You have been referred to Occupational Health – What now?

Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and well being of the employees of De Montfort University.

Your manager has responsibility for health and safety in respect of you, your colleagues and the University. To fulfil this responsibility your manager needs reliable professional advice which is provided by Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

**Occupational Health**

As an employee, you must attend work and perform your role to the best of your capacity, but there may be occasions when health or well being issues impact on your ability to do so. In such circumstances Occupational Health is available to assist in exploring and resolving these issues. We will, with your consent, provide management and Human Resources with appropriate information on limitations of your fitness while maintaining medical and personal confidential information.

Occupational Health currently has two Occupational Health Advisers and has the support of a visiting external Occupational Health Physician. All have relevant qualifications and experience in dealing with health issues in the work place.

**Why have you been referred?**

Your manager or Human Resources may decide to refer you to Occupational Health (OH) if they think your performance or attendance at work is possibly affected by a medical condition or if it is suspected that work is a factor in causing your ill health. Also in the event of you being absent on a long term basis local management will normally seek advice from OH who will contact you by phone, letter or email. When referring you to OH for such advice your manager/HR will inform you of the referral and the reasons why. It is in your interest to support the referral as a consultation is your opportunity to provide information in confidence about your circumstances and ensure that you are accessing appropriate support and treatment.

**What can you expect if you are referred?**

You will be offered an appointment usually within two weeks, and be seen by a member of the OH team usually internally at Gateway House. At the appointment the reason for your referral will be discussed. You may also undergo a health assessment which will include details of your health and work and may involve a physical examination. Members of the OH team are bound by a professional code of conduct, so confidential medical details will not be disclosed. You will however be asked to give consent to share relevant information regarding your fitness for work. You have an important contribution to make to this assessment and OH will strive to achieve an agreed approach based on the medical evidence.

As part of the assessment, the OH professional will carry out a consultation to determine if optimum management and treatment are being accessed and identify any gaps. Further information about your health may be sought from your GP or Specialist and if so you will be asked for your written consent. You can decline this request, but OH can then only advise management on the information they have available to them.
What sort of advice will be given?

Once your assessment has been completed, the OH professional will send a report to your manager, the content of which will be discussed with you. Depending on the nature of the referral, advice on the following may be given:

- Whether you have a health or wellbeing issue which may affect your attendance or performance at work.
- If so, how it may affect your attendance or performance
- An estimate of the time you may need for appointments or for treatment
- If you are absent, how long is it likely to be before you are ready to return to work?
- If you have been seriously unwell, recommendations to your manager on measures that might assist you to return to work while you are fully recovering and in rehabilitation.
- If you are not fit to return to your current job, recommendations on alternative duties or adjustments by agreement with management.
- If requested by your manager/HR, an assessment for Ill Health retirement.
- If the Disability Discrimination Act may apply and if reasonable adjustments are required to help support you in the workplace.

Sometimes several appointments are required before final advice can be given.

Ethical Code of Conduct and Confidentiality

It is essential that OH maintains confidentiality and remains impartial in advice regarding health issues in the workplace. This creates an environment where employees can raise sensitive matters so that they can be assisted and for the University to receive appropriate advice on issues of fitness to work.

What if I don't like the advice?

Ultimately the advice being given is impartial and is the considered opinion of the doctor or OH advisor. If you do not agree with the advice then in the first instance contact OH. With your consent, OH would also be happy to explain this advice to your GP or Specialist.

Will my manager have to comply with the advice?

It is important to remember that OH can only advise management on the impact on your health or well being issue. Ultimately it is a matter for management to decide how the University responds to this advice and whether any advice is implemented, particularly in relation to determining job adjustments.

What should you bring to the assessment?

Medicines: Make a note of any medication you take including the dose. GP Details: Name and Surgery address. Hospital information: Name of your Specialist and their hospital address. Other treatment: Details of any other treatment you are receiving.

Why can’t my GP, another Doctor or therapist carry out the assessment?

Your GP is the expert when it comes to treating your illness. However OH professionals are expert on how your health can affect you in your work. OH is much more familiar with your work and work place.
Unable to attend?

If you are unwell or unable to attend for any reason then please contact OH to rearrange the appointment as soon as possible. We are able to re-arrange an appointment if sufficient advance notice is received. If you fail to attend an appointment then management will be notified.