

# Employee Assistance Programme

A buyer's guide

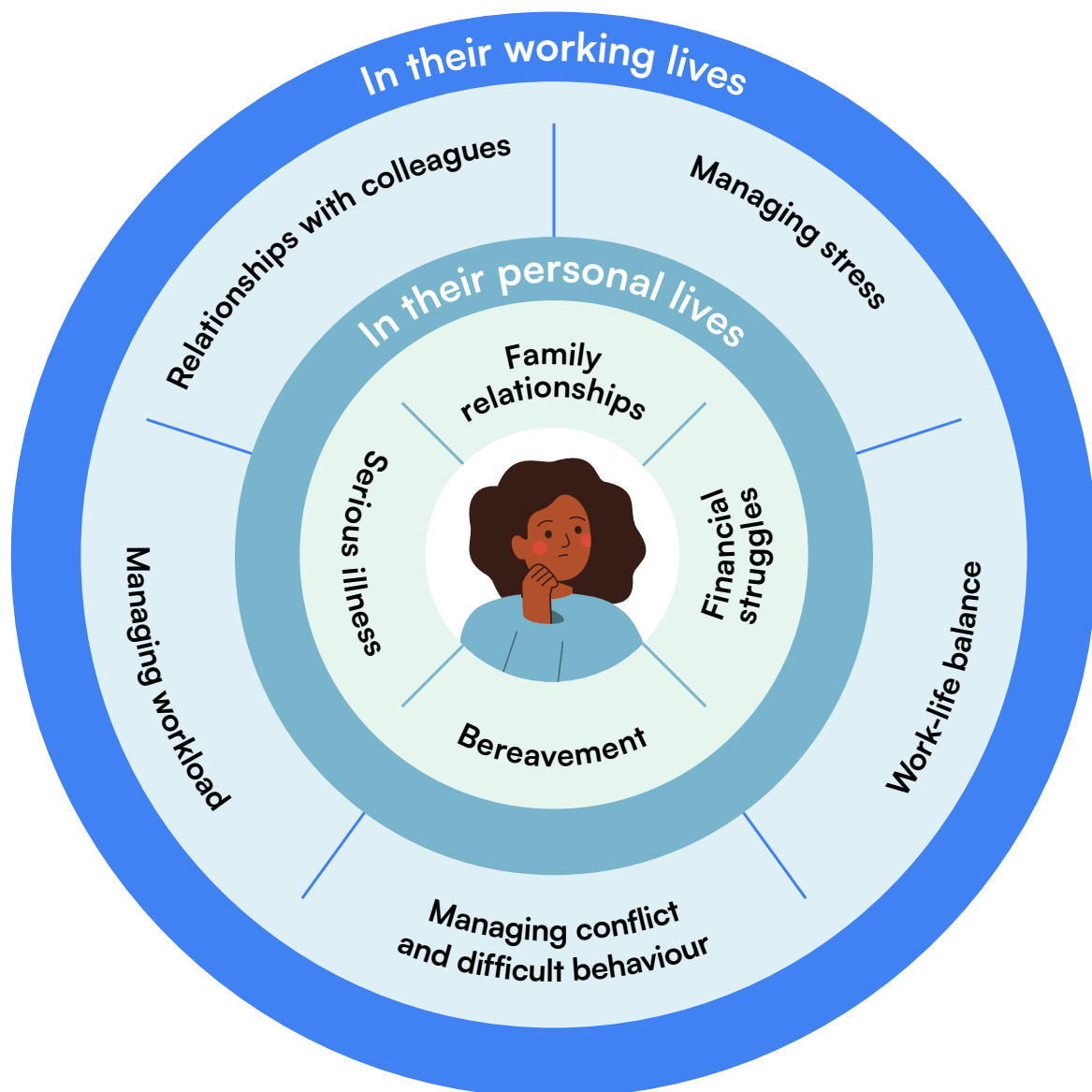


# What is an Employee Assistance Programme?

An Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is an employee benefit programme that supports your staff with personal problems and/or work-related problems that may impact their job performance, health, mental and emotional wellbeing.

An EAP can provide in the moment support and structured counselling. Some EAPs will also provide a range of additional support services, which may include mindfulness programmes, line manager coaching services and life coaching.

An EAP supports staff facing a wide range of issues such as:



# Why invest in an EAP

The education sector is uniquely challenging...

**78%**

of staff working in education are stressed

**59%**

of staff are not confident disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health issues to their employer



We know that good organisational support creates confidence in disclosing these challenges.

By investing in an EAP, you are immediately providing support for your staff, and demonstrating your commitment to their mental health and wellbeing, helping them to stay well and stay in work.

## Before you buy: things to think about

Hiring professional services, no matter what the service may be, requires investigation. It is important that schools find a provider that is qualified to deliver an appropriate service and has the knowledge and experience to support education staff. Here are some questions that your staff are bound to ask, so it's important to discuss them with any potential EAP provider:

### 1 Does the EAP provider understand my sector?

- Working in education is unique, as are the challenges faced by staff. Does the EAP provider have experience of working extensively with education staff?
- Are they able to provide services tailored for education rather than generic support?

### 2 What is the service on offer?

- Is there support available 24/7 365 days a year?
- Does the support offered go beyond being reactive to include proactive measures, such as providing staff with tools to manage their own wellbeing?

### 3 How quickly is support available?

- How fast can someone see a counsellor once referred?
- How quickly are calls answered?

### 4 How good is the EAP?

- Does the provider have quality assurance processes in place?
- Are they accredited?
- How long have they been offering an EAP in the education sector?

### 5 Will they support the school?

- What ongoing support will the provider give you?
- Will they support with staff roll-out?
- Can they provide resources to promote the service to staff?
- Will you receive regular updates and information about the service and usage levels?

# What makes an EAP successful

There are several factors that help make an EAP successful. Some are dependent on choosing the correct partner and service for you, as detailed above. It is also essential to make sure that all staff understand and know how to access the service. The best EAP available won't make a difference if the staff don't know about it or don't buy into it.

Here are some top tips to help make the roll-out of your EAP successful.

## 1 SLT buy-in

- The leadership team buying into the EAP, and supporting its roll-out, will go a long way to encouraging staff to use the service. They are often the first port of call for staff needing assistance and need to be able to signpost staff to the EAP. Will your EAP provider work with the SLT to introduce the service and help them to understand how it will benefit and support staff?

## 2 Support from your provider in rolling out an EAP

- Make sure you choose a provider that will work with you to develop a launch plan and timeline that works for you and your staff

## 3 An EAP launch session

- An introductory session from your EAP provider is an essential part of getting staff to buy into the service. Seeing a third party deliver this reassures staff of the impartiality of the EAP, and allows staff to get a first-hand introduction to all of the elements of the service

## 4 Promotional materials to share with staff

- Make sure your chosen provider will give you materials to share with staff, and posters to put up around school to promote the service
- Use these extensively!

## 5 Ongoing communication to school about the EAP

- Continue to promote the EAP to staff through termly newsletters or other staff comms
- Do you get a regular customer update on the service from the provider? Share this with the team
- Ask if your provider will offer refresher sessions to staff
- Include the EAP information in new employee onboarding and in return to work discussions



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