



**UK Employee Assistance Professionals Association**

# **Employee Assistance Programme Standards Framework**

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## Foreword

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The UK EAPA Standards have become an integral element of the employee assistance landscape, providing an important and valuable resource for programme providers as well as purchasers and clients.

As the employee assistance market has changed in recent years it has been important that these Standards evolve to reflect the needs of employers, procurement professionals, affiliate counsellors and, importantly, end users of employee assistance programmes and that the Standards support high levels of service quality and delivery.

The scope of these new Standards is such that they are designed for EAP services in all types of organisations in the UK and further afield and they are applicable to all types of EAP. They continue the good work that has previously been undertaken by the Association and follow the Standards system that was established by the Association at its inception.

The revised UK EAPA Standards presented here have been put together by a large multidisciplinary team and alongside their valued input, the Association has consulted widely among UK EAPA members to ensure that we can present a user friendly and easy to use set of Standards.

Notably, changes to the document include the way in which specific Standards are clarified and quantified. This ensures that there is less opportunity for interpretation and that each Standard can be upheld more readily. Alongside this, the clearer presentation of the Standards is aimed at a wider readership of this resource which will help us grow the Association's influence within the UK employee assistance market.

We would like to extend our thanks to all those who have assisted in the creation of these Standards; over the last two-years, the support and commitment of the project team has been vital and their dedication is evident in the quality of the document that we are now able to publish.

Feedback on the UK EAPA Standards is welcome and may be offered by emailing [info@eapa.org.uk](mailto:info@eapa.org.uk).

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## Introduction to the UK EAPA Standards

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### **Aim**

The aim of these Standards is to support the achievement of safe, appropriate and effective quality services.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to set out the Standards (as revised in 2015) for EAP services. The Standards are measured by the voluntary evaluation of the EAPs.

### **Scope**

The EAP Standards are designed for EAP services in all types of organisations in the UK and beyond. EAP services can constitute a wide brief and the Standards are applicable to all types of EAP.

The Standards aim to complement, not replace, other standards and legal obligations.

It is the responsibility of a purchaser to take reasonable steps and due diligence to arrange for a competent assessment of their EAP needs, whether that assessment is performed by the contracted service or by a competent independent adviser.

The Standards are relevant to professional activities and do not extend to an employer's legal responsibilities that are already addressed.

EAP professionals who deliver EAP services are also bound by standards set by their respective professional bodies in relation to their practice.

Providers of EAPs must be committed, in addition to ensuring high standards of service delivery, to help ensure that their EAP professionals act in accordance with their own professional standards. Consequently the Standards for EAP services take into consideration and complement the professional standards set by the relevant professional bodies.

### **Standards**

Each standard can normally be met in more than one way. For each standard a number of minimum requirements are described.

### **Disclaimer**

UK EAPA will give consideration to any feedback received about an EAP provider.

However, the UK EAPA is not a regulatory body and where you are not satisfied with an EAP you should follow the provider's complaints procedure and/or seek legal advice. UK EAPA does not endorse or recommend any EAP and to the fullest extent permitted by law, UK EAPA accepts no liability for any loss or damage (whether direct, indirect or consequential) incurred by any person howsoever caused arising from any person acting, omitting to act, failing to act or refraining from acting in accordance with these Standards.

## 1. Purchasers: needs assessment

### Standard

An EAP must understand purchasers' needs based on recent information.

### Minimum requirements

1. An EAP must complete a needs assessment.

## 2. Purchasers: organisation-wide integration of the EAP

### Standard

An EAP will offer a purchaser assistance to integrate the EAP at all levels of the organisation.

### Minimum requirements

1. A purchaser will be encouraged to make the appropriate persons within the organisation aware of the importance of thorough integration of the EAP.
2. An EAP will offer an EAP policy wording for integration in to the employment policies and to review the same.
3. The purchaser will be made aware that UK EAPA recommends responsibility for integration shall be clearly placed with a coordinator.
4. The purchaser will be made aware of the value of ensuring those involved closely with the EAP need to be familiar with its role and may consequently require briefing on the nature and purpose of EAPs.

## 3. Purchasers: implementation plan

### Standard

An EAP will provide an implementation plan to each EAP purchaser.

### Minimum requirements

1. The implementation plan will contain reference to:
  - The actions and responsibilities of those involved and timescales required to put the EAP in place.
  - Arrangements for monitoring progress and taking corrective action.
  - Arrangements to promote, publicise and launch the service.
  - Arrangements for continued promotion of the service.
  - Emphasis on confidentiality.

## 4. Purchasers: EAP promotion

### Standard

An EAP will offer a promotional programme that encourages usage and includes promotional materials, management and employee briefings and an ongoing promotion plan.

### Minimum requirements

1. An EAP will offer to assist the organisation in promoting the service through a variety of methods, taking full account of the specific and diverse needs of those in the organisation.
2. The EAP will provide regular promotional materials.
3. All promotion activity will be continuous and will include all individuals covered by the service.

## 5. Purchasers: EAP reports

### Standard

An EAP will offer management information reports to the purchaser.

### Minimum requirements

1. An EAP will provide generic usage information to all purchasers.
2. The report must detail the method of counting the data.
3. The report must identify any potential duplication of data and usage information.
4. The report must protect individual confidentiality and anonymity.
5. The report must enable the purchaser to identify themes and trends in the usage of the EAP.

## 6. Purchasers: complaints procedures

### Standard

An EAP will have a published complaints procedure.

### Minimum requirements

1. An EAP will define what is to be regarded as a complaint – which may be considered to be different from 'negative feedback'.
2. A purchaser raising an issue as a complaint will have it identified as such.
3. An EAP will identify a person to whom any complaint should be addressed.
4. There will be a clear statement of any requirements as to the manner of communicating complaints –namely whether oral, written or both.
5. The statement will identify by whom the complaint will be investigated, reviewed and responded and the time scale.
6. There will be a procedure for resolving disputes following investigations of complaints.

## 7. Purchasers: strategic partnership, communication and consultancy

### Standard

An EAP will offer a partnership approach to the purchaser.

An EAP will have clear and effective lines of communication, a sharing of vision, outcomes and action plans and will provide every opportunity for the EAP to influence strategic initiatives.

### Minimum requirements

1. The EAP should make clear its ability to provide strategic organisational consultancy as part of its role.
2. Using management information reports the EAP will be able to offer feedback to the purchaser regarding trends that would benefit from their action.
3. Having identified those themes and trends, the EAP will be proactive and supportive in suggesting appropriate remedial action.



## 8. Information control: record keeping

### Standard

An EAP will create and maintain records of services to both client and purchasing organisation that are consistent with the EAP service delivery system, purchasing and provider organisation policies, programme procedures and all applicable legal and professional requirements.

### Minimum requirements

1. Every individual client at the start of any EAP Service will be informed that a record will be kept of any contact with the service.
2. The EAP will record all services delivered to the purchaser.
3. The content of records will be consistent with the scope of the service and detailed enough to provide management reporting.
4. Affiliates shall be informed in writing that all records maintained in a format stipulated by the provider are the property of the provider.
5. Records shall be kept, transferred and destroyed securely.
6. Records should be kept in line with other professional, legal and legislative requirements.
7. Access to records should be kept to a need to know basis.
8. Access to electronic records should have appropriate access controls including passwords security.
9. Individual clients have a right to review their own records on request.

## 9. Information control: confidentiality

### Standard

An EAP will have a clear confidentiality statement and UK EAPA members must adhere to all appropriate UK Data Protection legislation.

### Minimum requirements

1. Confidentiality is a central tenet of an EAP service and must be maintained.
2. An EAP will explain confidentiality to purchasers.
3. An EAP will have a written statement that fully informs clients about their rights regarding the scope and limitations of confidentiality. This statement will be communicated and made available to every client before assistance is offered.

In the case of telephone or online counselling it is expected that the statement will be read or typed out and agreed verbally or online by the client, with a copy sent by e-mail if requested.

4. Every employee of an EAP must personally contract to a confidentiality agreement.
5. An EAP will have clear guidelines and procedures as to when confidentiality will be breached, such as threat to life or others and child protection.
6. An EAP will have clear consent to disclose information about a client, for example as part of a management referral.
7. An EAP will protect client information from disclosure with appropriate levels of security. Access levels for different staff within an EAP shall be clearly defined.
8. All offices from which EAP services are provided shall be located and designed to ensure client privacy.

## 10. EAP business operations: service delivery

### Standard

An EAP will attempt to ensure their services are provided through a distinct and separate business function that provides a clearly identifiable and systematic EAP delivery system.

An EAP will ensure procedures are in place to enable consistent and effective delivery of services. They will be continually reviewed and developed in response to EAP objectives and business needs.

### Minimum requirements

1. An EAP will ensure it has sufficient resources to provide a professional and clinical service.
2. An EAP will employ at least one manager having a minimum of two years' experience of direct EAP provision.
3. An EAP will have a ratio of full time equivalent clinical staff, to its other staff of not less than 1:5000.
4. An EAP will either be an organisational member of a counselling or counselling related professional body (e.g. BAC, BPS, HPC, UKCP) or employs at least one senior manager of the service who is a member of such a body.
5. A service delivery system will be chosen that best reflects an EAP needs. Factors to be considered include size and diversity of employee population, number and location of sites, budget and internal resources.
6. The EAP will have a separately identified function with its own policies, written procedure and identified personnel, reporting relationships and responsibilities.
7. The procedures will describe all the important EAP processes, such as:
  - The access routes to the EAP.
  - Processes that ensure confidentiality.
  - The processes for problem identification or assessment, referral and for short-term resolution.
  - EAP participation in case monitoring, follow-up, treatment, case closure, reports and non-compliance.
  - EAP participation in such related areas as manager referrals, procedures relating to stress, harassment, trauma, disability, mental health, substance misuse and discipline.
  - Each procedure will outline the scope of the work entailed.

## 11. EAP business operations: people

### Standard

An EAP must provide an adequate number of professionals to achieve the stated goals and objectives of the EAP in conjunction with purchaser service level agreement.

### Minimum requirements

1. An EAP will ensure adequate staffing levels and skills are available for each client considering size, geographic location for delivery, diversity and scope of the contracted programme.
2. An EAP will evidence standards for supporting staff and quality assurance, such as ISO-9001, Investors in People or equivalent practice.
3. An EAP will evidence staff have the knowledge, skills, qualification, training and experience necessary to perform their tasks.
4. An EAP will ensure all staff will have a minimum of an annual written performance review to include a personal development plan for continuing professional development.
5. An EAP will familiarise staff with policies and procedures including duty of confidentiality and data protection and their accountability for service delivery and quality.
6. An EAP will ensure all staff are familiar with, and work consistently with the UK EAP Code of Ethics.
7. An EAP will ensure relevant staff are aware of their responsibilities to other professional codes of ethics as appropriate (for example, to BACP, BPS, HCP or UKCP) and the requirement to identify and resolve actual or perceived conflicts of interest.
8. An EAP will have in place systems to identify and address unacceptable practice, conduct or concerns around health.
9. An EAP will ensure staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and have policies and processes in place to raise concerns or grievances.
10. An EAP will be able to demonstrate a system for clinical governance including the maintenance of documented protocols.
11. An EAP will ensure all clinical staff undertake adequate clinical supervision.
12. An EAP provider to ensure all clinical staff are professionally indemnified.
13. An EAP to ensure clinical professionals are registered with and accredited by the relevant regulatory body or working toward accreditation.

## 12. EAP network: affiliate management

### Standard

Stakeholders of an EAP will fully understand and accept the policies, procedures, responsibilities and limitations associated with their specific role within the EAP and its service delivery. In particular the dual purchaser/customer relationship.

An EAP will have robust recruitment, due diligence, credentialing and audit processes in place to ensure high quality service delivery by appropriately qualified and credentialed affiliates.

An EAP will provide affiliates with a contract and ensure affiliates receive regular, non-managerial 'supervision' of their counselling practice.

An EAP will provide affiliates with detailed documentation of the EAP policies and procedures. This will include the management clients at risk and escalation procedures.

### Minimum requirements

1. An EAP provider will have a robust affiliate recruitment process that include effective due diligence checks on qualifications, insurance cover, experience and professional accreditations.
2. Affiliates will be provided with a contract that clearly defines their specific roles and responsibilities, including procedures to be followed, lines of communication, boundaries, and expected performance criteria.
3. Care will be taken to ensure the provider has full management control and responsibility for affiliate activities.
4. Regular audit evaluation and re-credentialing of affiliates will be carried out by the EAP.
5. An EAP will comply with the UK EAPA Code of Ethics for individual members (see paragraph 'Buying in external services').
6. Affiliates will be given appropriate information about EAP delivery policy and procedures.
7. Records will be kept of all affiliates who have contact with clients. These records will show:
  - Relevant clinical and professional qualifications and their verification.
  - The name of their professional supervisor.
  - Confirmation at least every two years that supervision is continuing.
  - Details and frequency of any visits to affiliates premises.

### 13. EAP network: EAP affiliate case management

#### Standard

UK EAPA expects that regular case management will be provided to EAP affiliates.

#### Minimum requirements

1. An EAP will ensure case managers are EAP specialists with substantial experience of client assessment, including assessment for psychological and mental health issues.
2. Case managers will be supported by clinical specialists in the field of mental and behavioural health, who have additional experience of crisis and suicide risk assessment.
3. Case management will be provided for all EAP affiliates.
4. In the event of an emergency the case manager will agree a procedure for urgent action.

### 14. EAP network: EAP case risk management

#### Standard

An EAP will have a clearly defined clinical risk protocol process for the management of risk cases that includes sufficient escalation and consultation processes.

#### Minimum requirements

1. An EAP will have adequate professional liability cover.
2. The EAP establishes procedures necessary to respond to legal challenges.
3. The EAP complies with relevant government regulations.
4. EAP documents such as release of information forms, statements of understanding and permission for treatment are standardised and consistently used.

## 15. EAP operations: problem identification and initial assessment

### Standard

An EAP will provide professional initial assessments of client's eligibility and suitability for EAP assistance and treatment needs.

An EAP will ensure that assessment will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

All clients will have a mental health assessment at first contact, conducted by an appropriate specialist, to fully assess the client needs, where after referral to relevant support services will be made.

### Minimum requirements

1. Purchasers will be made aware of the different level of service offered, for example by intake 'service representatives' who may not be counsellors.
2. Competent staff will be available at all times to conduct an intake immediate problem identification.
3. Competent staff for a mental health assessment will have successfully completed face-to-face classroom tuition, and graduated from a minimum of a one year full-time or two year part-time counselling qualification that included a supervised placement with a minimum of 100 contact hours as an integral part of the course, for example, CEAP (Certified Employee Assistance Professional).
4. Staff involved in assessment will follow clearly detailed procedures and protocols for the assessment and documenting of client needs and managing risks.
5. Assessment procedures and protocols will detail guidelines for crisis situations and escalation to a qualified clinician.
6. Where assessments are conducted on the telephone, allowance is made for those occasions where a face-to-face assessment is most appropriate. An EAP will have the facility to arrange this at short notice.

## 16. EAP operations: EAP referral

### Standard

An EAP will refer clients to appropriate services for the assessed problem.

An EAP will refer clients to accredited counsellors.

An EAP will signpost or refer onward when the assessed problem is not appropriate to the EAP provision or to the purchaser

### Minimum requirements

1. A counsellor will have completed at least 450 hours of tutor-led professional training with student placement, have a minimum of 450 hours of practice supervised to at least 1.5 hours per calendar month and practised for at least three years.
2. An EAP will have established a list of local referral possibilities in light of the purchasing organisation's employee population.
3. An EAP will know how to research additional requirements quickly depending on the particular needs of a client.
4. Referral options will be discussed with the purchaser, with an explanation of the options, together with any costs.
5. The EAP will maintain appropriate professional boundaries in researching referral options, in making the referral and in follow up.



## 17. EAP operations: crisis intervention

### Standard

An EAP provider will ensure that the purchaser has given careful thought as to how employees are supported in urgent, serious or emergency situations.

An EAP will be able to offer support in the event of crisis and trauma situations, including telephone support, onsite support and follow up. Where the EAP is not able to offer this support it should make an appropriate referral for support.

### Minimum requirements

1. An EAP provider will develop an appropriate procedure for triggering and co-coordinating critical incident or emergency services, with the purchaser
2. The EAP will either provide and maintain a 24 hour/365 days a year service that is able to respond appropriately to any crisis.
3. A mental health/crisis management professional will be on call at all times.
4. Procedures for accessing help in an emergency will be made clear to employees.
5. An EAP will have access to a team of pre-selected critical incident response specialists or be able to refer to an appropriate support organisation.
6. The EAP will have clear procedures and guidelines for dealing with crisis situations.

## 18. EAP operations: short-term problem resolution

### Standard

An EAP will establish guidelines and procedures to determine if and when to provide short-term (session limited) problem resolution services.

Short-term problem resolution will be explained to the employee client at the outset.

### Minimum requirements

1. Before proceeding with face-to-face counselling, at least one assessment session is conducted to decide the appropriateness of short term counselling to the client's problems.
2. Employee clients are made aware of the boundaries in which an EAP will work and the limits of confidentiality.

## 19. EAP operations: monitoring and follow up of services outside the EAP

### Standard

An EAP will have systems in place to ensure the appropriate monitoring of progress for all clients referred to services external to the EAP.

### Minimum requirement

1. The EAP will establish parameters for case management and follow up of EAP clients.
2. All monitoring activity will be documented appropriately.
3. The EAP will offer to monitor the treatment of a client who has been referred to services outside of the EAP. If the client consents, the EAP will periodically call the employee, and sometimes the treatment provider, by prior arrangement to check progress.
4. Where the EAP is contractually required to follow up in certain situations, such as alcohol dependency, stress or clinical depression, the EAP will inform the employee client to make them aware of the requirement at the point of referral and obtain consent to such follow up.

## 20. EAP operations: EAP consultancy services to managers

### Standard

An EAP provider will provide consultancy and support for line management within an organisation.

### Minimum requirements

1. Coaching and support for these key staff on how to intervene constructively, fairly, consistently and sensitively to help employees with situations requiring attention and appropriate help.
2. Day-to-day support to ensure key staff understand their own boundaries and what is appropriate support for the employee.
3. Advice and information on how to make a referral to the EAP.

## 21. EAP operations: manager referral

### Standard

An EAP will provide methods to accept referrals from the organisation and its representatives; this can include line management, human resources and occupational health.

### Minimum requirements

1. A clear procedure is in place for referrals to take place.
2. The concept itself and the procedures around referrals are explained in the organisation's EAP materials so the process is transparent to all.
3. An EAP provider will appoint a case manager to monitor the initial assessment, action plan and subsequently the quality of assistance provided.
4. An EAP provider will obtain explicit consent that clearly details the level of feedback to be given to the referrer.

## 22. EAP operations: evaluation

### Standard

An EAP will implement internal procedures that are used routinely to audit and evaluate the effectiveness of both delivered EAP services and administration processes.

An EAP will be prepared to subject such procedures to external independent audit.

### Minimum requirements

1. Evaluation parameters will be clearly defined.
2. Procedures and responsibilities for and the frequency of evaluation activity will be clearly defined.