

FAQs - your Occupational Health Assessment

Who is Optima Health?

Optima Health provides occupational health services to a wide range of organisations and operate a fleet of purpose built mobile clinical units that allow us to bring occupational health screening to you at the workplace.

What is Occupational Health (OH)?

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

What is an OH Assessment?

An OH assessment provides independent, impartial advice to you and your employer about your health and fitness for work. The assessment may be performed by an OH Adviser (a nurse trained in OH) or an Occupational Physician (a doctor trained in occupational medicine).

Why Do I Need an OH Assessment?

Your HR Adviser or line manager will usually have referred you for the OH assessment. The benefit of attending the assessment is that it gives you the opportunity to discuss any health problems with the OH professional, and how these impact on your work. The OH professional can look at all the circumstances, and provide your employer and you with the advice about your health and fitness for work.

Do I have to attend an OH Assessment?

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 HR Adviser or line manager. Please advise Optima Health as soon as possible if you are unable to attend your appointment. If you do not attend your appointment, your employer may have to make decisions about your employment without the benefit of OH advice.

Now that I am attending an OH Assessment – what happens next?

Your consultation with the OH professional is likely to last around 30-60 minutes. The OH professional will ensure that you understand the purpose of the assessment and their role in providing independent,

impartial advice. Your consent will be sought for the assessment to proceed and for a written OH report to be sent to your employer. If a medical examination is necessary, your permission to proceed with this will also be sought.

What information is passed to the employer?

The report to your employer will provide advice about your health in relation to work. This is likely to include advice about your fitness for work, how this might change in the future and any workplace adjustments that might help you. 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 upon your fitness for work. The aim is to assist you and your employer to manage any health problems that are impacting upon your capacity for work.

How are my confidential OH records maintained?

Your OH records are maintained to the same high standard of confidentiality as hospital or GP medical records, in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998. Your OH record will not be disclosed to anyone else outside of Optima Health without your consent.

Do I have the right of access to the OH reports written about me?

Yes. If you require access you should ask your HR Adviser or line manager for a copy of the relevant report. Alternatively you can contact Optima Health in writing for a copy. Under the Data Protection Act 1998 you or your authorised representative may apply for access to your own occupational health records by applying in writing to Optima Health.

Will there be any need for you to contact my GP or Hospital specialist?

Occasionally the OH professional will seek (with your written consent) a medical report from your GP or hospital specialist. This is usually necessary if the OH professional requires further clinical information about your health, (e.g. information regarding your diagnosis, results of investigations, treatment, future plans etc) prior to advising you / your employer. The process is subject to the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988. This gives you certain rights (including a right to see your doctor's report, if you wish, before it is sent to us). Under some circumstances the OH professional may write to your GP, with your consent, giving information about the outcome of your OH assessment. This can be particularly helpful where there are clinical findings or work arrangements that the OH professional believes your GP should be informed of.

What should I bring with me to the assessment?

- your appointment letter
- proof of your identity; your company ID pass will do
- any medication or a list of medication that you have been taking
- glasses and/or contact lenses, if worn, and if you are attending for a medical examination
- any other information that you think may be relevant to your assessment.