

Guidelines for Use of Employee Support Service

March 2005

1. Purpose of Employee Support Service

The University of Limerick values the contributions made by employees and recognises that every one of us, regardless of our position within the University, can experience difficulties and problems in our daily lives. The purpose of the Employee Support Service (ESS) is to provide University of Limerick employees with a support service to assist them in resolving personal issues relating to health, well-being, relationships or their employment.

The introduction of the Employee Support Service is supported by the University.

2. Scope of the Employee Support Service

2.1 The Employee Support Service will apply to all University of Limerick employees.

2.2 The Employee Support Service will apply to family members of all University of Limerick employees. Family members are defined as partner or adult child (18+ years) residing at the same address as the employee.

2.3 The Employee Support Service encourages proactive intervention, involving preventative measures that seek to address/eliminate the cause(s) of difficulties for individual employees.

2.4 The service is voluntary – the decision to use the service and avail of counselling rests with the individual.

2.5 Use of any aspect of the Employee Support Service is free of charge to employees and adult family members living at home.

3. Accessing the Employee Support Service

3.1 The University of Limerick employees may access the following support facilities:

- A free-phone helpline for information/referral/support purposes, available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- Up to 6 sessions of face-to-face counselling support, provided by external consultants.
- An experienced team of counsellors and practitioners, with a wide range of specialisations, provided by an external consultancy.

3.2 All counsellors and practitioners work to professional codes of practice, assuring sensitivity, confidentiality and the highest standards of professionalism.

3.3 The Employee Support Service is initially accessed by the employee calling a Free Phone number which is answered directly by the external consultancy. To ensure confidentiality, access is not made through other University of Limerick employees. Users may prefer to access this number from a private telephone as UL telephone bills are itemised.

3.4 Counselling appointments will be available in the evenings and weekends if required by employees.

3.5 Every effort will be made to ensure that employees will be able to access the services at a convenient location.

3.6 A line manager or supervisor may suggest the use of the Employee Support Service to an individual employee if personal issues are creating difficulties at work. However, the decision to access the Programme rests with the individual employee.

4. Confidentiality

4.1 The University of Limerick will not receive any personal information from the external consultancy as to who is accessing the Programme, other than data such as the following which permits the University of Limerick to evaluate the Programme, so as to measure its impact and effectiveness to the Organisation:

- Number of employees utilising the Programme
- Number of sessions of counselling accessed
- General area of presenting issues.

4.2 Complete confidentiality is assured. Information will not be disclosed which could reveal the identity of employees accessing the programme. However, there are two exceptions to this rule:

- Where the employee could endanger the health and safety of other employees or service-users.
- Where the employee is in danger of harming her/himself.

In such cases the employee will be informed by the counsellor/practitioner of any disclosure taking place.

5. Internal Co-ordination

5.1 A Steering Group has been established with the aim of coordinating the business relationship with the service supplier. Members of the Steering Group will also answer queries you may have in relation to this service.