cluster or business unit.
  - (viii) Effectively using all available resources.
  - (ix) Operating within a budget and time frames.

The above job specification is not exhaustive and will be reviewed as the role develops.

### **5.5. Management**

The role of senior management is to provide visible support to the EWP unit to ensure its successful implementation. This will be achieved through the following actions:

- (a) Approval of policies and programmes.
- (b) Financial support.
- (c) Ensuring staff participation in EWP activities and functions.

### **5.6. Employees**

An individual employee is normally in the best position to identify when he or she is experiencing difficulties which impact on work performance or effective functioning. Therefore, employees have the right and responsibility to seek assistance from the

EWP. Employees have a responsibility to give their full cooperation when assistance is provided to them.

## **5.7 Supervisors**

Supervisors are the primary users of the programme in so far as the referral of referral is concerned. They have the following obligations:

- a) To inform employees about the availability of the EWP before their work performance becomes hampered by problems, and where there is a marked decline in job performance.
- b) To address work performance problems through normal supervisory procedures.
- c) To act consistently and treat employees fairly.
- d) To recognise and identify various problem signs and symptoms in order to ensure early referral to the EWP.
- e) To document work performance and attendance to facilitate the identification of problem signs and symptoms.
- f) After work-related problems have been eliminated, to accept that the employee's performance is affected by personal/ social factors, and make a referral to the EWP when necessary.
- g) To motivate employees for self-referral.
- h) To make follow-ups and require feedback from the EWP, especially in the case of a formal referral, without a breach in confidentiality.
- i) To assist the EWP with the reintegration of employees into the workplace, by monitoring work performance and attendance.

## **5.8 Programme Manager**

Programme manager must---

- (a) Oversee the EWP to ensure effective and consistent application of the Policy and procedures;
- (b) Ensure the ongoing promotion of the EWP in the workplace;

- (c) Maintain the integrity of systems, programmes and procedures;
- (d) Liaise with EWP outsourced services to ensure service standards are acceptable and meet the requirements of employees;
- (e) Ensure employee access to relevant and appropriate levels of care;
- (f) Support to employees when they return to work, if appropriate;
- (g) Implement appropriate training, prevention and educational programmes to address employee needs;
- (h) Train managers, supervisors and employee representatives to fulfil their role in the EWP;
- (i) Provide organisational consultation in areas where the working environment is threatening to work productivity;
- (j) Store all EWP information in a confidential and secure manner;
- (k) Provide feedback to management in areas where special attention or training is required; and
- (l) Monitor and evaluate the Programme to ensure that it meets the needs of the VKLM and its employees.

## **5.9 Unions**

The Unions must—

Be knowledgeable about the EWP and the referral procedures,

- (a) Encourage members to use the EWP when appropriate; and
- (b) Maintain a strict level of confidentiality in respect of all cases referred to the EWP.

## **6. REFERRAL TO THE EWP.**

6.1 Employees may access the EWP services by means of self-referral, informal and formal referrals, as outlined in the EWP procedures. No information about the precise nature of the employee's personal problems may be revealed to supervisors without the employee's informed and written consent. Feedback will be provided in accordance with the formal referral procedures.

6.2 Information reported back to the supervisor will not contain details of the employee's condition, but only information about how that condition affects his or her ability to work, information on employee attendance and corporation regarding the treatment plan.

## **7. PAYMENT FOR EWP SERVICES**

7.1 The EWP is an organisational benefit. VKLM and employees will contribute 50/50% of a monthly fee to a services provides for levels from level 7 and above, while VKLM will contribute 100% from level 8 and below.

7.2 Employees may not be deprived of any services provided in accordance with the EWP Policy. The EWP services rendered by an external contracted service provider- whether it is conducted by a psychologist, social worker, and any kind of counsellor or advisor, on a short-term basis (up to 6 face-to-face counselling sessions per person, with a further 2 sessions at the discretion of the clinical services manager).

7.3 Employees will be referred, at own cost, for further treatment if the situation cannot be resolved on a short- term basis. Long-term, on-going treatment is not part of the EWP services.

7.4 The cost of long-term treatment and specialised services must be borne by the employee. Any prescribed medication must also be covered by the employee or the employee's medical aid.

7.5 The EWP must make every effort to refer those needing help beyond the services it can provide to the appropriate resource. Rehabilitation costs that are not covered by the EWP will be the responsibility of the employee. The employee or dependant will be notified by the EWP before referring them to treatment, which will involve additional costs.

7.6 EWP assistance will be provided once per employee per problem area. However, an employee may use EWP service more than once, for different problem areas. In the case of substance abuse, where an employee is required to undergo treatment at an appropriate institution institution, the VKLM will be responsible for the payment of the completed treatment only.

If the employee relapses, he or she will be responsible for the cost of the subsequent rehabilitation and treatment.

- 7.7 Counselling sessions are provided by service providers contracted by the VKLM. All counselling is provided by fully qualified and registered clinicians, close to the employee`s residence or place of work, with multilingual access. If employees choose to use a counsellor other than the one provided by the VKLM, they will be required to meet the cost themselves.

## **8. LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS**

### **8.1 Time allocation for counselling**

Employees referred to the EWP may excuse themselves from work to participate in the Programme. Absence of up one hour and additional time for travel is considered appropriate for each session. Employees who voluntarily seek EWP services, but do not want their supervisors to work of their participation, must arrange appointments outside working hours ,during lunch periods or during periods of approved leave. Leave provision will be made for employees to assist with personal issues as per the Leave Policy.

### **8.2 Transport arrangements**

Should counselling services be conducted outside the workplace, employees may be assisted with transport, where appropriate, provided that resources are available.

## **9. RECORD KEEPING**

- 9.1 The EWP Unit must maintain the following records with the objective of designing and maintaining a record system for evaluation of the programme:

- a) Administrative matters.
- b) Report on EWP use, trends, and themes.
- c) Marketing material.
- d) Training material
- e) Evaluation documents.



- 9.2 Information about the precise nature of employees problems must be treated confidentially and any records arising must be kept in a confidential and secure filing system. No individual`s name may be identified when invoicing for payment for services.
- 9.3 Training and marketing material must be reviewed regularly to keep abreast of developments in the EWP field.

## **10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME**

The Action Committee must monitor the operation of the EWP on an ongoing basis- in order to evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the EWP operational activities, and to ensure a cost-effective and relevant service to the VKLM, employees and their dependants. Evaluation will ensure the Programme`s progress, usefulness and identify the need for changes where necessary.

## **11. POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed annually and revised as and when it is necessary to do so.

## **12. BUDGET AND RESOURCES**

The financial and resource implication/s related to the implementation of this policy should be qualified and quantified.