



East London
NHS Foundation Trust
Information Governance
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11 December 2024

Our reference: FOI DA5687

I am responding to your request for information received 31 October 2024. I am sorry for the delay in responding to this request. This has been treated as a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I am now enclosing a response which is attached to the end of this letter. Please do not hesitate to contact me on the contact details above if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights Coordinator

If you are dissatisfied with the Trust's response to your FOIA request then you should contact us and we will arrange for an internal review of this decision.

If you remain dissatisfied with the decision following our response to your complaint, you may write to the Information Commissioner for a decision under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113
Web: www.ico.org.uk

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Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

Request: I am trying to get some further clarification on the information sent. For context, I would like to know the difference in spending for Occupational Health (OH) and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). As part of this I am trying to get clarification on what constitutes OH and EAP.

Question 1: Could you please provide me with an understanding of how your Trust defines OH and EAP respectively? What elements/criteria do you measure to track the provision of each?

Answer: Occupational Health (OH):

Optima Health is the Trust's Occupational Health Service (formerly known as Team Prevent) who provide dedicated provision of Occupational Health and Employee Wellbeing. Optima Health work with East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) to develop proactive Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategies based on Prevention, Early Intervention and good quality assessments of Fitness for Work. They aim to protect and promote workers' health, by ensuring that people work in a healthy environment and by encouraging them to take responsibility for their own health, so that it does not impact on their ability to fulfil their contractual duties. Optima Health adopt a holistic approach to Employee Health and Wellbeing - helping ELFT to create a positive, healthy work environment - and this is reflected in the services we provide including health surveillance, employee health and wellbeing initiatives, immunisations and vaccinations, sickness absence management and pre-placement assessment.

Pre-Placement Assessments – if staff have been offered a job with ELFT, they will be asked to complete a pre-placement health assessment questionnaire. Staff may be referred to OH if they have indicated they have a health condition that may affect their work so that OH's Employee Health and Wellbeing Advisors can assess their fitness for the job tasks and ensure that their health is not likely to be made worse by the role. OH may make recommendations on adjustments that ELFT may wish to consider, to support them.

Health Surveillance – If ELFT staff are exposed to any potential health risks during their work (for example allergens or potentially harmful agents) OH will work with ELFT to ensure that risk assessments are undertaken and control measures put in place to protect staffs' health. OH may also undertake Health Surveillance to detect any early signs or symptoms and immunisations and vaccinations may be required to prevent work related ill health.

Absence/Ill Health Referrals - All employees have a contractual obligation to attend work. If staff have been off sick or have a health problem which is affecting their ability to carry out their job, they can be referred to the Health and Wellbeing team for a clinical opinion on the fitness for their role, or their fitness to return to work after surgery or illness. These consultations can be via telephone and/or face to face. OH will work to ensure that staff receive Early Intervention support and advice as soon as possible, in the interests of their health and wellbeing. OH's priority will be on helping to facilitate staff return to work as soon as possible by focussing on what they can do, rather than what they cannot do. OH will advise on phased returns and adjustments, if necessary, for someone to be able to return to work, they can help to successfully rehabilitate some people back to work, particularly after a long-term absence. OH will advise Managers if adjustments are likely to be beneficial or whether staff can return to work straight away. The manager will ultimately decide if any suggested adjustments can be accommodated within the workplace.



The attached brochure explains the OH provision fully. Please see Appendix 1.

The Occupational Health Programme is defined as and comprises the following:

- Pre-employment health assessment
- Absence Management and Management Referrals
- Ill health Retirement/application for payment of pension benefits to ill-health for ex-employees
- Immunisation/Vaccination Programme
- Sharps Injuries and Blood Borne Virus Exposure Management
- Healthcare Associated Infection/Infection Control

OH is measured via monthly management Information reports which include:

- Comparison against KPIs in terms of:
 - Timeliness of appointments offered.
 - DNA rates.
 - Number of cases broken down by case type.
 - Cases and reasons per department.
 - Referrals of staff broken down by, age, gender, medical classification, top ten reasons for referral.
- Monitoring of recommendations for fitness for work by:
 - Reasonable adjustments.
 - Fit for work.
 - Temporary unfit for work.
 - Permanently unfit for work.
- Feedback of staff satisfaction.
- There is also monitoring submitted to the Infection Prevention Control Committee on a quarterly basis by the Clinical Lead of the provider.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP):

ELFT's Employee Assistance Programme provides professional support and guidance for employees and immediate family* experiencing anxiety or stress about personal or work-related issues. HELP/Optima Health provides staff and their partner and dependent family members a place to turn for support any time of day or night, 365 days a year. Support is available for whatever issues staff might be facing, including work stress, depression, marriage and relationship issues, legal concerns, coping with change, parenting issues, financial problems and much more. The HELP/Optima Health Lifestyle website offers extensive resources including articles on health, issues at home, issues at work, management support tools, stress questionnaires and online counselling in real-time. Their website is here:

<https://elft.workplacewellbeing.com/eap/>

HELP/Optima Health employ professionally qualified Counsellors and Information Specialists, who are experienced in helping people to deal with all kinds of practical and emotional issues.

ELFT's EAP provides:

- Unlimited Freephone access 24 hours a day, every day of the year for personal and work-related issues.



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- Short-term counselling and support by telephone and face-to-face (up to six one-hour sessions per issue).
- Support and referral for longer-term issues.
- Information services for any practical and day-to-day issues.
- Management support and referral services.
- Online counselling, supporting articles and wellbeing advice.

Although the service includes access to structured counselling support for some, this will only be offered following an assessment with one of HELP/Optima Health Adviceline staff. Advice line, staff are themselves counsellors and are professionally qualified to determine the most appropriate course of structured support for you given your own unique set of circumstances. Face to face counselling is not the only form of structured support that may be offered to staff, HELP/Optima Health also make use of structured telephone appointments and a number of other forms of support.

Every month, ELFT's Wellbeing Team receive a management information report for both Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programme. These reports show data on various information including monthly uptake of calls to EAP and referrals to OH, volume of calls, new or repeat users, further interventions i.e. referred to GP, legal, debt support, referral sources, reasons for referrals, work-related issues or type of personal issues, stressors, demographic information, clinical outcomes, satisfaction scores per month, DNA rates etc.

Question 2: Could you also please provide a breakdown of how much the trust spends on OH and EAP respectively from the total spending figures you have provided in your initial FOI response?

Answer: The Trust has reviewed question 2 of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000. Section 21(1) of the FOI Act states:
(1) Information which is reasonably accessible to the applicant otherwise than under section 1 is exempt information.

The information requested on OH is accessible here:

Question 2d:

https://www.elft.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2024-11/anon_response_-_foi_da5631.pdf

The Trust spent £87,167.00 on the Employee Assistance Programme over 24 months.



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