

CONSTITUTION & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 21 st June 2018
Report Subject	Extending the Care first scheme to County Councillors
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Assets
Report Author	Democratic Services Manager and Senior Manager- Human Resources & Organisational Development.
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Carefirst Service was introduced for Flintshire County Council employees in April 2017. Whilst County Councillors are not employees, they are part of the County Council and it is reasonable from a well-being perspective to extend access of the service to them.

The committee is invited to consider whether the Carefirst service, available to employees should be made available to County Councillors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee agrees that the Carefirst service, available to employees, should also be made available to County Councillors
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING CARE FIRST SCHEME
1.01	The Health and Wellbeing of our employees is key to delivering a diverse range of services across all areas of the County. With ever increasing pressures at work and home, there are times when we all need some extra support to balance the demands of everyday life. With this in mind the Council recently launched an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provided by Care First. This programme is intended to complement the service available from Occupational Health.

1.02	<p>Who are Carefirst?</p> <p>Carefirst are an independent provider of professional employee support services. Carefirst employ professionally qualified Counsellors and Information Specialists, who are experienced in helping people to deal with all kinds of practical and emotional issues such as Wellbeing, family matters, relationships, debt management, workplace issues, and much more.</p>
1.03	<p>The service is free of charge for members of staff and they do not need to speak to their manager first to be able to use Care first, they just need to call 0800 174319 and they can speak to a professional counsellor or information specialist <u>in confidence</u>. Care first is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and is accessible by phone or online.</p>
1.04	<p>What can the service be used for? Care first is designed to individuals with a wide range of work, family and personal issues. From work-life balance to childcare information, relationships to workplace issues, health and well-being, let your EAP support you on the issues that affect all of us at some point in our lives. Topics include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Work-life balance · Relationships · Childcare information · Health and well-being · Debt · Disability and illness · Careers · Bereavement and loss · Stress · Elder care information · Life events · Immigration · Anxiety and depression · Family issues · Bullying and harassment · Education · Consumer rights · Workplace pressure
1.05	<p>Is it confidential? Yes. We will not be advised who accesses the service without the explicit consent of the individual or an individual personally chooses to tell someone about their contact with Carefirst.</p>
1.06	<p>Whilst councillors are not council employees, they are part of the Council and so it is reasonable that the organisation provides appropriate help and support where it is able. All of the topics identified above can become a concern for councillors as well as for staff.</p>
1.07	<p>The Carefirst service can be extended to councillors for a modest cost as part of our existing contract - £1.76 per head. This is an annual flat rate payment and does not alter based on usage.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	£123.20, based on 70 councillors at £1.76 each.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None. The extension of the Carefirst service to councillors reduces enhances the existing provision across the organisation.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Carefirst leaflet

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None Contact Officer: Robert Robins, Democratic Services Manager Telephone: 01352 702320 E-mail: robert.robins@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	EAP – Employee Assistance Programme Carefirst: the independent provider of professional employee support services which is contracted to the Council.