

What to expect from an occupational health consultation**WHAT IS OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH?**

Occupational health is a branch of medicine or nursing that specialises in the relationship between work and health. It considers very specifically the effects of work on health, and health on work. Its purpose is to protect each employee, to ensure that the proposed work does not in any way damage, or compromise their health. Therefore if you have a health condition or symptoms that may impact on your work, or may be caused by your work, then you may be referred by your manager for an occupational health assessment. This is so that your manager can obtain appropriate advice on how the condition may impact on your work, and on any adjustments or support they could provide to try to reduce any impact that work may be having on your health and vice versa. Occupational Health Services Ltd is an independent occupational health provider, who will advise both the employer and employee from a position of impartiality.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL

There are many different reasons for a referral, which include:

- Concern that your health is affecting your work, or your work is affecting your health
- Long-term sickness absence
- Repeated short-term absences

If you are unsure why you have been referred, please ask your manager/HR to clarify this.

WHO WILL ASSESS YOU?

You will be assessed by an Occupational Health Advisor (OHA), who is an occupational health nurse, or an Occupational Health Physician (OHP), who is an occupational health doctor. They will have the appropriate occupational health qualifications and experience in occupational health and within different industries.

WHAT WILL THE CONSULTATION INVOLVE?

Your consultation will either be face-to-face or by telephone or video call. It will be mainly a verbal assessment. In some cases, if clinically relevant, the doctor may do a brief physical examination. The purpose of the consultation is to take a full medical history (including diagnosis, investigations and treatment), to understand how your condition or symptoms affect your normal everyday activities at home and work, and to understand all elements of your job. The consultation should usually last between 45-60 minutes, but could be slightly longer if the issues are complex. Please try to ensure you arrive in good time for your assessment. If you are delayed it may not be possible for you to be seen and another appointment may need to be made and will result in a cancellation fee being incurred by your employer.

WHAT WILL BE DISCUSSED?

It is helpful for you to know what will be discussed, so that you can be as prepared as possible for the consultation. You may wish to have a timeline or summary of your health condition(s) to hand so that

you can find the relevant information quickly when you are asked questions. Types of questions you will be asked may include:

- Any diagnosed conditions
- Your symptoms - what symptoms you have, when they first started, how severe they are, how often you experience them, what makes them worse, what makes them better
- How your symptoms affect you at home (doing normal activities) or work, and if any home or work activities make your symptoms worse
- Treatment - any relevant treatment you have had in the past, treatment you are currently having (including names and doses of medication), planned future treatment, and how effective your current treatment is
- If you are seeing a specialist and the outcome of your last appointment and when you have your next appointment
- Any relevant past medical history
- Any other relevant factors (e.g. significant stressors or significant life events) that could be impacting on your health
- What you are doing to try to manage your condition – e.g. self help strategies, lifestyle changes
- A discussion on your work – what you do (main tasks and responsibilities), what hours you work, shift patterns, work demands (e.g. if you are a manager, have a fast-paced role, drive long distances, work alone, global travel, work at heights etc)
- Any ideas of types of support you feel may help you at work

CONFIDENTIALITY AND REPORTING BACK TO MANAGER

All consultations are strictly confidential. A report will need to be provided to your line manager and HR manager, but you will be informed of the contents of the report and will need to give consent for it to be shared. The report will answer specific questions asked in the referral and usually includes an opinion on the likely impact of your condition on your work in the short and long term, an assessment on your fitness for work (short and long term), and any reasonable adjustments or support that could be provided at work. Confidential clinical information will not be disclosed without your consent, however, your manager will need to understand how your condition affects your functioning at work and hence what you are able to do, and what you are not able to do. You have the right for any factual inaccuracies in the report to be amended, but not to change our opinion. If you do not agree with our opinion, you can provide us with a separate statement with your comments and ask for us to send this with the report to your manager. You have the right to withhold consent from sending the report to your manager, however, if you do decline, then any management decisions may be taken without the benefit of medical advice.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

The information we collect is classed as special category personal data as it relates to your health. You have the right to see any information we hold about you in your occupational health record. To do so, submit your request in writing to us. If you believe any of the information held is inaccurate or misleading, you can request that an amendment is attached to the occupational health record. Your occupational health records (paper and digital copies) will be shredded and deleted permanently, six years after the last recorded entry.



IMPORTANT - WHAT INFORMATION TO HAVE AVAILABLE AT THE CONSULTATION

Please see the “what will be discussed” section and ensure you are prepared for your consultation. It is helpful for you to have a simple chronological summary of your relevant medical conditions (date symptoms started, diagnosis, date of diagnosis, a list of scans/tests and their results, treatments received, including name and dose of current medication, or diabetic glucose monitoring data etc). If you have any copies of letters from your GP or Specialist relating to this condition, please also bring copies with you/have them available for you to refer to during the consultation, but only if you already have copies at home. You don't need to request anything particular from your GP. If you have any questions about the consultation or what it will involve, please call OHS on **07842 245450**.