

Optima Health

Optima Health EAP

24/7 access to confidential mental health support

Optima Health Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a free, confidential support service available to you 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

It's there to help when life feels challenging - whether you're dealing with stress, anxiety, financial worries, relationship issues, work pressures or simply need someone impartial to talk to.

How the service can help

Emotional, health and social problems can affect any of us at different times in our lives. These challenges can cause personal distress and impact our wellbeing.

Optima Health EAP provides confidential, professional support and guidance for employees and their immediate family*. This means help is always available, whenever you need it.

How confidentiality is handled

Employees can trust that Optima Health EAP treats all information confidentially whether obtained directly or indirectly.**

Our EAP is bound by the professional code of ethics of the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy and the Employee Assistance Professionals Association.

Using the EAP service

Whether you are experiencing struggles or concerns at home or at work, Optima Health EAP is available to provide expert guidance and support.

Our team of wellbeing and counselling practitioners offer confidential, independent and unbiased information and guidance.

Support is available in a range of ways - by telephone, online and through face-to-face appointments. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

**Family member access: Immediate family members can use the helpline for support. Counselling is available only when they attend with the employee, such as in couple sessions. Legal and debt support are not included in the family service.*

***Confidentiality: Calls are confidential, except in situations involving serious risk of harm, serious crime, or a legal requirement to share information. If this happens, it will be explained wherever possible.*

How to contact Optima Health EAP

Contact our service for free **confidential 24/7 support** from our team of trained wellbeing and counselling practitioners:

Helpline: 0808 168 2143

Website: https://www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk/

Get in touch if you need support with areas such as:

Health and wellbeing
Mental or physical health, bereavement, trauma, and alcohol or drug problems.

Money worries
Debt, gambling, and financial wellbeing advice.

Caring responsibilities
Childcare or looking after relatives or dependants.

Consumer and legal
Disputes with retailers, housing or family concerns, and understanding your legal rights.

Family and home
Relationships, children and social problems.

At work
Bullying and harassment, stress, management support, sickness absence, work-life balance and personal effectiveness.

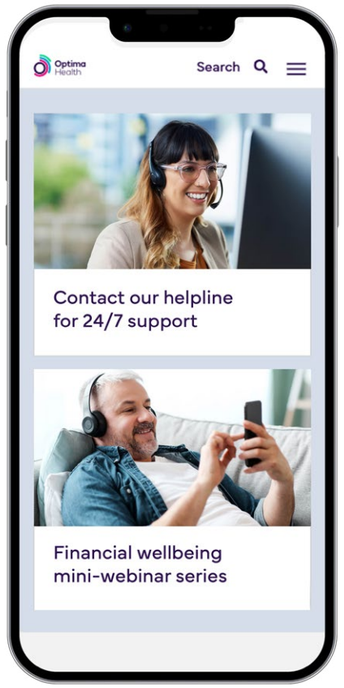
Accessing the wellbeing platform: *Lifestyle*

What is the Lifestyle platform?

Lifestyle is our online wellbeing platform, providing trusted information and support across a wide range of topics. This includes mental health, physical health, financial worries, bereavement, staying well at work, and guidance for line managers on supporting staff.

The platform offers a variety of articles and videos, as well as details of our monthly webinar programme, which includes both live and on-demand sessions.

Lifestyle also provides access to our online counselling service, allowing you to speak to a counsellor via a secure chat function.



How to access the Lifestyle website

Visit:	https://www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk/
Username:	RBWM
Password:	RBWM



FAQs

What happens when I call the EAP helpline?

Your call will be answered promptly and some basic personal details will be taken in order to set up a confidential record. Following this we will ask you a few questions about what you're experiencing so that we can identify the most appropriate support for you.

These details help us confirm your identity in line with data protection requirements when the counsellor subsequently calls you.

Other details may also be collected, as required by your employer for management information purposes, such as your role and length of service.

Please be assured that the management information for your employer never includes any personal details or information that would make you identifiable.

How are my case records stored?

Case records are stored on our secure case record system and retained for seven years.

Do I have to give personal details?

You can remain anonymous if you wish, although a telephone number will be required.

The counsellor will be able to provide immediate support, but follow-on services like counselling will not be available if you choose to maintain anonymous.

Is the EAP service confidential?

Optima Health EAP is confidential and independent of your employer.

There are a few exceptions to confidentiality which are: if the caller indicates a risk to self or another; reveal they have committed a serious crime; reveals something that, by law, must be disclosed to the authorities.

Any disclosure requirements will be discussed with you if and when they arise.

What happens during the initial assessment?

The counsellor will listen to your concerns, undertake an assessment of the situation and determine what help is required. The counsellor will then discuss the options identified as appropriate.

The assessment provides a structured way to explore the issues and access information and guidance to address your concerns. Outcomes may include:

- Resolving the issue during the call itself.
- Referral for short-term structured counselling.
- Debt management support.
- Legal information and advice.
- Signposting to appropriate internal or external resources.

When would short-term structured counselling be offered after the initial assessment?

Although counselling is known to be highly effective in dealing with emotional and psychological issues, it is not always a suitable option. This will be explored with you in the initial assessment.

If short-term counselling is identified as an appropriate intervention, then an appointment will be arranged with you. This may be for supported computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (cCBT), telephone counselling, online video counselling (usually via Microsoft Teams), or face-to-face counselling, where clinically appropriate.



Is EAP just for counselling?

No, in addition to counselling, the EAP service offers access to a wide range of support options. This includes debt management support, legal information and advice, couples counselling, and coaching for managers. All of these services are funded by your employer and at no additional cost to you.

When would short-term structured counselling not be offered?

There are some situations where short-term structured counselling may not be offered. This could be due to the number of sessions available, a need for more specialist support, the counselling not being appropriate for the issue, or other factors.

- The presenting issue is identified as falling outside mild to moderate mental health.
- The caller is identified as being at high or immediate high risk (usually in terms of harm to self).
- Counselling is being provided elsewhere.
- The caller is assessed as insufficiently motivated or psychologically minded to benefit from short-term structured counselling.
- Indications that the caller needs longer term counselling or specialist support (for example, historical sexual abuse, addictions). In these instances, the counsellor will explore more suitable options and, if required, can offer a follow-up review as they progress into the correct service.
- Post-traumatic stress related issues are reported and it is more than four weeks since the incident (NICE guidelines state specialist trauma therapy is required).
- Where the caller is seeking long-term counselling, and short-term interim support is not identified or is deemed potentially detrimental.

If short-term counselling is not considered appropriate, then the reason for this will be discussed with you, and alternative sources of support explored.

What is short-term structured counselling?

This is based on identifying a clear focus and measure for success that is achievable in the sessions. By formulating solutions, the counsellor will progress the individual towards their goals. Please note that the counsellor will review at each session whether short-term structured counselling continues to be suitable.

What does *signposting* mean?

If a longer-term issue, or specialist support is indicated, signposting would be explored. In this case, the counsellor would assist the caller to identify specialist agencies which fit with their specific needs that are able to provide longer-term support.

However, the EAP service does not actively work in partnership with any of these agencies. There is onus on the individual. It is a personal choice and there has to be desire to engage, which is generally key to the success of any talking therapy.

Support is given as to how to make the choice, for instance: mainstream agencies (usually national); questions the caller may want to check with the provider, as a way of filtering the options; how to make best use of any sessions; etc.

Are there any other limitations?

There is a limit to the number of blocks of counselling available via the helpline within a rolling 12-month period. This means that there is one block of counselling within the defined period.

A further block of counselling is permitted if the issue is unrelated to the previous focus of counselling. Even if counselling availability has been used, callers can still access the helpline for one-off support.

What can managers expect if they want support?

Managers can experience difficulties within their role and can benefit from coaching support to help explore the different options available to them. For instance, they may have an issue with a member of their team who has a mental health issue, there could be conflict taking place between team members, or the manager may be struggling with adapting to an organisational change.

The coaching support is there to build the manager's confidence and help them look at potential solutions in a non-directive way. It also helps the manager set personal goals and look at how their performance can be maximised.

If a manager may be in need of a counselling intervention, it will be suggested to them at the time.

Is this service available for family?

The Optima Health EAP service is primarily available to the employee, but can be extended to family members as long as the employee is present.

For instance, if the employee would benefit from couples counselling, this is available as long as the employee is present for each session provided.

Can I as a manager refer an employee to the EAP?

If an employee is upset or uncomfortable about contacting the EAP service then managers can support this process with a 'warm hand over'.

With the employee's consent, a manager can email contactus@optimahealth.co.uk or ring the Optima Health EAP number and provide their employees name, contact number and reason for contacting.

It may be important to know that once the employee has been handed over to the EAP service, a manager will not be informed of any actions. If further advice or information is required with regards to the employee's reason for needing assistance, then the option of an occupational health referral should be considered.

Complaints

Our aim is to provide a professional, supportive, safe, and effective service. However, should there be any concerns about the service, the following options are available:

- Via letter to: Unit 2, Hayland Street, Meadowcourt, Sheffield S9 1BY – marked for the attention of Optima Health EAP.
- Via email to: customerexperience@optimahealth.co.uk



optimahealth.co.uk/employee-assistance-programme

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