

Seirbhís Chúnaimh
d'Fhostaithe na Státseirbhíse



Civil Service Employee
Assistance Service

Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS)

Code of Practice

Mission Statement

Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS)

To offer a quality resource and support service for all staff which positively affects both individual health and well-being and organisational effectiveness

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This code of practice constitutes guidelines for the Employee Assistance Officers in the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS)

2. Definitions

- 2.1. In this Code of Practice, the following terms have the meanings given to them below:
 - **“EAO”** means Employee Assistance Officer
 - **“CSEAS”** means Civil Service Employee Assistance Service
 - **“Client”** means any client of the CSEAS: a HR, line management or CMO referred client or a self-referred client to whom Employee Assistance services are being or have been provided by an EAO or the CSEAS
 - **“Client Record”** means all information recorded in whatever medium by the CSEAS relating to any client

3. Professional Competence and Responsibility

- 3.1. EAOs will at all times work to the highest standards in their profession and promote the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service
- 3.2. EAOs will not attempt to provide services for which they do not have the relevant expertise and will suggest referrals where appropriate
- 3.3. EAOs will engage in professional and peer supervision as required
- 3.4. EAOs will conduct themselves in a manner that does not undermine staff confidence in EAOs' ability to carry out their duties
- 3.5. EAOs will not allow any personal obligation or prospect of gain or loss, or any other circumstances which might present a conflict of interest to affect their professional conduct
- 3.6. EAOs will comply with requirements set out in Circular 26/04: Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour
- 3.7. EAOs will not engage in the provision of EA services at a time when their physical or psychological condition or their ability or professional judgement is impaired by the influence of alcohol, drugs or illness
- 3.8. EAOs will offer an impartial helping relationship which respects clients' personal values and autonomy

- 3.9. EAOs will treat all clients equally, value diversity and ensure that their own personal value system is not imposed on the client
- 3.10. EAOs will adopt the procedure set out in Appendix 1 when dealing with two or more parties involved in conflict situation(s)

4. Confidentiality

- 4.1. As the CSEAS is a centralised shared service, confidentiality is between the client and the CSEAS (rather than with an individual EAO)
- 4.2. Information and personal data disclosed by employees to the CSEAS remain confidential (exceptions are listed below) and will not be disclosed to a third party outside of the CSEAS without the prior knowledge and consent of the individual. Where an individual is referred by HR, Line Management or the Chief Medical Officer, confirmation of attendance/engagement will be made available to the referring party and all proposed feedback will be agreed with the staff member in advance. Where an individual chooses not to avail of the CSEAS, this will be relayed to HR, Line Management or CMO as appropriate
- 4.3. **Management referrals** – The CSEAS accepts management referrals where
 - There is a threat to life
 - Where the referral has been recommended by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer
- 4.4. **Exceptions to confidentiality**
 - Life-threatening situations to the individual, other parties or the public
 - Where there is a statutory responsibility to report
 - Where required by a court or legal process to do so
 - Where non-disclosure of information could compromise the CSEAS
 - Where the CSEAS becomes aware of a breach in criminal law disclosure may be necessary
- 4.5. EAOs must report matters where there is a legal obligation to do so
- 4.6. EAOs will, as a matter of course, advise clients of any situation where limitations of confidentiality might arise
- 4.7. Should a staff member choose not to avail of a referral to the CSEAS, the referring party will be advised
- 4.8. In cases of alleged bullying/harassment/sexual harassment, clients will be advised of the policy document for the Civil Service: *“Dignity at Work” An anti-bullying, harassment and sexual harassment policy for the Irish Civil Service*

5. Record Keeping

5.1 All records created and held will comply with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018.

The Data Protection Acts provide EAOs with a legal responsibility to:

- obtain and process personal data fairly
- keep it only for one or more specified and explicit lawful purposes
- process it only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was given initially
- keep personal data safe and secure
- keep data accurate, complete and up to date
- ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive
- retain it no longer than is necessary for the specified purpose or purposes, and
- provide a copy of his/her personal data to an individual, on request

5.2 Records will be retained for a period of 10 years

6. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

6.1. The CSEAS recognises the need to treat all client data in an appropriate and lawful manner. We are committed to complying fully with the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR).

7. Client Protection

7.1. To preserve the integrity of the CSEAS the best interest of the client will always be upheld while giving due regard to the organisation's (the Civil Service) duty and obligation to meet its own responsibility

7.2. EAOs will be conscious of maintaining the integrity of the client/EAO relationship in their everyday dealings with colleagues

7.3. EAOs will not exploit or discriminate against clients in any way

8. Complaints

8.1. Complaints will be handled under the CSEAS Customer Complaints Procedure

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Appendix 1

CSEAS procedures where staff members availing of the CSEAS are in conflict (e.g. bullying allegation or inter-personal conflict) and both/all parties wish to avail of the CSEAS

When it becomes clear to an EAO that a client is involved in a conflict situation with another member of staff, and the other staff member may in time also wish to use the CSEAS, the following approach is recommended:

- The first client will be advised that in the interests of impartiality, it is more appropriate for EAOs not to deal with both clients involved in a conflict and a different EAO will provide the service to each of the parties
- The first client to approach the CSEAS will be offered the opportunity to deal with another EAO at the outset and, if the client agrees, it avoids the need to tell the second client that the first person has approached the CSEAS for assistance
- If the first client does not wish to deal with another EAO, it needs to be emphasised to that client that, if the other party wishes to avail of the CSEAS, he/she will have to be advised that the first party has already met with the particular EAO who is assigned to the particular Department/Office or region
- In this event, the second client will be offered the name of another EAO who will provide the service
- If the second client does not wish to deal with another EAO, each individual EAO will need to make a judgement as to whether he/she can deal with both parties in the particular situation
- Should there be more than 2 parties involved in a conflict situation, each EAO will adopt the above course of action, adjusting the procedure appropriately to ensure impartiality for all parties concerned