

## **Extraordinary Staff Consultative Panel: Monday 23 March 2020**

### **Briefing Note on the Employee Assistance Programme**

Currently our well-being support for staff includes health and wellbeing events which run throughout the year focusing on key national initiatives and a range of other initiatives; health and wellbeing intranet page; occupational health service offering both self-referral and referrals; onsite health check-ups; free flu vaccinations; cycle2work scheme; Neyber financial wellbeing package and education platform; purchase of annual leave scheme; discounted gym membership; eye test reimbursement for VDU work; mediation; mentoring; coaching; counselling, physio; flexible working options; West Suffolk We Save financial savings scheme and opportunities for volunteering through the volunteering policy. We also support well-being champions throughout the services and mental health first aiders.

The current offer is available to all our staff although some of the support will be provided through assessment and discussion with employees and their managers and rely on request.

There has been an increase demand on well-being related support and counselling services and some of this support has been sought through new and specialist providers to deal with complex cases.

#### **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**

An EAP, is an employer paid scheme, that enables employees to contact an independent adviser, on a confidential basis, to discuss any issue that is causing them stress, worry, and which could be interfering with their health, performance and attendance. It bridges the gap for those staff who may only wish to deal with personal issues confidentially and not through formal request, giving them the opportunity to have discussions outside of their normal work time and provide support in evenings and weekends where this may not normally be readily available.

Schemes available offer confidential helplines on 24/7 basis including counselling, doctor help line, prescription services, legal support, support for employees and their families. The provider, Westfield Health, also have access to the Big White Wall, which is the leading digital mental health service providing a full range of online support including self-help and on line courses for concerns of alcohol and drug abuse; anxiety and eating disorders and are registered with the Care Quality Commission.

#### **Conclusion**

Agreement to fund an Employee Assistant Programme for a period of two years, to gain valuable insight into how this may benefit staff performance, behaviour and attendance.

It is intended as part of the HR delivery plan for the new Workforce Strategy over the next four years to conduct a review of all well-being initiatives and associated spend (including counselling) and the impact of EAP would be part of this piece of work.

We will also be working with Westfield Health to develop a range of performance data that we can access throughout the contract and to deliver an information session for Service Managers in order that the EAP be cascaded down through the services.

It is clear that a proactive approach to the EAP will be needed to introduce the offer to the depot staff, this will be achieved through the health initiatives delivered at the depots throughout the year.