



University of Essex



After Receiving an Occupational Health Report

Guidance for Managers

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What can I expect from the Occupational Health (OH) Report?

Following the assessment, and with the consent of the employee, you will be provided with an Occupational Health Report containing professional opinions and recommendations. A copy will be provided to the employee either in advance or at the same time as you.

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 Occupational Health Adviser (OHA) will refer to the Equality Act 2010.

Please read the report 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 OHA 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 or gain further medical information.

Some questions may be related to management issues rather than being health related. If this is the case, we will state this and make recommendations.

What is causing delay in getting further information?

Where it is necessary to obtain further medical information, we may request 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 them again?

OH occasionally may book a review appointment for an individual, however in most instances we will be advising managers to re-refer for a review if further information is needed.

The referred employee has not given consent 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 in the information already available to you and discuss the case with your Employee Relations Adviser.

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.

- You may wish to discuss with your Employee Relations Adviser 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 may need to meet with them and ask for them to explain the reasons for their absences.
- Consider contacting the OHA or requesting a case management meeting to discuss further if still uncertain on how to move the 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 arranged to see them again or you have re-referred them.

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

Case Conference:

- A meeting with the Manager, OHA and Senior Employee Relations Adviser, in the presence of the employee.
- It is usually arranged by the Senior Employee Relations Adviser
- It promotes an open transparent discussion of work/health related issues, provides an opportunity to explore and identify support mechanisms
- It can lead to a quicker resolution of case
- It promotes confidence for both the individual and manager involved

Case Management:

- Usually less formal, between OHA and Manager, and may also include a Senior Employee Relations Adviser.
- 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 returning to work and identify what the department can or cannot support

If you have any queries or would like any additional information, please contact ohquery@essex.ac.uk