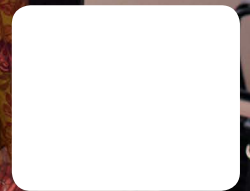


Occupational health
referral information
for Line Managers.



The Occupational Health Service is an independent, confidential health service provided by Nuffield Health to support an employee's health at work.

The Occupational Health Service is delivered by a team of health professionals who specialise in occupational medicine; the branch of medicine that deals with the relationship between work and health. Working to high professional standards, you can expect the team to treat all employees courteously and with respect for privacy and dignity.

Why should an employee be referred to the Occupational Health Service?

An employee can be referred to the Occupational Health Service due to any concerns around their health at work. This may be because they have had several episodes of sickness absence over a period of a few months, or because they are currently off sick. Alternatively the employee may be at work but there are concerns about their fitness for aspects of a role (i.e.. during a pregnancy or if a job description has altered).

When should an employee be referred to the Occupational Health Service?

Most companies will have an absence management policy which will be followed. However where there are no specific triggers the following recommendations provide a guide for referral:

- Three or more periods of absence within any 6 month period
- Five health related absences within any 12 month period
- Any stress, anxiety or depression related absence where the time frame for recovery is unclear
- Any musculo-skeletal related absence
- Any absence with a return to work date of more than 4 weeks
- Receipt of a 'may be fit for work' medical certificate
- Any health issues affecting performance at work

How to refer to Occupational Health

In order to provide the Occupational Health Service with the information that we require, a management referral form needs to be completed by you, the manager. Information that we require includes:

- The circumstances of the referral
- Any health information that you have information on
- Any questions that you would like us to address.
- Provision of a job description
- a list of any absences, with reasons

An appointment cannot go ahead without a complete referral form being received. Please note that all information that is provided to the Occupational Health Clinician can be disclosed to the employee and they are entitled to see a copy of the referral form when you are composing these documents.

Managers are advised to speak to their employees about the OH referral, prior to their appointment, to inform them of the questions that they have asked in the referral form.

If the employee is late or does not attend the appointment, this can result in a DNA fee being incurred. If they contact you with any difficulties finding the location or attending please contact the Occupational Health administrator as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made. Please inform us prior to the date/time should the employee require assistance upon arrival at the medical centre and we will organise the appropriate provision.

Obtaining further information

In complex cases, the Occupational Health Practitioner may need to seek further information on an employee's progress from their treating doctors (GP or specialists'). Treating doctors are entitled to charge a fee for producing such a report and the OH Practitioner will require line manager's authorisation prior to making such requests. The fees will depend on the complexity of the report and are usually in the region of £75-£150 and will be charged in addition to any agreed appointment fee. The process for obtaining GP / Specialist reports can be quite lengthy and it may take up to 6 weeks for reports to be received.

What does the Occupational Health Service report back?

OH Practitioners are bound by professional codes relating to medical confidentiality. This means that the health of an employee cannot be discussed without their permission with an employer. The Occupational Health Practitioner will discuss the information that they intend to discuss in the report with the employee at the appointment and they will be asked to give their consent.

If permission is given, the employee has the right to see any report before it is sent. If they choose to see the report before it is sent a response is usually required within 48 hours (unless the report is sent via post in which case 5 working days).

The standard turnaround time for reports to be sent to line managers is within two working weeks of the appointment date.

Occasionally interim reports will be provided where further information is obtained. Reports may make recommendations for a phased or supported return to work – reports will make clear that these are suggestions and need to be agreed locally within the scope of business needs.



How to contact the team

In the first instance please contact your local OH Adviser either by email or telephone

Further details can be found on the company's intranet page or through your local Human Resources co-ordinator / manager.

