

Report

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Report to: | Employee Issues Forum |
| Date of Meeting: | 5 February 2019 |
| Report by: | Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) |

| | |
|----------|---|
| Subject: | New Employee Counselling/Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) Service |
|----------|---|

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ update the forum on the new employee counselling/CBT service

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- ♦ that the services provided within the new employee counselling/CBT contract are noted

3. Background

- 3.1. South Lanarkshire Council is committed to continue providing employees with access to counselling services. The contract for counselling and CBT was renewed in October 2018.
- 3.2. Previously these services were under separate contracts, but the opportunity to bring them together under one contract was taken. Having one provider enables a more straightforward way of communicating the services to employees and has helped streamline the management of the service.
- 3.3. PAM Assist are now in place and this report will outline the service they can provide for council employees.

4. PAM Assist Services

- 4.1 PAM Assist can offer support to employees who are trying to manage issues that are impacting on their wellbeing. For example: stress (personal or work), anxiety, family matters, relationship problems, debt and addiction.
- 4.2 The service is open 24 hours/7 days per week/365 days per year and calls are answered by a trained counsellor who can listen to the employee's concerns/issues and advise which type of support would be helpful e.g. counselling/CBT.
- 4.3 To accommodate the employee's needs, support can be provided to the employee via telephone, face to face or on-line sessions. Having these different options may help employees who are trying to manage caring responsibilities and/or wish to arrange counselling outwith their working day.

- 4.4 Managers and employees also have access to the PAM Assist website. This website gives access to information on a variety of health and wellbeing areas such as stress management, A-Z of medical conditions, mental health support and online counselling.

5. Accessing the Counselling/CBT

- 5.1 All employees can contact PAM Assist directly and can choose to keep this contact strictly confidential. If they do wish to keep their counselling sessions private, employees can arrange appointments outwith working time.
- 5.2 As part of maximising attendance policy, the counselling services may be discussed and recommended to employees. This would occur as follows:-
- ◆ if an employee is absent due to psychological reasons they will be contacted by the Employee Support team who will discuss the option of PAM Assist if appropriate
 - ◆ the Occupational Health Adviser can provide employees with information to access counselling support at an employee medical appointment.
 - ◆ the Occupational Nurse, supporting an employee via the Addiction Policy, can provide the employee with information to access counselling or make a referral on behalf of the employee
 - ◆ managers can make their employee aware of the counselling service as part of their role in supporting an employee they are concerned about.

6. Communication

- 6.1 Recently the intranet homepage has had an Employee Support icon added. This means employees and managers can be taken to the counselling/CBT supports (and full Employee Assistance Programme) directly from the homepage and do not have to find/search for these services.
- 6.2 Communications have been issued with information about the new provider via Business Partners, management bulletins, personnel circulars and internal communications.
- 6.3 Opportunities to promote the service in different ways will continue this year and through the Healthy Working Lives initiatives, such as mental health awareness month in May.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1 Improving access to the counselling/CBT services can assist employees to manage when and where they use the service. This enables employees to have counselling support that can fit in with their lives.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 All financial implications are met within existing budgets.
- 7.2 As psychological absence remains one of the main reasons for employee absence, access to the Council's counselling/CBT service can assist an employee to gain early intervention and enable them to return to work sooner.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 There are no implications for sustainability or risk in terms of the information contained within this report.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1 This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

Paul Manning

Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

11 January 2019

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Achieve efficient and effective use of resources
- ◆ Strengthen partnership working, community leadership and engagement

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Suzanne Berkley, Personnel Adviser

Ext: 4631 (Tel: 01698 454631)

E-mail: suzanne.berkley@southlanarkshire.gov.uk