

Referring an employee to Workplace Health for an occupational health assessment.

Minimising sickness absence is of benefit to both individuals and organisations. Work can have a positive effect on health, whereas staying away from the workplace can in the long term be detrimental. Boosting morale and productivity by promoting the health of employees, is of clear business benefit too. So it is most important to have a clear approach to managing sickness absence, both short and long term.

Workplace Health can assist in the management of sickness absence when health is affecting a person's ability to work, or where work is impacting on health. This information sheet is designed for line managers who wish to make a referral to Workplace Health.

A referral to Workplace Health can provide employee and employer support in various ways. For example a referral will:-

- Identify any underlying health condition affecting attendance at work.
- Identify whether the work environment is contributing to sickness absence.
- Advise line managers on the expected time until return to work.
- Advise on appropriate modified duties and/ or a phased return to work plan.
- Assess the workplace prior to returning to work if required
- Advise managers on the possibility of temporary or permanent re-deployment (if such posts are available).
- Refer staff onto appropriate agencies (physiotherapy, counselling, support groups etc).
- Provide advice and support for the employee.

When should you contact Workplace Health?

Ideally, Workplace Health should be contacted as soon as possible if there are any causes for concern. We would recommend contact with Workplace Health is made when one of the following apply-

- 3 periods of sickness in any 6 month period
- Any period of sickness lasting over 4 weeks
- If an individual has a GP certificate identifying work-related stress or a back as the reason for sickness absence
- As an employer you are concerned about the health of a staff member

If there is an anticipated absence, such as an operation and a long recovery period, contact can be made before the period of absence commences and plans put in place for review at an appropriate stage later in the recovery process.

How to refer an employee to see us.

To make a referral you will need to complete the following steps:-

1. Ensure your staff member is fully informed as to why you are asking them to attend Occupational Health for an assessment. Transparency on the reasons for the referral is most important for the referral to provide valuable outcomes.

Where possible the employee should sign the Occupational Health consent form agreeing to the referral being made, and this should be returned with the referral form. Where it is not possible for the individual to complete the consent form, eg they are absent from the workplace, the Dr or Adviser will complete the form with the employee.

2. Complete our management referral and consent form. Along with any supporting documentation, such as a job description or sickness absence record, return documents via fax or post.
3. Upon receipt of the referral and completed consent form, we will contact you and the employee to confirm the appointment date and time.
4. You can expect a written report following the assessment, sent via post within 5 working days. There will be a delay if the Occupational Health clinician requires additional information from the individuals own GP or Medical Specialist. If such information is required, you will be informed that we have requested further medical information. The likely timescales for a report are normally 4-6 weeks. We will do all we can to keep you informed in this instance.

Please ensure your employee is aware of the date and time of their appointment. Missed appointments increase waiting times, where as cancellations do not. We'd encourage you to stay in touch with your employee where possible to ensure they attend.

To discuss our services any further, please contact us.

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