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For the last 38 years Workplace Options have been providing support to the employee and family members of our loyal clients all around the world. We pride ourselves on the quality and professionalism of the clinical and work life teams working round the clock in our service centres worldwide and our mission has always been to be easily and quickly available to those in need of our services. To this end, we have always pushed our service centres to deliver rigorous call answering and call abandonment service level targets, and to support this and the growth of our business, we routinely recruit and train additional clinical and work-life resources across the world.

In the last 6 months of 2019 we saw a very clear, and to a large extent unexpected, upsurge in engagement with EAP services in all locations which was greater than what we had forecasted based on the growth of our portfolio. The rising awareness and recognition of mental health issues in the workplace together with the slow dismantling of the traditional stigma associated with this in many countries and cultures around the world has driven utilisation of EAP to greater levels than we have historically seen.

As we hastily recruited additional resources in multiple locations in Q3 and then took these through our robust training and on boarding program we struggled to meet our service level targets. We were happy to see that performance against these was pushed back on track towards the end of Q4 and the beginning of 2020. However, we did not count on the Coronavirus outbreak in the Far East and its spread to Europe and the rest of the world towards the middle of February. Since then we have seen an unprecedented increase of over 27% in the number of calls to our service centres and this has inevitably resulted in longer answer times than we would ever want.

Faced with the impact on participants having to wait for longer periods our leadership team recently authorised a number of measures to cope with these new volumes:

- Recruitment of a large number of additional positions across our centres
- Expansion in the use of external providers from within our network who can provide short term call intake cover
- Redeployment of clinical team leaders to call answering duties

All these measures were agreed in February and our operational and service delivery teams are now in the process of implementing these. While we work swiftly to recruit and train new resources as well as on-board providers into our call answering system our service levels will, in all probability, not meet our targets but we expect to see gradual and significant improvements over the next 60-90 days. Please be assured that your employees and their family members will be supported in the same professional and caring manner once they are through to our clinicians and we ask for your patience and understanding as we deal with these rather challenging and extenuating worldwide events.