OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE
GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS UPON RECEIVING
AN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REPORT

What can I expect from the Occupational Health (OH) Report?
Following the assessment you will be provided with an Occupational Health Report containing professional opinions and recommendations as appropriate. A copy will be provided to the employee in accordance with current recommendations on good practice for Occupational Health specialists.

This may include a summary of the presenting situation, answers to your specific questions, an opinion about fitness to work and advice about adjustments to enable the employee to stay at work or return to work. There may be suggestions regarding help or support which could be offered by the University of Essex or other agencies and where relevant the clinician will make reference to the Equality Act 2010, which supersedes the DDA.

It will not include an opinion about whether or not previous sickness absence was genuine as it is impossible to ascertain this retrospectively.

Please read it carefully. There may be some information that has been discussed with the employee that has not been previously revealed. This is not necessarily the view of the clinician but a report back to you about what was discussed.

Will I have access to medical information?
Detailed clinical information and specific diagnoses may be withheld. OH professionals are bound by strict codes of medical confidentiality laid down by their governing bodies and will not discuss personal medical information without the prior consent of the client/employee.

Why haven't all my questions been answered?
We may not be able to answer all of your questions in one consultation. If the process is likely to be delayed, for whatever reason, an indication of likely timescales and any delays will be stated in the Occupational Health Report. It may be necessary for us to make a further appointment. However where it becomes apparent that we cannot progress a case after two appointments, we will endeavour to contact you to discuss further.

Some questions may be management issues, which requires a manager’s input rather than being a medical one requiring OH input.

What is causing delay in getting further information?
Where it is necessary to obtain further medical information we may apply for a medical report from the employee’s own GP or specialist. In order to do this we have to gain the individual’s written consent to send for this information, which is obtained at the consultation.

There may be delay in getting reports as the employee may request to see the report before it is sent to Occupational Health, which is their right under Access to Medical Reports Act 1988. However, we make every effort to expedite this process.

If it becomes apparent that the requested report is not forthcoming, we will contact you to inform you of this. An Occupational Health Report will be issued, but will be limited in its range because of the lack of medical information.
Will OH need to see the employee again?
Further review appointments may be necessary if we are unable to provide definitive answers to your specific questions. If this is the case the appointment will usually be given to the employee at the end of the initial consultation. The review could be face to face or over the telephone. The scheduling of these appointments is dependent upon the nature of the individual case. This will be determined by any of the following:

- The need to obtain further medical opinion from GP or Specialist
- The patient has not completed a course of treatment and it is difficult to determine their fitness to return to work at this point in time
- It is determined that the individual is unfit to work and needs to follow up the case at a later date
- Further follow up is requested by the manager

Wherever possible the appointment will be scheduled to coincide with the receipt of any medical reports, dates for planned return to work or with the completion of investigations or treatment so that all relevant information is available when the employee is next seen.

The employee has not consented for the Occupational Health Report to be released. What do I do now?
If the employee does not give consent for the Occupational Health Report to be released, you will be informed, in writing. You will need to take the necessary action based on the information already available to you.

What do I do now that I have the Occupational Health Report?
- You are advised to meet with the employee to discuss the contents of the Occupational Health Report and you may wish to discuss with the HR link, the implementations of any recommendations, setting clear time frames where appropriate, in accordance with your business needs
- Where the advice concludes that there is no medical reason for the employee’s absence, you need to meet with the employee and ask them to explain the reasons for their absences
- To consider contacting Occupational Health clinician to discuss further if still uncertain on how to move case forward
- It would be helpful if you could keep us informed of what adjustments or actions you have discussed and put in place and any progress or changes that have occurred since consultation. This is particularly useful if we have made arrangements to see them again

A case conference or case management meeting has been advised. What are they and who arranges them?

**Case Conference:**
- A meeting with the manager, OH clinician and HR Manager **in the presence of the employee**
- It is usually arranged by the HR Manager
- It promotes an open transparent discussion of work/health related issues, provides an opportunity to explore and identify support mechanisms and
- It can lead to a quicker resolution of case
- It promotes confidence for both the individual and manager involved

**Case Management:**
- Is usually less formal, between OH clinician and Manager, and can also include HR Manager.
- To discuss ongoing complex cases of absence at an individual level
- To seek advice on individuals, who though still at work, are giving cause for concern
- To discuss the relevance of ill-health retirement or other administrative actions as relevant
- Can be used to precede a Case Conference meeting to explore options for return to work rehabilitation and identify what the employer can or cannot support

If you have any further questions, please contact Occupational Health on 01206 872399