Employee Assistance Programme

Guidance for Managers

Project title



**Employee Assistance Programme – Guidance for Managers**

As part of an ongoing commitment to employee wellbeing the University of Stirling offers all employees **free** access to emotional and practical support through [Innovate Healthcare’s](https://innovatehealthcare.co.uk/) Employee Assistance Programme.

The service is provided by [Innovate Healthcare](https://innovatehealthcare.co.uk/) and delivered by their EAP partner CiC, who are industry leading and **entirely independent**. All support and advice provided is completely **confidential**.

**What is an EAP?**

An EAP is a service that provides support to an organisation by identifying and resolving employees concerns that impact the effectiveness of an organisation whether the concerns originate from work or from the home.

**How does it work?**

All employees have access to the service through a free phone number. All calls are answered by experienced, professional counsellors who are there to listen to employees concerns, determine appropriate resources, and then help them take the next steps. Employees can access a range of professional support services offering emotional, psychological and practical help, for a wide range of personal and work-related issues.

Employees can access up to six sessions of face to face counselling through the service. At the current time this will be done via telephone or virtual calls.

There is also access to a wide range of online resources through [Well Online](https://www.well-online.co.uk/) resources.

**What type of support is available?**

Employees can call the Advice-line as often, and for as long as they need to discuss any issues they would like support with, for example:

* Managing pressure
* Bullying and harassment
* Performance at work
* Marital, family and relationship difficulties
* Stress, anxiety and depression
* Alcohol/substance misuse and addictive behaviour
* Bereavement
* Work/life balance issues
* Debt management advice
* Legal and tax advice
* Child, elder and disability care issues
* Everyday matters (Family and general information and support services)

**How is the service accessed?**

The Advice-line service is accessible **24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year**. Employees simply call the free phone number: **0800 085 1376** whenever it is convenient. No appointment is necessary.

Accessing the service is easy to do and there are a variety of ways to do so. The most common method of contact is through the Advice-line at the number above. If this does not suit, there is the option for the employee to email the service, use online chat through [Well Online](https://www.well-online.co.uk/), use internet video calling, or be referred after consultation with a manager.

People living in the same household as employees can access the **Advice-line only** for guidance and advice, as long as they are over the age of 16.

**How do I refer someone for counselling?**

You no longer have to make a referral via Occupational Health should a member of your team require counselling. You would direct the employee to the EAP and they can access it by whichever option is most convenient for them.

Where appropriate, referrals for structured counselling will be recommended and arranged between the Advice-line and the employee. The service provides for **up to six free and confidential** face to face counselling sessions with a counsellor, local to the employee’s home address. These sessions can be telephonic or virtual at the employees request; however, sessions will be delivered in this way until social distancing measures have been relaxed to allow a face-to-face session.

Additional sessions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Face to face counselling is only available to employees of the University.

If a member of your team is already accessing a counsellor through our current NHS Fife Occupational Health provision they will continue to access this counsellor until the six sessions have been completed.

**What is** [**Well Online**](https://www.well-online.co.uk/) **Resources?**

[Well Online](https://www.well-online.co.uk/) is a self-help and information site available exclusively to employees covering a vast array of issues and can also signpost employees to telephone advisors for immediate assistance and emotional support.

Those who may not be comfortable discussing their issues with a telephone advisor may feel happier accessing information via the website, particularly if it is of a sensitive nature. You can either use the site on a stand-alone basis, or to gather information to better understand an issue before discussing it with a telephone advisor.

[Well Online](https://www.well-online.co.uk/) also supports an online chat facility. Online chat allows employees to contact an Adviceline counsellor using online instant messaging from wherever they have internet access. The information is kept updated and new topics are added as needs are identified. The monthly help sheets, written by in house clinicians, are continually uploaded to the site meaning the range of information is always expanding.

The resources can be found at: [**www.well-online.co.uk**](http://www.well-online.co.uk/)

On accessing the website, the username and password is outlined below:

* username:**StirlingU**
* password: **wellbeing**

Please familiarise yourself with the content of the online resources as many of these will be valuable for you, your team and there are some specific resources for the current situation we face.

If there is something which you feel would be of benefit that is not available then please discuss this with your HR Partner as the site is continually updated so may be able to be added.

**Can I make my employee contact the service?**

No. Use of the service is completely voluntary. You can, however, recommend or encourage your employee to call the service, highlighting the benefits it may have for them.

It is possible to do a Managed Referral, where you can contact the service on an employee’s behalf, but only with the employee’s consent, and any feedback will be agreed with the employee in advance. If this is something which you think is necessary then please discuss with your HR Partner in the first instance.

**Will I know if a member of my team has accessed the service?**

No the service is completely confidential so you will not be advised of the names of individuals accessing the service. A report will be provided to the HR team showing usage numbers.

However, you should discuss this with your employee at return to work meetings, support and guidance meetings, 1-1s etc to determine if they have accessed it and if they are finding it useful.

**Do the Counsellors have appropriate qualifications and expertise?**

The quality of counsellors is core to the work of CiC and therefore they will have achieved both in terms of qualifications and applied experience in their field. CiC counsellors must have a recognised diploma in counselling, 300 hours of post qualification experience as well as training in and adherence to a number of industry standards.

Counsellors are trained in providing short-term focused therapy. Many have particular specialities, eg dealing with traumatic incidents. All have experience of working with a range of personal and work issues.

The Adviceline workers have access to a range of information-gathering tools and are trained in providing advice and support to employees across a range of issues. The Advice-line workers are skilled in assisting callers in deciding whether face-to-face counselling is appropriate.

**Are there any other resources that I can direct my employees to if they require support?**

The EAP is the main source of support for employees and they should be able to receive the necessary support they require.

However, the University has also subscribed to the Big White Wall which is also available for staff to access. Big White Wall (BWW) is a digital mental health support service which is available online, 24/7, and is completely anonymous so you can express yourself freely and openly. Professionally trained Wall Guides monitor the community to ensure the safety and anonymity of all members. In addition to BWW’s online community, you will have access to a wealth of useful resources and can work through tailored self-help courses covering topics such as anxiety, sleep, weight management, depression and many more.

Employees register through <https://www.bigwhitewall.com/> using their @stir.ac.uk email address. They will then be asked to create an anonymous username.

**Please note counselling is not available through this source.**