



Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

What is an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)?

An EAP is a worksite-focused programme to assist in the identification and resolution of employee concerns, which affect, or may affect, performance. Such employee concerns typically include, but are not limited to:

Personal matters - health, relationship, family, financial, emotional, legal, anxiety, alcohol, drugs and other related issues.

Work matters - work demands, fairness at work, working relationships, harassment and bullying, personal and interpersonal skills, work/life balance, stress and other related issues.

Employee Assistance Programmes are a mechanism for providing counselling and other forms of assistance, advice and information to employees on a systematic and uniform basis, and to recognised standards.

An EAP is also a strategic intervention designed to produce organisational benefit - quantifiable by outcome measurement - through a systems-led approach to human asset management. It addresses team and individual performance and well being in the workplace.

EAPs are intentionally defined more by what they achieve, rather than by what they are, in order to leave maximum room for tailoring services to meet the needs of each organisation.

EAPs are unique within the occupational health field in addressing the twin focus of employee well being and organisational performance.

EAPs therefore have the opportunity to reach people who would not otherwise have access to the support from which they may benefit.

Why should an organisation have an EAP?

In the last decade there has been an enormous increase in the pace of change in the commercial world. Organisations continue to face unprecedented pressures and demands from increasing competition, heavier workloads and longer hours, all of which have to be dealt with at a personal level. It is inevitable that these continuous pressures will cause problems both for every organisation and many individuals.

In this climate EAPs help individuals, managers and organisations to:

- ▼ Cope with work-related and personal problems and challenges that impact on performance at work.
- ▼ Improve productivity and workplace efficiency.
- ▼ Decrease work-related accidents.
- ▼ Lessen absenteeism and staff turnover.
- ▼ Promote workplace co-operation.
- ▼ Manage the risk of unexpected events.
- ▼ Position the organisation as a caring employer.
- ▼ Recruit and retain staff.
- ▼ Reduce grievances.
- ▼ Assist in addiction problems.
- ▼ Improve staff morale and motivation.
- ▼ Provide a management tool for performance analysis and improvement.
- ▼ Demonstrate a caring attitude to employees.
- ▼ Assist line managers in identifying and resolving staff problems.

In short, EAPs represent a proven, cost-effective solution to many of the people problems employers face today. The UK EAPA therefore would recommend all organisations to consider seriously how a relevant form of EAP can be introduced into their organisation.