

SECTION 1 - DO I NEED AN EIA?

DO I NEED AN EIA?

<p>Name of policy/activity:</p> <p>Remove Employee Assistance Provider programme</p>
<p>Please choose one of the following:</p> <p>Is this a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New policy/activity • Existing policy/activity? This is a new activity. • Budget proposal/change for this policy/activity ✓ • Pilot programme or project?

<p>Decision</p> <p>Set out the rationale for deciding whether or not to proceed to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</p> <p>Removing employee support could impact on particular groups of staff i.e. staff with mental health or general health issues, carers, age related issues e.g. stress at home and work due to family and career commitments, those impacted by menopause, social economic reasons including cost of living crisis, staff reductions and those continuing to recover from the effects of the pandemic</p> <p>EIA required: Yes</p> <p>Date of Decision: 13.02.2023</p>

If undertaking an EIA please continue onto the Section 2. If not, pass this signed form to the Equalities Officer.

Assessment undertaken by:

Director or Head of Service	Frances Garrow, Head of HR, ICT and OD
Lead Officer for developing the policy/activity	Anne Smith, Senior OD Adviser
Other people involved in the screening (this may be council staff, partners or others i.e contractor or community)	Don Toonen, Equal Opportunities Officer

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SECTION 2: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Brief description of the affected service

1. Describe what the service does:

The employee assistance programme service provides a 24 hour, 365 days a year service for psychological, emotional and practical support, which can be accessed by any employee when they need it.

Services they offer include:

- Telephone support & guidance
- Information & resources including links, podcasts, templates and exercises
- Structured telephone counselling
- Video conferencing / Face to Face counselling
- Live Chat service.

This service is available for staff and their family who are residing at the same address who are 16 years and over.

2. Who are your main stakeholders?

Staff

3. What changes as a result of the proposals? Is the service reduced or removed?

The proposal is to remove the service. This will mean that staff are reliant on local and national providers for support or their GP/NHS.

4. How will this affect your customers?

In the current year to date (April 22 – Dec 23 – ref EAP quarterly reports) there have been 66 referrals made to the service. This represents 1.3 % of the workforce. This equates to a cost of approximately £170 per person making initial contact with the service.

Where the service is removed staff members will require to source support from another provider or privately.

The service is open to all employees. Of the 66 staff members using the service 73% were female and 27% were male which aligns with the council's gender split. The age of those employees accessing the service was also closely aligned with that of the council's age profile. 57% of users were aged 45 or over.

The council's main reason for long term absence is stress, depression and anxiety. (Ref Annual Report 2022) and failure to access early intervention may have an impact on absence rates and the wellbeing of staff.

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The impact of the pandemic on mental health is still being realised across the workforce with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Pulse survey demonstrating an increase in the numbers of staff experiencing a mental health condition in the past year. Additionally with an aging workforce the council is likely to see an increase in age related health conditions including menopause. Currently the service is predominantly used by female workers. 75% of Moray Council's workforce is female and 55% are in the lowest 3 or 4 grades although it is not possible to accurately map the users of the service to this group.

The service is also provided to (and to a small extent used by) foster carers and member's of staff families.

The reasons for accessing the service are both work and personal reasons or a combination of both.

With the imminent budgetary challenges ahead and possible impact on the workforce, the council may see a rise in the cases of depression, stress or anxiety which is currently reported as the most common reason of long term absence.

5. Please indicate if these apply to any of the protected characteristics		
Protected groups	Positive impact	Negative impact
Race		
Disability		
Carers (for elderly, disabled or minors)		
Sex		
Pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding)		
Sexual orientation		
Age (include children, young people, midlife and older people)		√
Religion, and or belief		
Gender reassignment		
Inequalities arising from socio-economic differences		√
Human Rights		

6. Evidence. What information have you used to make your assessment?

Performance data	
Internal consultation	
Consultation with affected groups	
Local statistics	
National statistics	
Other	Quarterly reports from current provider

7. Evidence gaps

Do you need additional information in order to complete the information in the previous questions?

It is uncertain to what extent each contact represents different members of staff or if there have been multiple contacts by one or more individuals.

This is a confidential service with information regards the success of the service being limited to the providers internal evaluation process. Information is anonymous and cannot be linked to specific individuals. The quarterly reports have indicated that of those using the service 86% (year to date) have felt significantly better following support.

Please note the small sample size which limits statistical information.

8. Mitigating action

Can the impact of the proposed policy/activity be mitigated?

Staff members can be signposted to local and national providers

Please explain

Where this service is removed employees can be signposted to alternative providers however it is acknowledged that this support maybe subject to longer referral times.

9. Justification

If nothing can be done to reduce the negative impact(s) but the proposed policy/activity must go ahead, what justification is there to continue with the change?

n/a

Have you considered alternatives?

SECTION 3 CONCLUDING THE EIA

Concluding the EIA

1. No negative impacts on any of the protected groups were found.	
2. Some negative impacts have been identified. The impacts relate to:	
Reducing discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010	
Promoting equality of opportunity	
Fostering good relations	
3. Negative impacts can be mitigated for the proposals as outlined in question 8	√
4. The negative impacts cannot be fully mitigated but are justified as outlined in question 9.	
5. It is advised not to go ahead with the proposals.	

Decision

Set out the rationale for deciding whether or not to proceed with the proposed actions:

The council is facing significant financial challenges, with significant savings to be made in order to develop a sustainable council. The proposal will allow for a reduction of £15,000 pa which is currently being funded as a temporary measure.

During a particularly challenging period, the removal of this service may have a negative impact on employee engagement and morale so this needs to be taken into consideration when making this decision however there is an alternative signposting option to mitigate.

Date of Decision: 13/02/2023

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Sign off and authorisation:

Service	Education, Communities & Organisational Development
Department	HR, ICT & OD
Policy/activity subject to EIA	
We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Anne Smith Position: Senior OD Adviser Date: 16/02/2023
Authorisation by head of service or director.	Name: Frances Garrow Position: Head of HR, ICT & OD Date: 16/02/2023
Please return this form to the Equal Opportunities Officer, Chief Executive's Office.	