

*This leaflet contains information of what to expect if your supervisor or Human Resource Business Manager (HRBM) / HR Adviser wish to refer you to Occupational Health for an assessment and advice. Please see 'Referral Information and Guidance' for further information (<http://www.oh.admin.cam.ac.uk/services/referral-process>)*

### **What is Occupational Health?**

Occupational Health (OH) is a specialist branch of health care concerned with the effects of work upon health and also the effects of health upon work capacity. OH can advise on such issues as fitness for work, sickness absence, disability, rehabilitation, ill-health retirement or other health and work issues.

### **Why am I being referred to OH?**

Referral to OH may be suggested by your supervisor or HR contact where there is concern about your health, performance (where there are health implications) or level of sickness absence. An OH assessment can provide objective information that can assist both you and management in addressing these concerns.

Your supervisor or HR contact must discuss the reason, nature and consequences of the referral with you and, having gained your informed consent, give you a copy of the referral form or letter to sign. If this is not the case please contact your supervisor.

The completed referral form or letter from your supervisor provides the occupational health practitioner with information about your job, any recent sickness absence, possible health problem or disability together with the reason for the referral and the specific questions to be answered in relation to your work.

You will be seen by a qualified nurse or doctor who is a specialist in occupational health and who will assess your health or any disability that you may have, and how it may affect your fitness to undertake the work that you do. The appointment will also provide you with the opportunity to discuss any health problems, in confidence, and any concerns that you may have about your health in relation to your work.

### **Why an assessment with OH when I am seeing my General Practitioner (GP)?**

Your GP is responsible for your primary care and treating your ill health condition(s). An occupational health practitioner is responsible for advising about work factors that may affect your health and on measures that can assist. In consultation with your supervisor, the assessment may result in a visit to your work environment to consider the need for any specific workplace modifications or restrictions which may be required. These modifications may be temporary or on occasions, permanent.

### **The appointment**

Once OH receives a referral you will be sent an appointment, usually by letter. If preferred, this appointment may be arranged through the person referring you. The referrer will also be informed of your appointment date and time.

If you are unhappy about why you have been referred, or if you don't wish to attend, then you should discuss this further with your supervisor or named HR contact. If you would like to discuss anything relating to the appointment with an OH Adviser prior to attending, please contact us to arrange this.

An initial assessment usually lasts about 45 minutes. The OH professional will ensure that you understand the purpose of the assessment and their role in providing independent, impartial advice.

You will be asked about:

- The health problem, any concerns that you have and what treatment you are receiving
- The work that you undertake and any difficulties arising from health or other reasons
- Any activities out of work that you are involved with

If a physical examination is required your permission to proceed with this will be sought by the doctor.

If you are too unwell to attend an appointment or if you have any special needs e.g. mobility assistance, please contact OH in advance of the appointment. Should you fail to attend an appointment, an alternative will be offered and the referrer informed. Should you fail to attend a second time then the referrer will be informed and no further appointments offered at this time.

### **Will there be a need to contact my GP or hospital specialist?**

OH do not have access to your GP and / or hospital records. In order for OH to provide fully informed advice there may be occasions when further medical information would be helpful. If this is the case the reason will be explained to you and you will be asked to sign a consent form allowing OH to approach your GP and / or hospital specialist for this information under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988. The information received by OH in the GP / Specialist report will remain confidential to the OH service and will not be divulged.

### **What information is in the report to management?**

Based on the information obtained from the referral and during the consultation, the content of the OH report and response to the questions asked will be discussed and agreed with you. Following the appointment, the report to the referrer will provide advice about your health in relation to your work.

This is likely to include advice about your fitness for work, how your ill health may affect your ability to perform your job, advice and / or support during periods of absence or ill health as well as recommending any modifications and / or restrictions that may help to facilitate your return to work.

The report may include limited clinical (medical) information but this will only be included where it is relevant. The report will not disclose unnecessary clinical detail regarding conditions that do not have a bearing on your fitness for work. The aim is to assist you and your manager to manage any health problems that are impacting on your capacity for work.

If follow up appointments are indicated these will be discussed with you at the time of your initial appointment and appropriate arrangements made.

#### **Who will have access to the OH report?**

At the appointment the OH professional will discuss the report with you and ask you to complete a separate consent form confirming that you agree for a report to be provided to the individuals named on the management referral form. With your consent, a copy of this report may also be sent to your GP for information.

You can request to see the report prior to it being sent to the referrer. Whether or not you wish to see it prior to it being sent to the referrer, you will receive a copy. If you consider the report contains incorrect factual information this should be highlighted to the OH professional.

The referrer should arrange to meet with you to discuss the report and any advice or recommendations made. Sometimes the referrer and / or named HR contact may contact OH to ask for clarification following receipt of a report. We may be able to clarify the report and advice given verbally but we will not answer any new or additional questions without first consulting you. A record of this discussion will be documented in your OH record.

#### **Confidentiality**

The Occupational Health Service is committed to maintaining the privacy, dignity and confidentiality of service users at all times. We adhere to the principles of the Data Protection Act, the General Medical Council & Nursing & Midwifery Codes of Confidentiality.

For full details of how your personal information is used by the University Occupational Health Service, please see <http://www.oh.admin.cam.ac.uk/general-information/confidentiality-statement>



## **Occupational Health**

### ***Occupational Health Referral***

### ***Employee Information***

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