



Care first

a manager's guide

here to help, 24 hours every day

Care first – a performance management resource

Care first is an acknowledged leader in Employee Assistance Solutions. We have a proven track record in improving staff wellbeing, performance and attendance through working in active partnership with managers. Please keep this guide. It will help you to access **Care first** services now and in the future.

Your employer has made an investment in staff wellbeing, to help them perform to their maximum potential. **Care first** has been chosen to provide a confidential service for information and advice or counselling, available to staff free of charge. As a manager you may be responsible for compliance with Health & Safety legislation and your 'duty of care'. Knowing how to make the most of **Care first** services will help you to help your people.

Services

All staff have access to the following services:

- freephone advice, information and counselling service
- 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year

Everyone in your organisation has received an information leaflet which includes a plastic wallet card carrying the **Care first** freephone number.

Managers have access to additional help:

- support and information service for managers
- management consultancy
- management referral to initiate counselling for an employee

Further Care first services

- a range of information booklets
- critical or traumatic incident response
- sickness and absence management
- mediation and managing conflict
- coaching for performance
- a range of workshops and training programmes
- customised training



Noticing problems

Both workplace and personal problems can affect the performance of an employee at work. For some, the combination of workplace difficulties with personal concerns will lead to a deterioration of performance at work. Change can be a major source of pressure: even changes that are positive, such as responses to innovation and improvements in efficiency, can provoke negative reactions among employees.



For some individuals it will not be possible to contain their anxiety and work effectively. As a manager, you may be the first to identify those who are not coping well. Indicators that somebody may not be coping:

- poor workplace relations with colleagues or customers
- becoming withdrawn from colleagues
- tensions and conflict in workplace relationships
- loss of motivation and commitment
- increased sickness absence
- poor time-keeping
- increased errors or accidents
- reduced work output
- deterioration in personal standards
- emotional outbursts

Helping you to help your people

The level of support a manager is able to give will depend on the nature of the problem and the time available. Help from **Care first** may be more appropriate. There are a number of options:

1 Self-referral

Encourage the individual to contact **Care first** on **0800 174319** – a confidential, freephone helpline available 24 hours a day. The person who answers will be a counsellor and the employee only needs to identify the organisation they work for. The caller can maintain contact with one **Care first** telephone



counsellor at a mutually agreed time over a period of weeks or they can be referred for face-to-face counselling if appropriate. **Care first** can also provide onward referral to external agencies.

2 Management support

If the problem is unfamiliar or complex – or if the employee is denying the problem and resisting the opportunity to seek help – you may find it useful to talk to **Care first** yourself on **0800 174319**. Together, we can discuss the wider implications and likely effects, and explore options for appropriate management of the employee. However, in view of confidentiality, we will not confirm or deny whether an employee has called **Care first**.

3 Management referral

If the situation is unusually sensitive or the employee is extremely distressed, with the consent of the employee, you can request a Management Referral (by calling **0800 174319**). **Care first** will make the initial contact with an employee by telephone and confirm back to the manager that contact has been made.

4 Management consultancy

Care first provides professional management consultancy to deal effectively with a wide range of people problems. If you want to discuss your approach to sickness absence, bullying or harassment, grievances, disciplinary action or any other difficulties you are having with your staff, just call **0800 174319** for informed advice.

Further **Care first** services

Information booklets

Care first can supply a set of booklets on specific issues such as drinking, family breakdown, bereavement, debt, childcare and elderly relatives. These may be available in electronic form on your organisations intranet. Print versions are available by telephoning **0800 174319**.

Critical or traumatic incident response

Critical or traumatic incidents such as accidents, explosions, fire, acts of aggression, death of a colleague, personal assault, verbal abuse, threats by customers. **Care first** will work with affected employees to reduce trauma, contain anxiety and return the workplace to normal as soon as possible. We will also maintain contact to monitor those affected and offer further counselling and assessment as necessary. Call **0800 174319**.

Sickness and absence management

The UK Health and Safety Executive has stated that the leading causes of working days lost through work-related injury or ill health are work-related stress, depression and anxiety. **Care first** can directly address these issues to improve attendance levels within your organisation. We provide a variety of tools such as: identifying problems early, rehabilitation through counselling and coaching and promoting culture change.

Mediation and managing conflict

Formal grievance procedures can be extremely time-consuming and costly. Preventing and resolving conflict early can stop workplace problems from escalating. **Care first** mediation can save valuable time and money, maintain morale in the wider workforce, and allow people to concentrate on their core roles.



Coaching for performance

Professional performance coaching can make a marked difference to your employees' job satisfaction and productivity. **Care first's** coaching service is a strategic management resource tool, particularly during periods of dynamic business growth or change.

Training and workshops

Care first produces bespoke training where required, as well as offering a range of training packages and awareness seminars:

- Managing pressure
- Home visiting skills for managers
- Counselling and listening skills
- Managing diversity
- Equal opportunities – harassment and bullying
- Managing conflict
- Pre-retirement
- Life transitions, bereavement, loss and change



Standards

Care first aims to deliver the highest standards of customer service. We welcome your feedback because it enables us to maintain and improve. You should expect the following from all **Care first** employees:

- the highest professional standards
- exceptional customer service
- prompt and efficient responses
- an informed and positive approach
- polite and courteous service

Every aspect of our service is monitored by performance targets. We aim for continual service evaluation and quality monitoring. This work is an ongoing process between **Care first** and your organisation's Contract Management Team.



Any questions?

If you require information on any aspect of our service or you have an issue requiring an individual solution, please call 0800 174319 and **Care first** will be happy to help.

If you or any of your staff would like to comment on our service, please go to our website where you can submit an evaluation online, or download a PDF to send by post.

Any complaint or concern can be taken up with your Service Manager, or with the Executive Director at **Care first**.

Care first

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