

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Members Privileges Sub Committee – For decision	3 June 2019
<b>Subject:</b> Employee Assistance Programme for Members	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Angela Roach, Assistant Town Clerk Chrissie Morgan, Director of Human Resources	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author</b> Colette Hawkins, Town Clerks	

### Summary

The Chief Commoner has asked officers to investigate options which enable Members to access to support advice and guidance similar to those provided by an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to assist with member well-being.

The EAP was introduced to provide employees with support to help them to deal with certain challenges occurring in everyday life i.e. personal or professional problems which might be impacting on their general health and well-being.

The employee EAP service is free for employees and immediate members of their family to use and is available 24 hours a day. Those accessing it are provided with confidential, impartial advice or counselling from qualified professionals. A wide range of issues are covered by the programme which, amongst other things, includes relationship problems, bereavement, drug, gambling, financial and legal issues.

This report outlines the key provisions of an EAP and provides indicative costs.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Decide how they wish to progress Member access to an EAP and recommend the preferred way forward for approval by the Policy and Resources Committee.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. Balancing everyday life with the requirements of work and home can create pressures for all of us. The City of London Corporation is committed to providing officers with timely access to practical information and advice on care issues.

2. The City Corporation has a contract for an EAP, provided by Health Assured, for all officers. This is a three-year contract, with an option to extend for an additional 2 years and commenced in January 2018.
3. The Chief Commoner has asked officers to explore options to provide a similar programme for Members.

### **Employee Assistance Programmes**

4. At times everyone can find it difficult to balance the pressures of work with the needs of home life. An externally provided EAP can give support to people to enable them to deal with these challenges, both on a practical level and emotionally.
5. An EAP is designed to help people deal with any personal or professional problems which could be impacting on their general health and well-being.
6. Dependent on the nature of the issue, counselling or advice can be provided by fully qualified professionals. All calls would be treated in the strictest of confidence and in line with The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) code of ethics. The only time confidentiality may ever be broken is if the supplier believes the individual or a third party is in significant physical danger.
7. Some EAP suppliers include provision of an extended programme to also provide support to immediate family members.
8. The key benefits of an EAP include:
  - A telephone information service offering support and information regarding legal, financial and practical issues;
  - Access to short term counselling (this can be telephone or face-to-face depending on the terms of the contract);
  - Completely free, confidential and unlimited support (individuals can use the service as often as they need);
  - Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year;
  - Independent, impartial source of support.
9. The EAP can provide information on a wide range of work and personal issues including:
  - Relationship problems (personal and work)
  - Financial / debt issues
  - Legal information
  - Alcohol, drug and gambling issues
  - Bereavement
  - Consumer issues
  - Bullying
  - Stress and anxiety

- Medical information

10. As part of the contract, utilisation reports will be provided showing statistics on the number of people using the EAP and the type of issues raised. However, no personal, identifying information will be disclosed. No-one at the City Corporation will know who has called, unless an individual chooses to disclose this.

## **Options**

11. Currently the staff EAP contract costs approximately £11,250 p.a.. If Members are minded to progress the provision of an EAP for Members it is anticipated that this will cost less per year for their own contract, however the actual breakdown of cost per headcount is likely to be greater for a smaller contract (125 Members).

12. The costs will vary dependent on whether telephone or face-to-face counselling is included in the contract.

13. The Chamberlain's Department has advised that under procurement guidelines if the total cost of the contact is under £10,000 then officers can undertake a competitive process by approaching at least 3 organisations to ask them to submit a bid.

14. However, if the cost of the contact will be over £10,000 a full tender process will be required.

15. As noted above, the City Corporation will receive utilisation statistics on the number of people using the EAP and the issues raised. Normally utilisation statistics are provided for groups of no less than 150 people to ensure confidentiality.

16. As there are only 125 members consideration will need to be given as to who will receive this statistical information to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

17. A full communications plan and launch campaign will be included as part of the contract.

## **Considerations**

18. If Members wish to undertake a competitive procurement process to procure an EAP, consideration should be given to the following points:

a. Contract length:

- i. For an initial 1-year contract. This would allow Members to trial an EAP and to look at utilisation of the service over the year;
- ii. For a 3- year contract.

b. Services provided:

- i. To provide a like-for-like service as with the contract in place of officers, which includes telephone counselling only;

- ii. To provide the same services as above, with the exception that counselling can take place by either telephone or face-to-face.
- c. Utilisation report:
  - i. Who the report will be provided to and what data, if any, will be shared with key Members.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

- 19. The provision of an EAP for members will link to the Corporate Plan outcome number 2: contribute to a flourishing society – people enjoy good health and wellbeing.
- 20. A test of relevance, as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), was undertaken and identified no relevance to equality as this external service would be available to all Members.

## **Financial Implications**

- 21. If members of the Sub-Committee are minded to progress Member access to an EAP, there is no funding available in existing budgets to fund the initiative. A funding source will need to be identified with the help of officers in the Chamberlain's.
- 22. The Chamberlain's Department have advised that there would be no tax implications for providing an EAP to Members as this is not a benefit in kind and it cannot be attached to any individual.

## **Conclusion**

- 23. The provision of an external EAP for Members could help Members, or their families, deal with any personal or professional problems which could be impacting on their general health and well-being. It would provide them immediate access to confidential advice / support, as the service would be available to them 24/7, 365 days a year.

## **Appendices**

- None

## **Background Papers**

- Test of Relevance: Employee Assistance Programme for Members

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