

## **Section 5**

# **Information on Health Screening**

## Information on UK Health Screening

There are many companies in the UK that offer occupational health screening. Some of the companies, along with their different types of screening and associated costs, are summarised in this section.

Access to an occupational health service offers you the opportunity to explore any concerns about the effect of your workplace on your health. By advising the company on how to control hazards at work, the occupational health service will be able to make your workplace a safer place. You can also expect expert advice on your own working practices. For example, whether you should wear earplugs if you are exposed to industrial noise, or how to work safely with computers.

### *Buying an Occupational Health Service*

For many small companies, their first contact with an occupational health (OH) service will be for help with a specific problem. That experience can lead to a decision to have access to an OH service on a continuing basis.

Small and larger companies may come to the conclusion that they need competent OH advice as a result of a statutory risk assessment. In either case, buying an OH service is a straightforward process if the task is broken down into component parts:

### **Identify the services you need**

Why are you looking for a service? Do you have a specific problem in the workplace, or has your decision arisen after a review of the work hazards or business risks? Has help with your OH arrangements been suggested by the HSE or a trade association?

It helps to:

- Write down the problem
- List the workplace hazards (physical, chemical, biological, design or organisational) in your company
- List the major business risks in relation to your staff

### **Conduct an OH needs assessment**

You need to decide how big the risks you have identified really are. You may need help with this unless the problems are simple. Most OH service providers will help with a needs assessment, although some self assessment tools are available and trade associations offer valuable advice.

### List the services you want

Keep it simple. Complicated terminology isn't necessary. What you need is a clear picture of what you want.

### Identify a supplier

Compare the list you have drawn up with the list of services offered by the OH supplier. The HSE or trade bodies may be able to help with finding other suppliers.

### Negotiate the service you require

All companies are different and have different needs. Choose the service you need. It may be that the supplier can suggest alternative ways of doing things, but remember you control what you want.

### NHS Plus <http://www.nhsplus.nhs.uk/>

NHS Plus is a network of NHS occupational health (OH) departments across England, supplying quality services to non-NHS employers.

NHS Plus offers support to industry, commerce, and the public sector, with a focus on small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

### *What services does NHS Plus provide?*

NHS Plus providers will differ in the services that they can offer. Occupational health covers a wide range of information and practice, with units offering a selection of services and advice on areas including:

- Occupational Health Needs Assessment
  - Risk Assessment
  - Pre employment assessment & screening
  - Health Surveillance (health checks)
  - For Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
  - Other statutory surveillance
  - Non statutory surveillance
- Immunisation
  - Occupational
  - Needlestick injury management
  - Travel
- Procedures including:
  - Audiometry
  - Vision screening
  - Lung function testing
- Medical advice for:
  - sickness absence management
  - return to work / rehabilitation / disability
  - ill health retirement
  - occupational disease

- Counselling
- Drug and Alcohol screening
- Training (Health & Safety, Manual Handling, First Aid)
- Insurance medicals
- Industrial Injury Assessments
- Ergonomic Advice
- Life style screening / advice & Health Promotion

### *Case Study 1 - Example of Costs*

*A small firm in Nottingham employs 20 people. The paint used contains isocyanate, a known respiratory sensitiser. Health surveillance on the employees has been recommended following a visit from the Health and Safety Executive.*

The occupational health service would provide the following annual Health Surveillance programme on a fee for service basis:

- Workplace premises would need to provide a room for sessions with table, two chairs and electric socket as minimum.
- The Occupational Health Nurse would see each employee individually and take them through a questionnaire related to respiratory and skin health and past and present occupations.
- The OH Nurse would carry out an inspection of skin i.e. face, hands and arms.
- The OH Nurse would carry out a lung function test by spirometry equipment and correlate the results related to height, age, ethnic origin and gender of the participant.
- The programme would provide an explanation of the results and give sensible health education advice related to the hazards of the work including skin care and smoking cessation advice if required.
- A report with findings would be sent to the employer for their COSHH records with specific advice regarding individual employees if necessary.
- All medical records would be stored securely and confidentially at the occupational health department.
- If any employee has an abnormal result, a repeat test at the occupational health department would be recommended and when appropriate the opinion/medical examination from the Occupational Health Physician sought.
- The occupational health service provides all equipment (maintained and calibrated to manufacturers recommendations); disposable sundries; height ruler and individual health records.

**TOTAL:** Cost per person £32.00

Travel charged at 49p a mile for visits outside a 5 mile radius.

### *Case Study 2 - Example of Costs*

*A company based in Bath involved in manufacturing employs 150 people.*

This organisation requested a cost for a specific service level agreement. In this case after the contract is agreed, if the number of examinations are exceeded, a further invoice will be sent after the work is complete.

Some of the work will be undertaken on site, and the remainder will be carried out at the occupational health department.

Where applicable travel costs have been included. Travel costs take account of a 20 mile return journey.

- Provision of three pre-employment questionnaires to be completed by employees and sent to the occupational health unit. The OH unit compiles a report for the employer offering opinion on individuals' fitness for posts.
- One Occupational Health Nurse Adviser referral to confirm if a health problem declared at pre-employment will impact on their ability to carry out duties of the position.
- One Occupational Physician referral – a medical opinion if required.
- Nine Nightworker Health assessments to assess an individual's health for night work.
- Six fork lift truck driver medical screenings (not incl. of travel costs) to confirm fitness to operate these vehicles in accordance with guidance.
- Three Management referrals to the Occupational Health Physician to gain an opinion on fitness for the post in the event of management concern for an individual.
- Two management referral follow up appointments.
- 96 Audiometry tests - to be carried out on site over five visits to be arranged by the employer. Individuals must have been away from the noisy environment for a minimum of twelve hours.

**TOTAL: £2,977**

The organisation is also notified in the letter that this quotation is subject to contract, and any further medical opinion required in light of health surveillance results is not included in the above prices. This service involves work outside normal office hours. This will require negotiation, but all occupational health departments will understand the need for interruptions to production to be kept to a minimum and will be as flexible as possible with service delivery.