

STRATHCLYDE FIRE & RESCUE
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP)
HUMAN RESOURCES PROCEDURE: 21/2008 11 DECEMBER 2008

Background

Strathclyde Fire & Rescue (SFR) is committed to the health and welfare of its employees and believes that their personal well-being is essential for its efficiency and effectiveness. The Employee Assistant Programme (EAP) is provided not only for employees but their family members (over 16 living in the same household and dependants in further/higher education who maybe living away from home).

The policy gives details of the EAP service, which provides professional, independent advice and counselling to employees to assist with the alleviation of personal and/or family matters, including practical issues causing distress or concern. Specialist advice and assistance will include personal counselling, financial advice relating to the management of personal finances and debt (not investment advice), legal matters and other relevant areas. *Refer to Section 8.4 "Employee Benefits" for Independent Financial Advisors.*

This policy also takes account of the need to support employees who have attended a traumatic incident and may require support and details the service available to such employees. This is detailed under Section 5 of this policy. SFR's Chaplaincy, the Fire fighters' Charity (formerly Fire Services National Benevolent Fund) and the Family Support Trust are other forms of support available to all employees and details are included within Section 8 of this policy.

1. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP) PROVIDER

SFR employees can access the services of:

AXA-ICAS
70 HUTCHESON STREET
GLASGOW
G1 1SH
Freephone 0800 0727072
Email: eap@axa-icas.com
www.wellbeingworks.com

Expected outcomes for SFR employees will be;

1. A professional service underpinned by complete confidentiality
2. Support for people closely connected with employees (family members)
3. Alleviation of stress and/or improved sense of well being by assisting to address personal stress and manage factors that reduce well being

Expected outcomes for SFR will be:

1. A support mechanism for employees
2. Advice and guidance for managers in responding to specific complex situations concerning individuals. This will result in developing suitable organisational responses that will improve staff well-being and attendance
3. A Value for Money Service

4. A reduction in sickness absence through positive intervention where a welfare or health related issue is the root of the employee's absence

2. ACCESS TO SERVICE/REFERRALS

2.1 The service will be available to all employees 24 hours a day every day of the year including public holidays. The service can be accessed from anywhere in the world e.g. on holiday abroad by using the freephone number initially. Employees (self-referral), line managers and SFR's Occupational Health Service (OHS) can make referrals. A formal referral will normally be made by telephone.

The service will be accessible for initial contact via the following media:

- Freephone/local rate telephone line - 0800 0727072
- E-mail - eap@axa-icas.com
- Letter – to address in Section 1

2.2 AXA-ICAS will make an immediate assessment that provides the employee with an appropriate level of support and response. Where a face-to-face meeting is required, the arrangements will be made within one working day, with the meeting taking place within 7 working days.

2.3 Telephone will be the normal route of access. Initial contact will determine if specialist, follow up or face-to-face is required with an AXA-ICAS counsellor/advisor carrying out such an assessment. Information/advice provided by telephone will be given within 1 working day of the enquiry. There is no restriction to the number of occasions employees or their families can access the service. Follow up contact with employees' will include facilities for contact via an agreed contact point:

- Telephone (at no cost to employee)
- Letter
- E-mail (work/personal address)

2.4 AXA-ICAS will facilitate face-to-face meetings between the employee and counsellor/advisor where required. This will be at a suitable location arranged by the counsellor/advisor, and agreed by the employee, normally within 20 miles of the employee's place of work/residence or 1-hour travel by public transport. This may also include home address or work place if agreed by the employee. Where the counsellor/advisor proposes their own premises for counselling purposes, aspects of privacy, personal safety, confidentiality of records and access is taken into account. The counsellor/advisor will attend meetings at the employee's home where the employee agrees and as a result of them being unable to travel due to disability, ill health or other similar cause.

3. LINE MANAGER/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (OHS) REFERRALS

3.1 When a formal referral is made by a line manager, AXA-ICAS shall confirm with the line manager that the employee has made contact or is attending the counselling as appropriate. If the employee requires more than 6 sessions the counsellor shall also confirm this with the line manager. **No other information will be given to the manager unless with the agreement of the employee.**

3.2 Where the formal referral is from a clinical member of the Occupational Health Service (OHS), the counsellor/advisor will submit a confidential report detailing the EAP intervention and the outcome back to the OHS. The counsellor/advisor must obtain the written consent of the employee to forward the report to OHS. The counsellor/advisor will then issue a written report to OHS. Thereafter, managers may have access to this report only with the written consent of the employee.

4. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP) OVERVIEW

The following is an indicative list of concerns that may require assistance and advice that shall be provided by an EAP counsellor/advisor:

Personal concerns

- Personal/family legal advice
- Personal and financial management and housing
- Housing advice
- Consumer advice
- Debt counselling

Practical concerns

- Work relationship
- Workplace problems
- Bullying and harassment
- Workload stress
- Anger management
- All forms of discrimination

Psychological concerns

- Substance dependency or abuse
- Anxiety/depression
- Eating disorders
- Panic attacks
- Coping with bereavement/suicide intervention

Specialist Services

- Critical Incident Debriefing discussed in further detail in Section 5
- Partnerships/links with outside organisations such as local authorities/doctors where employees need urgent help but are too distressed to act for themselves
- Telephone/e-mail or written advice from appropriately qualified legal professionals, consumer affairs, financial affairs and debt advisors
- Advice to managers in responding to complex situations relating to an employee. This may include complex HR issues or critical incidents normally attended by operational employees
- Training sessions on areas such as Stress Management, Conflict Resolution and other subjects deemed relevant by SFR in line with training requirements

5. PROVISION OF CRITICAL INCIDENT DEBRIEFING (CID)

AXA-ICAS will provide critical incident debriefing for employees who have attended a traumatic event. These sessions will be carried out under the following circumstances:

1. Death of a firefighter/other member of staff on duty/colleague
2. Death of a child/children
3. Multiple fatalities
4. Any other traumatic event which the officer-in-charge (OIC) believes could have an adverse effect on employees involved e.g. serious injury or near miss to firefighters' on the incident ground

5. Road Traffic Collision (RTC) involving firefighters' where such employees have been injured or where firefighters' could become distressed following injury to members of the public
6. In relation to Operations Support Centre, where employees have been involved in a fire survival or traumatic emergency call/incident which could have an adverse effect on the employees involved

AXA-ICAS will provide the following in relation to CID:

- Attend a major incident when deemed appropriate by the OIC
- Attend a debrief between a minimum of 24 hours and a maximum of 72 hours from the request by the OIC
- The debrief may be held during day/night shift and maybe held at weekends or public holidays

Initiation of the CID Process will be carried out by the OIC of the incident contacting AXA-ICAS directly on the freephone number provided (0800 0727072).

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

The credibility and effectiveness of the EAP will only be achieved if employees are assured of its confidentiality. AXA-ICAS will maintain a confidential record of all contacts with employees'. The names of employees shall not be disclosed to SFR staff or their representatives, unless with the full written consent of the employee concerned. Except in circumstances where the professional assessment of the AXA-ICAS indicates a level of risk to the employee, third parties or there is the potential for serious professional misconduct, confidentiality will be maintained.

Where circumstances dictate that it is necessary to disclose certain information e.g. a case that involves disciplinary procedures, this will again only be done with the consent of the employee. Where this consent is refused, the manager hearing the discipline case will make a decision based on the available facts.

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE SERVICE

SFR will monitor the service provided by AXA-ICAS. AXA-ICAS will provide monthly written reports to OHS Business Development Manager and will include the following data:

- Number of referrals
- Number of referrals on sick leave
- Type of referrals (self/management)
- Nature of referrals e.g. financial, legal, workplace
- Trends
- Number and nature of complaints from employees. Some examples of this may include counsellor/advisor continually cancelling appointments or employees having to travel long distances to appointments etc

Data will be provided in a format that protects the confidentiality of the employee. A formal six monthly and 12 monthly report with analysis and comment on the trends, risks for the organisation and other relevant information will be presented at quarterly contract review meetings. This will allow SFR to monitor and review the service to ensure it is making the most positive impact possible in terms of supporting the personal well-being of its employees. Any trends emerging from these reports will be shared with representative bodies but only in the most general terms.

8. A number of well established employee/welfare type arrangements exist within SFR and these will complement the EAP. These include:

8.1 CHAPLAINCY SERVICE

SFR's Chaplains give support to the Service and its employees both in ongoing work and in times of need and attend Service functions in an official capacity. The supportive and pastoral role extends to all employees regardless of their religious beliefs and those with none. A critical feature is where the Chaplain will establish personal relationships with managers and employees' and give confidential support when required. Where an employee has a specific faith, requirement the Chaplain will provide contact details of an appropriate person whom they may wish to contact.

The Role of the Chaplain

1. Provide a confidential pastoral support to SFR employees
2. Provide assistance to managers in the execution of their duties particularly when dealing with difficult or sensitive matters and incidents
3. Compliment the work of other staff e.g. Occupational Health, AXA-ICAS, Diversity Team etc
4. Provide assistance and support in the event of a major incident
5. Keep abreast of developments in pastoral care
6. Carry out their role impartially and in strict confidence on an ecumenical basis responsive to the needs of employees from all faiths and none
7. Establish a mechanism to enable employees the to make contact out with normal scheduled visits
8. Arrange and where appropriate conduct services e.g. memorial services
9. Maintain regular contact with SFR through the nominated contact officer

Relationship with SFR

1. Subject to operational constraints the Chaplain will have access to all SFR premises and will have an SFR identity card
2. The Chaplain may also liase with Trade Unions where the circumstances merit such involvement
3. The nominated SFR contact Officer will be the Chief Officer's Staff Officer

Contact Details

The current Chaplains are Rev Craig Lancaster and Father Jim Thomson. It is anticipated that other local clergy will also provide support to the Chaplains where possible including attendance at key events.

Rev Craig Lancaster can be contacted at:
Hyndland Parish Church, 81 Hyndland Road, GLAGOW G1 9JE
Telephone: 0141 334 1002
Mobile No: 07752 583035
E mail: craig.lancaster@strathclydefire.org

Father Jim Thomson can be contacted at:
St Josephs, 73 Cardigan Road, Stepps, GLASGOW G33 6AA.
Telephone: 0141 779 2001
Mobile: 07801 273332/07768 145585
E-mail: jim.thomson@strathclydefire.org

8.2 THE FIREFIGHTER'S CHARITY (Formerly the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund)

The Firefighters' Charity is a dynamic award winning charity which provides assistance to serving and retired employees, their widow/ers, spouses, partners and young dependants through the provision of sheltered accommodation, recuperative facilities, rehabilitation and therapy, in addition to financial support for those who need it. The charity has 3 UK Centres, which provides this range of support services in addition to the HQ facility in Basingstoke, Hampshire. The centres are located at:

- Jubilee Therapy Centre (Cumbria) – therapy and recuperation
Eamont Park, Penrith, CUMBRIA CA10 2BN
Telephone:01786 890009
- Harcombe House (Devon) – therapy and recuperation
Chudleigh, DEVON TQ13 0DG
Telephone:01626 853639
- Marine Court (West Sussex) – recuperation
Fitzalan Road, Littlehampton, WEST SUSSEX BN17 5NF
Telephone:01903 735931
- Proposed new centre (Eastern based) – therapy
- The Fire-fighters' Charity Headquarters, Second Floor, Copenhagen Court,
32 New Street, Basingstoke, HAMPSHIRE
Telephone: 01256 366566
General Helpline:0800 389 8820
www.firefighterscharity.org.uk

8.3 STRATHCLYDE FIRE AND RESCUE FAMILY SUPPORT TRUST

What is it?

The Trust provides assistance to all members of the trust as well as retired employees of SFR in times of hardship and need.

What does it do?

The Trust provides much needed assistance and contact with the Service including

- A Bereavement Grant, currently £2,000 to a surviving spouse
- Assistance Grants/Hardship Grants
- Children's Investment Trust, on the death of a serving parent £600 is invested in trust in the child's name
- Summer Trip for our registered beneficiaries
- Christmas Lunch for our registered beneficiaries
- Christmas Grant of £100 each year to a surviving spouse

The support of the membership as well as from other agencies ensures that over 80% of our income is paid out in grants each year and every penny raised within Strathclyde stays in Strathclyde.

New Development

In 2007 the Trust added to its portfolio by providing a 2 bedroom, high quality flat in the Costa del Sol, Spain. This will be for use by our trustees who may need of rest and recuperation.

8.4 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

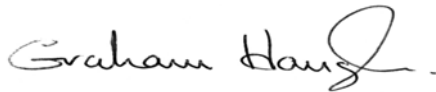
An employee benefits scheme is in place. www.sfrpremium.co.uk offering a number of discounts. The scheme is free to employees and their families in areas such as sport and fitness, learning and leisure, car care, professional services and retail. Further details on becoming a member can be obtained from the website above. In addition to this a number of offers are in place and can be accessed as detailed below:

Childcare Voucher Scheme - HR Procedure 14/2007
Independent Financial Advisors - HR Procedure 24/2007
Beneden (HealthCare Society) - HR Procedure 02/2008

The above list is not exhaustive and SFR shall continue to source a number of schemes and benefits, which will be of interest to employees and retired members.

9. CONSULTATION

This policy was devised in consultation with managers' and representative bodies. This has ensured the needs of employees and SFR will be addressed through its implementation. Any amendments or changes to the policy will take place again through consultation with the above parties.



MR G HAUGH
ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES