



Occupational Health

Looking after the **health work and well-being** of staff at the University of Edinburgh



What is OH?

OH is a specialist branch of public health care protecting and **promoting the health** of the working population. Utilising OH will;

- assist employers with the **health, safety and welfare** of all employees
- impact the corporate social responsibility agenda
- contribute to government-led initiatives such as reducing ; health inequalities, social exclusion and sickness absence and well being



Occupational health offers an impartial advisory service concerned with the **effect of work on health** and the **effect of health on work**;

where health is a concern OH aim to support and advise staff and managers in order to

- increase attendance
- optimise performance
- increase productivity and retention
- facilitate well being at work

Work ← **relationship** → **Health**



So - Why have an Occupational Health service?

- to contribute to the wider public health agenda
- to help meet the employers statutory requirements (H&S)
- to contribute toward and achieve university strategic goals
- to benefit staff and employer
 - support staff throughout their employment
 - optimise the employees experience
 - increase productivity and satisfaction



(CBI/Pfizer 2010)

In 2009/10, 28.5 million days were lost overall (1.2 days per worker)

- 23.4 million due to work-related ill health and
- 5.1 million due to workplace injury (HSE 2011) at a **cost to employers** of about **£17bn** in 2009 alone.

Musculoskeletal disorders and stress were the most commonly reported illness types.



Who we are-

The 3 full time OH professional staff

- '**Specialist Community Public Health Nurses**' (SCPHN) qualified to a minimum at degree level and registered as specialists with The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)
- The physician is a **Consultant in OH Medicine** and is registered with The General Medical Council (GMC)

All health professionals work within their governing bodies requirement for professional practice or risk being struck off.



Who we are

Janet Craig - Head of Unit and OH Manager



Isabel Jack - Senior OH Adviser



Daniel Richards - OH Adviser



Helen Gilroy - Administration



Dr Robert Malcolm - Consultant Physician in OH



Where we are located.....



OHU's objective is to promote health and well being at work;

Requiring partnership working and often involves balancing a number of delicate issues and work factors

To be effective OH must remain and be seen to be;

- **impartial**
- **available for employees and managers**
- **Confidential**

OH staff are bound by strict guidelines for practice



Who are our customers?

- **Staff** for all services and limited PhD contingent for health surveillance
- **Managers**
- **Human resources**



Who are our partners?

Internal

- H&S, Occupational Hygiene, etc
- HR
- Managers
- Employees
- Unions
- Physiotherapy – FASIC
- Parking Office

External

- Universities OH group HEOPS – benchmarking practice and a requirement for evidence based practice
- HSE
- Faculty of Occupational Medicine (setting standards- SEQOHS)
- RCN and NMC (Public Health Forum)



Specialist advice can be provided on a variety of work related health matters including;

- Statutory health surveillance/screening/vaccination
- Immunisation and travel
- Health and well-being
- Alcohol / Drug misuse
- Attendance management
- Policy and protocol development
- Rehabilitation
- Mental health and work
- Stress management
- Health-related capability issues including early retirement due to ill-health

NB where there is any specific case discussion confidentiality may apply



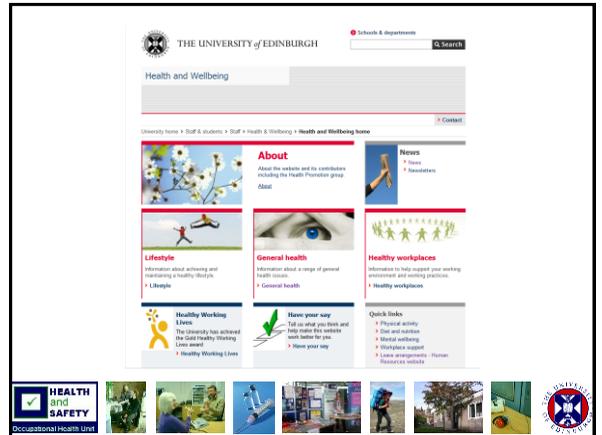
Health and Well being



The Healthy Working Lives (Gold award)

Part of criteria for the award evidence included OH service provision such as;

- managers tool kits e.g. stress risk assessment
- presentations e.g. managing absence, work life balance and management of mental health issues (et al)
- availability of self referral for staff
- available information for managers and staff with any health concern effecting work prior to referral (though do not substitute for the GP)



Involvement in a variety of projects, both internal and external to the organisation for example.....



<http://www.macmillan.org.uk/Cancerinformation/Livingwithandaftercancer/Workandcancer/Workandcancer.aspx>



Contact with Occupational Health

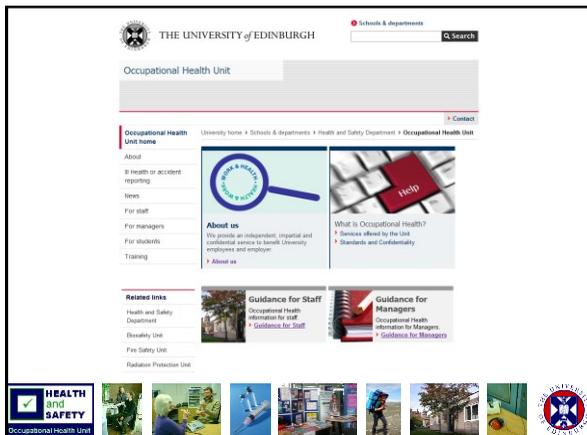
- management referral (via referral form)
- self-referral (phone or email)
- report of suspected or confirmed occupational ill-health (via online form)
- phone or email enquiry



occupational.health@ed.ac.uk

650 8190





What would help?

- more pro-active early interventions in absence (government reviews are operating at 4 weeks absence being long term and requiring referral) and performance management in order to impact on attendance and retention– not presenteeism
- to raise awareness of mental health in the workplace particularly causes of stress and management of mental illness.
- Early consideration of the requirement for health surveillance by effective use of risk assessment

What can Occupational Health and partners do?

Whilst being realistic in expectation, continue development of good effective working relations by:

- further understanding and acknowledging specialist support roles and increasing effective communication
- working in partnership during attendance management and manager training
- Risk based health surveillance implementation
- Be mindful that there is a requirement for evidence based practice

Some solutions

- Provide adequate training and support to managers in conjunction with HR in order that they can take action with health issues
- Raise awareness of mental health issues, duty of care and the need to manage work related causes of stress
- Be realistic in expectation
- Recognise the need to work together to identify need and what else can be done.....needs assessment.
- Recognise the student health requirement.

CIPD viewpoint 2013

“believe that HR specialists play a critical role in convincing organisations of the competitive benefits to be gained from proactive strategies. Effective management of the health and welfare of people at work contributes to performance improvement and increases competitive advantage, reduces unacceptable losses associated with ill-health and injuries, lowers absenteeism, improves morale and reduces litigation costs.”

It recommends the implementation of practical occupational health policies tailored to circumstances noting “top management must demonstrate commitment and provide leadership in formulating strategy, developing policies and monitoring performance. It must ensure the necessary resources are available to implement policies”.

Council for Work and Health (2013)

sets out a vision of “universal access to occupational health to create better health and business productivity and highlights the fact that, almost 70 years ago after the NHS was created and OH was excluded from its remit, OH now has an opportunity to play a much greater role in the health of the nation”

