

Report of Gemma Taskas HRLT lead for Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Report to Lorraine Hallam Chief Officer HR

Date: 28th November 2017

Subject: Employee Assistance Programme Contract

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| Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s): | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for call-in? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Summary of main issues

The report is to seek approval from the Chief Officer, Human Resources, to instigate a new tender process to procure an Employee Assistance programme.

The current contract with Help Employee Assistance runs out 31st March 2018. All extensions have been taken that existed within the original contract which started 1st April 2013.

Under council procurement rules the approval is classified as a Significant Operational Decision.

Recommendations

It is recommended that a new tender process for an EAP is instigated as soon as possible to ensure continuity when the current contract ends on 31st March 2018.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Chief Officer, Human Resources, to instigate a new tender process to procure an Employee Assistance programme.
- 1.2 To outline the benefits of having an independent Employee Assistance Programme in the council.

2. Background information

- 2.1. Leeds City Council (LCC) has had a contract in place for the provision of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for over fifteen years. The formal contract with the current provider Help Employee Assistance is due to expire on 31st March 2018 and there are no further options to extend.
- 2.2. Should LCC wish to continue to offer an EAP, the formal tender process would need to start as soon as possible to ensure continuity and avoid the need for waivers of the Contract procedure Rules, which is always open to challenge.

3. Main issues

- 3.1. An independent EAP is valued by employees, managers and Trade Union colleagues (source: Corporate H&S Committee, previous staff surveys). The feedback of those using the service is generally good.
- 3.2. Having an active EAP helps the council to: manage attendance and performance, demonstrate how it values its employees, potentially defend civil claims/criminal litigation for stress-related illness, manage critical incidents, and provide managers and staff with the skills and confidence to manage difficult situations.
- 3.3. An EAP is more relevant now than ever. Levels of stress, anxiety and depression are growing in the working population throughout the UK; the organisation is going through a period of change; and the external financial climate has an impact on most people.
- 3.4. There is no capacity or capability to deliver a comparable service 'in-house'. Key stakeholders also value the independence of the current EAP.
- 3.5. The usage of the EAP during 2016/17:
 - 865 individual employees contacted Care First, resulting in 3,450 contacts; 63 of these contacts were assessed as at risk 10 of these high risk a 1 staff member immediate high risk.
 - 71% of all contacts were female;
 - 21% of contacts related to work-issues (which included support for managers) and 30% cited as 'both work & personal'. Work issues dealt with included: physical and emotional health issues; work overload; change; relationship with manager; disciplinary; control over work; and work-life balance.
 - 2803 registered users for the Wellbeing Zone with 1906 of these active users.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1. Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1. The service has been consulted at within various staff forums. These include the Corporate H&S Committee, various Directorate committees, the CJCC, Wellbeing Group and across the HR service.

4.2. Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1. Having an Employee Assistance Programme assists the council with its overall inclusion priorities. In particular around mental health and disabilities.

4.3. Council policies and best council plan

- 4.3.1. Having an EAP assists with the council being a Mindful Employer and forms part of the Councils Wellbeing Strategy. It also assists with the council value of treating people fairly contained within the best council plan.
- 4.3.2. An EAP is also an integral part of the Council's approach to managing people and impacts on policies such as Managing Attendance and Supporting Staff in Work.

4.4. Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1. The procurement will be evaluated on a 40/60% price/evaluation split. The last time this contract was procured was on a 30/70 split. It was felt this time that pricing needs to be more competitive to achieve better value for money.

4.5. Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1. The retender will be carried out with support from Procurement to ensure all procurement rules will be followed.

4.6. Risk management

- 4.6.1. The council will be seeking to renew the EAP at broadly the same terms and conditions as the current contract.
- 4.6.2. An independent EAP can provide valuable trauma and crisis support during a difficult time or incident within our service areas.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1. The provision of an EAP within the council is seen as beneficial, contributing to the council values and the drive to promote positive mental health.
- 5.2. The council believes that the workplace can be used as a setting to improve health and the EAP, in helping employees and their immediate families, contributes to the health of the wider community.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. The Chief Officer Human Resources is recommended to support the instigation of a new tender exercise for the provision of an Employee Assistance Programme from the 1st April 2018.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1. None provided.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.