



# **INGQUZA HILL LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

## **INTEGRATED HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY**

**REVIEWED: 2025**

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## 1. THE PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Integrated Health & Wellness office of IHLM recognizes that its employee are the most important and valuable resources and holds a view that these resources should be well cared for and well developed. This was done by introducing Employee Assistance Programme. Employee assistance programme is a short-term counselling service for employees with personal problems that affect their work performance. This programme started back in the 1940s as an early programme focusing on individual whose alcohol abuse affected job performance but now the programme has grown and is more focused on individual holistically.

The Ingquza Hill Local Municipality seeks to administer EAP in a manner that is consistent with various labour laws, policies and DPSA Strategic Framework that exists so that employer / employees' rights are not violated or adversely affected and that they receive the best care and services which IHLM can within parameters of law and reasonable effort.

To provide guidance and ensure consistency regarding the implementation of the Employee Assistance programme. To offer counselling and support to all employees who encounter personal, emotional, psychological or behaviour concerns that detrimentally affect their work attendance and job performance. To ensure that employee personal and work-related problems do not escalate to the extent of voluntary termination of services by an employer. To promote healthy working relationships and to improve productivity in the workplace.

## 2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Integrated Health & Wellness** is a proactive and holistic intervention program that is aimed at ensuring a capacitated, motivated, fulfilled and productive workforce through individual and organizational interventions including health & productivity management, TB & HIV & AIDS Management, Safety Health Risk Environment Quality Management (SHERQ) and Wellness management as employees are life blood of the organisation.

**Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)** Is defined as work-based program designed to assist in the early identification and resolution of productivity problems associated with Employee / employer impaired by personal concerns which include but not limited to health, marital, substance abuse, financial, emotional stress, work related and other concerns which may adversely affect the job performance of Employee / Employer

**Employer** according to this policy is the head of the institution

**Council** a member of the local government council

**Employee** means a person employed with in the institution in terms of Public Service act of 1994.

**Immediate family** for the purpose of this policy means nuclear family members e.g. spouse, children and parents of both partners of the employee.

**Confidentiality** means information strictly captured in the EAP office without anyone having access to it

**EAP Officer** someone trained and registered with the professional body who is responsible for EAP programme.

**Troubled Employee** refers to any employee / employer whose job performance is adversely affected by any personal or work-related problems.

**Accident** means an accident arising out of and during an employee's employment and resulting in a personal injury, illness or the death of the employee.

**Employee wellness committee** Wellness committee is responsible for the identification of strategies geared to improve the health and wellbeing of the employees and to create a healthier workplace. One of the key areas of responsibility of workplace wellness committee include the development of the workplace wellness plan. The plan that will identify initiatives under the following health promotion strategies. 1. Awareness building 2. Education, 3 Skills building and 4. Environmental support to enhance health practices and policy guidelines development and many other activities undertaken by various IHLM departments.

**Healthy** means free from illness or injury attributable to occupational causes

**Occupational Health and Safety** – means a person who holds a qualification in Occupational Health and Safety recognized as such by South African Medical and Dental Council as referred to in the Medical, Dental and supplementary health service professions Act, 1974 (Act No 56 of 1974)

**Medical Surveillance** – means a planned programme of periodic examination which may include but not limited clinical examination, biological monitoring, or medical tests of employee by an Occupational health and Safety officer or prescribed cases by an Occupational medical practitioner

**Occupational Hygiene** – is the anticipation, recognition, evaluation and control of conditions arising in or from workplace which causes illness or adverse health effects of person

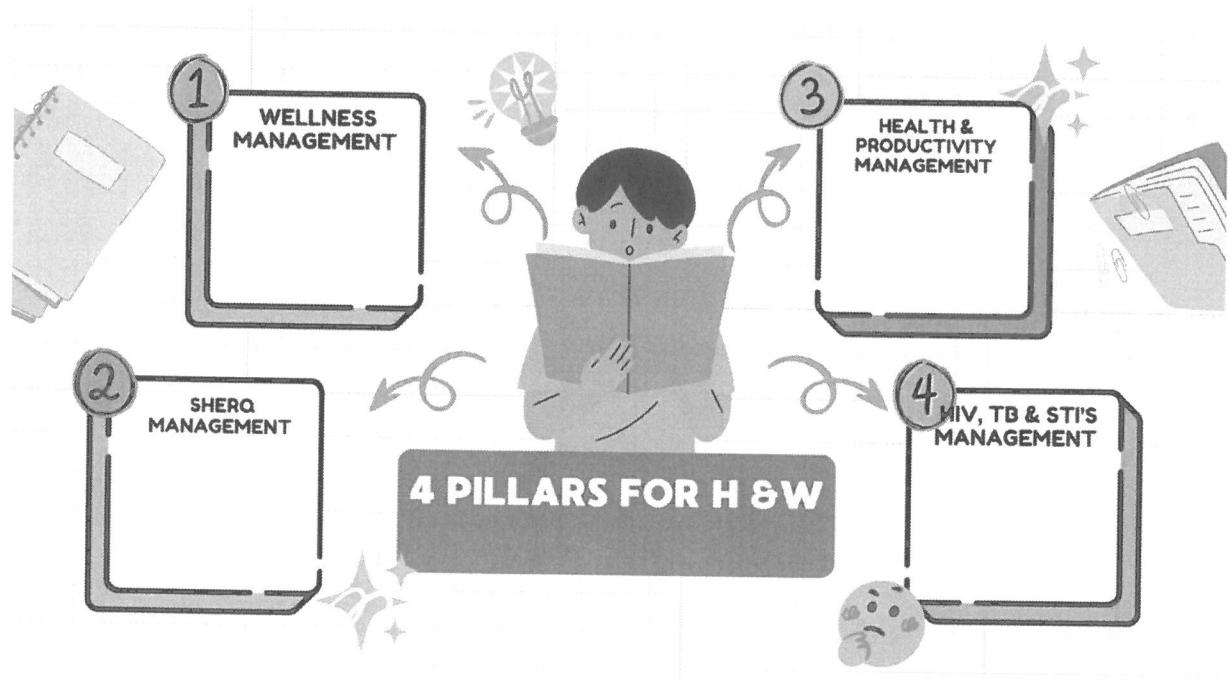
**Safety** means free from that injury or damage that may occur

### **3. POLICY STATEMENT AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 POLICY STATEMENT**

To encourage and maintain the wellbeing and productivity of councillors and employees by providing confidential assistance or short-term counselling to those who are experiencing personal or work-related problems. The policy is applicable to all Management, councillors and employees of Ingquza hill local municipality.

### 3.1.1 INFOGRAPHIC FOR INTEGRATED HEALTH AND WELLNESS



### 3.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 Constitution of the republic of South Africa act of 1996
- 3.2 Basic conditions of employment act 75 of 1997
- 3.3 Labour relations act 66 of 2003
- 3.4 Occupational health and safety act of 1993
- 3.5 Employment equity act of 1998
- 3.6 Manual on managing HIV &AIDS in the workplace of 2002
- 3.7 Mental health act care act of 2002
- 3.8 Skills development act of 1998 (act no. 97 of 1998)

### 4. POLICY CONTENT

With in the policy content, we are going to cover the following topics:

## **4.1 PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE INTERGRATED HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMMES**

In terms of its commitment to Ingquza Hill Local Municipality's EAP initiative, council accept the basic principles which are generally internationally accepted in the support of successful EAP intervention

**4.1.1 The accessibility principles** is committing the employer to make the service available to all employees including the contractual employees employed by the council

**4.1.2 The principle of confidentiality** the EAP office of IHLM will ensure confidentiality of information given by the employee during the consultation and keeping the records safely. The municipality cannot dismiss or victimize the employee because of information revealed during consultation.

### **4.1.3 Neutrality**

The IHLM shall ensure that EAP office is not asked to testify or witness any Labor disputes or labor disciplinary hearing. EAP office must not be used as a disciplinary proceeding.

**4.1.4 Voluntarism** is the most common form used by councillors and employees in terms of seeking treatment so the IHLM at no stage shall force the councillors or employee to participate in EAP program the employee must access it voluntarily.

### **4.1.5 Constructive Coercion**

After everything has been done, that is training, implementation of the program and interventions made the office of the speaker, managers and supervisor can now persuade the troubled councillor or employee to seek help from EAP office.

### **4.1.6 Permanency**

The IHLM shall ensure the survival and sustainability of the program by providing visible support. The Corporate services department must ensure thorough advocacy through consultation with all departments within the municipality.

## **4.2 COUNCIL COMMITMENT**

**4.2.1** undertake through its integrated health and wellness programme to offer councillors and employees short term diagnostic, curative and referral services for all psychosocial problems experienced by its employees.

**4.2.2** Warrants that the assistance and services offered by employee assistance program will be available to all employees irrespective of position.

**4.2.3** Encourage voluntary employee participation in this program

**4.2.4** Recommends union participation and promoting of this program through its involvement.

**4.2.5** Oversee supervisory, managerial and union representative training in respect of objective, benefits or promotional opportunities.

**4.2.6** Accepts that alcoholism / drug dependence is a treatable condition

**4.2.7** Participation in the employee Assistance Program does not replace standard disciplinary procedure nor does it constitute a de facto exemption from such procedure but assists by providing professional assistance in the management of impaired job performance where personal or social factors are causal factors.

### **4.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY AT THE INSTITUTION**

1. Provide EAP services in compliance with DPSA Strategic framework
2. Have the EAP Specialist who is responsible for EAP Program
3. Handle all referrals e.g. self or from supervisors
4. Facilitate workshops or awareness campaigns
5. Train all Supervisors / managers on the identification and handling of troubled employee / employer
6. Assist in the referral of troubled employee / Employer to external services
7. Be involved in marketing and advocacy on EAP
8. Provision of physical wellness activities to councilors and employees

#### **4.3.1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WELLNESS COMMITTEE**

The Wellness committee is supposed to be led by senior manager corporate services or HR manager whilst there is no wellness manager including representatives from different departments and two union members. The prime objective of Wellness committee is –

1. To advice the Employer on health-related matters that affect the employees
2. Formulating of Health & Wellness mission
3. To be involved in the development of H&W Policies
4. Developing behavioral risk management strategies
5. Attending meetings and making key decisions about the program strategic promotion of H&W services and trainings
6. The committee must seat once a quarter

7. Conducting regular planning review sessions
8. Lastly, encouraging Directors, Managers, Union and Supervisors to utilize EAP services

#### **4.3.2. SENIOR MANAGER CORPORATE SERVICES**

- 1 Must include EAP issues as co-faction in the performance agreement
2. Ensure that Municipal programs integrate with EAP targets
3. Provide the municipal manager with EAP reports
4. Ensure that provision of financial support is provided for EAP unit
5. Approve Service Delivery budget implementation plan (SDBIP) for EAP unit.
6. Monitor and evaluate the EAP services provision through the EAP policy
7. Ensure that the line management does not discriminate against participating in EAP programs.

### **4.4. REFERRAL PROCEDURE**

There are 3 type of referral procedures which councillors and employees can use in accessing employee assistance office as follows

#### **4.4.1 VOLUNTARY OR SELF REFERRAL**

**4.4.1.1.** Through marketing and promotion of the EAP program people can come to the office voluntarily.

**4.4.1.2** Should the employee require proof of attendance for his / her employer proof will be given to him or her.

#### **4.4.2 INFORMAL REFERRAL**

**4.4.2.1** Any person within the workplace excluding the direct supervisors who is of the opinion that an councillor or employee could benefit from the services offered by EAP office can affect a referral with an employee's consent.

**4.4.2.2.** This category refers to peers, union, colleagues or any staff member who by virtue of specific and specialist contact in the course of duty with the employee is of the opinion that referral to EAP will be beneficial to the employee.

#### **4.4.3 FORMAL REFERRAL**

**4.4.3.1** the office of the speaker, Managers and supervisors who will become aware that an councillor or employee's work performance is substandard or impaired can, through the process of job action, encourage or suggest to the employee to consult the EAP office.

**4.4.3.2** The focus of the office of the speaker, manager or supervisor is on the councillor or employee's work performance and not the personal problem which may be the cause of poor performance.

**4.4.3.3** A job action is validated by keeping a record of the councillor or employee's job performance which will also serve as the only basis whereby the employee can be counseled by his or her management.

**4.4.3.4** If the councillor or employee at the time of counseling acknowledges experiencing a personal problem and accepts the suggestion that the EAP be consulted, an interview should be arranged.

**4.4.3.5** If the person does not wish to participate in the EAP his job performance should continue to be monitored, and the normal procedure followed.

#### **4.5. PROCEDURES FOR THE REFERRAL AND TREATMENT OF TROUBLED EMPLOYEES**

**4.5.1** Referrals made to EAP may be made by the councillors or employees themselves on a voluntary basis or by the office of the speaker or manager when an councillor or employee's work performance has declined.

**4.5.1.2** When the basic code of conduct of an councillor or employee has not met acceptable standards.

**4.5.1.3** Decision to accept a manager referral to the EAP and subsequent referrals for treatment are voluntary and are the personal responsibility.

**4.5.2** IHLM councillors, employees or members of their families requesting an appointment with the EAP should contact the EAP officer.

**4.5.2.1** Councillors or employees seeking assistance from the EAP are encouraged to do before job performance is impaired.

**4.5.2.2** Problems treated early are usually simpler to resolve.

**4.5.3** Councillors or employees referred to an outside provider however will not be responsible for all costs associated with those outside services although the employee's medical aid may cover some of the costs if applicable and in terms of the fund rules.

#### **4.5.6 TIME OFF FOR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SESSIONS**

**4.5.6.1** Time off from work to attend EAP counselling session is treated the same as other absences due to ill health or medical appointments.

**4.5.6.2** Arrangements should be made with the office of the speaker, employee's supervisor in advance to schedule time away from work or make up any lost time.

**4.5.6.3** Councillors or employees who attend EAP sessions or treatment may use their sick leave or vacation leave which is paid leave or unpaid leave should the employee not have paid leave available if requested and approve.

#### **4.6 PROBLEM INDICATORS THAT SHOWS THAT ONE NEEDS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME**

The problems being experienced by councillor, employee / employer may manifest themselves in factors such as follows –

**4.6.1** Absenteeism, frequent unplanned leave, late coming and early departures. The employee will create various reasons for staying away from work

**4.6.2** Frequent sick leave with no evidence of a latter from medical doctor

**4.6.3** Work quality or quantity deterioration. Lowered productivity, carelessness, forgetfulness and absentmindedness

**4.6.4** Lastly physical appearance deterioration.

#### **4.7 ACCESSING EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME**

Employee assistance program can be access through one of the following

4.7.1. Face to face counselling

4.7.2. Telephonic counselling

4.7.3. Completion of formal referral form

#### **4.8 TYPE OF SERVICES THAT EMPLOYEE ASISTANCE PROGRAMME OFFERS**

Employee assistance program services include assessment, counselling, referral (if indicated) and follow-up. The EAP initial appointment will be as soon as reasonably possible after a request is made. EAP services include but are not limited to counseling in these areas.

##### **4.8.1 PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS**

- a. Alcohol dependency
- b. Behavior problems

- c. Impaired relationships
- d. Financial difficulties
- e. Legal problems
- f. Communication problems

#### **4.8.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS**

- 1. Anxiety problems
- 2. Depression
- 3. Suicide tendencies
- 4. Dealing with HIV / AIDS and other terminal illnesses
- 5. Trauma

#### **4.8.3 WORK RELATED PROBLEMS**

- a) Adjustment problems
- b) Harassment
- c) Retirement
- d) Retrenchment
- e) Work relations
- f) Work stress
- g) Ballism
- h) Personality clashes
- i) Tribalism

### **4.9 WELLNESS PROGRAMME TREATMENT PROCESSES**

**4.9.1.** A professional assessment of the employee's problem is done by the EAP Officer.

**4.9.3.** Additional health professionals such as Psychologists, Occupational therapists and any related health professional, outside stakeholders are available depending on the approval of Senior manager corporate services

**4.9.4.** If necessary, additional input may be sought from the occupational health and safety service or human resources unit.

**4.9.5.** If the councillor or employee does not agree with the assessment or feels that she / he does not wish to participate in the treatment she / he is referred to the referral person by means of a feedback report from EAP.

**4.9.6.** Depending on the nature and complexity of the problem the councillor or employee may also be referred to as a specific outside stakeholder for assistance.

**4.9.7.** If services provided by the EAP result in a positive outcome, services will be terminated, and referral person (where applicable) informed accordingly.

**4.9.8.** Should the councillor or employee not co-operate with the services offered by EAP, or should the treatment not result in a positive outcome, the councillor or employee will be referred to the referral person when applicable.

**4.9.9.** In such cases job performance must continue to be monitored and normal disciplinary procedure followed.

#### **4.10. DEFAULTING IN TREATMENT**

**4.10.1.** In the event in which the councillor or employee defaults in treatment program voluntary or due to poor participation and motivation, then any payment paid by the municipality on behalf of the councillor or employee shall be recovered from the councillor or employee.

**4.10.2.** Should an councillor or employee who has successfully completed the treatment and suffer a relapse, then a full report must be submitted to the delegated authority by EAP professional recommending further action.

#### **4.11 PAYMENT OF THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME SERVICES**

**4.11.1** IHLM shall pay for services rendered by external services providers in line with national rates as per prescribed by professional bodies.

**4.11.2** Payment shall only be made for number of sessions conducted and invoices shall be accompanied by attendance register for each EAP services provided

**4.11.3** In cases of substance and alcohol abuse the municipality will only pay for the initial treatment. Should the employee relapses cost of further treatment will be done by the employee.

**4.11.4** If the member of the councillor or employee's family is associated with the councillor or employee's personal or social problem, the family member may access EAP services, provided there are no additional cost to the Municipality for further referral

**4.11.5** Counselling costs will be limited to nine sessions. Medication prescribed as part of treatment will be paid for by the organization, subjected to the above-mentioned provisions. Councillor or employee requiring anti-retroviral treatment will be formally referred to department of health by EAP professional. This is to ensure the municipality resources are not duplicated

## **4.12. THE PROHIBITION OF USAGE ALCOHOL WHEN ATTENDING WELLNESS OR PHYSICAL WELLNESS PROGRAMS**

4.12.1. Alcohol related harm is an intractable problem that is destroying lives, tearing apart the social fabric and hampering socio economic development. It needs to be addressed by providing for ancillary matters to contribute to the reduction of alcohol related harms.

4.12.2. Wellness programs are designed for team-building purposes and getting employees out of the office to reduce stress and become productive at work. The municipality has observed that several employees see the opportunity of wellness program as time be free and get intoxicated during the working hours and that is prohibited.

4.12.3. Any councillor or employees found with alcohol and intoxicated during the event in progress or during any physical wellness program will face disciplinary action as per applicable legislation after the investigation has been made.

4.12.4. The wellness committee members will be committed in searching every councillors or employee's car entering the premises of the event and the traffic department will assist with alcohol breathalyzer if there are any suspicion of an intoxicated employee.

## **5. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

**5.1.** Inqguza hill local municipality started its own wellness office in 2012, and this is the first of its kind policy though the policy is continuing evaluated on a yearly basis.

**5.2.** Needs analyses was done to all IHLM employees before designing the policy and three wellness offices from different municipalities were consulted and the DPSA strategic framework.

**5.3.** EAP shall be continuously monitored. It shall be evaluated once in three years by the EAP officer and the management.

## **6. APPENDICES**

**6.1.** The council recognizes that EAP education is an important component of successful EAP intervention.

**6.2.** The education and orientation of key people who will act as referral agents to the nature and function of the EAP is paramount to the ultimate effectiveness of the program.

**6.3.** The correct identification of the troubled employee and steps that must be taken to encourage the employee to seek professional help will be the primary focus of this education,

**6.4.** The EAP shall be responsible for ongoing preventive and educative health and wellness education programs.

## **7.APPROVAL**

This policy will come into effect on the date of adoption by the Council and be signed off by the following:



**CLLR S.B VATSHA**

**THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER**



**DATE**