** Information Leaflet for Employees**

**What is Occupational Health about?**

Occupational Health (OH) is concerned with the effect of work on health and aims to ensure that employees are fit for the work that they do. OH, doctors and nurses work with both employers and employees to maintain the health and wellbeing of individuals through health promotion and assessment whilst at work.

If this is your first consultation with Unity, or you are not familiar with this service, we hope that the following information will be of some help in understanding our role and the various aspects of our work.

**About Us**

The OH team consists of Qualified Nurses known as Advisors, and Doctors known as Physicians, who are experienced and qualified in Occupational Health and who are supported by experienced administrators.

**Appointments**

Employees are seen by OH staff for a variety of reasons. These will be relating to protecting and monitoring aspects of your health in relation to your work environment. These may include:

* Consultations in relation to starting a new job or new role.
* Health screening for specific aspects of your work, in line with Health & Safety Regulations, to monitor your health in the workplace.
* Referral from your manager to advise about fitness for work and ensure that, when at work, the activities that you carry out are suitable for your capabilities and will not adversely affect your health.

**You may be referred if:**

* You have been absent from work due to illness for a period of time;
* You have had several short absences due to ill health;
* You have had an accident or injury resulting in your being absent from work or being unable to undertake your normal work activities;
* You have other health issues affecting your attendance, performance or behaviour at work that causes concern.

**Privacy & Dignity**

Unity is committed to maintaining the privacy, dignity and confidentiality of the client and employees at all times, adhering to the principles of the Nursing & Midwifery Council Code of Confidentiality and General Medical Council Code of Conduct.

**The Appointment**

All appointments are confidential. The Physician or Advisor will confirm with you the reasons for the appointment and provide an explanation of the events that will take place during the appointment.

As part of the assessment, you may be asked about any current or past health problems. The Clinician will be interested in how the illness or health condition is affecting you and will discuss your usual work activities. Areas such as your domestic situation and activities outside of work are often also discussed as these can have some impact on your general health and wellbeing. Some of the questions may seem quite personal and we do not mean to cause any distress, however they may help us to identify causes of ill-health and will help us to advise on an appropriate plan of action. Where appropriate, possible adjustments to your work to help you either remain at work or to return to work, may be discussed. At the end of the consultation the Physician or Advisor will summarise their findings and discuss the content of the report that will be sent to your manager.

**The Occupational Health Report**

It is important that there are ‘no surprises’ about the information that is shared in the report that we write during/ following your consultation. Best practice is to provide you with a copy of your report before it is sent to the referrer. We will make sure you have a secure and reliable route to do this (e.g., an e-mail address). You have the right to point out any factual inaccuracies in the report, but you do not have the right to edit our opinion. You have the right to add your own note to be provided alongside the report if you do not agree with the clinician’s opinion that has been given.

Since October 2009 you have two options regarding the preparation of the report:

1. To have a copy at the same as it is sent to your employer - We will require confirmation as soon as you have received your report by email or telephone that you have received the report, it will then be sent to your employer. If we do not hear from you, we will assume that after four full working days from (email/postal) receipt of your report that you are happy for the report to be released.

2. or to have a copy of the report before it is sent to your employer - you will be asked to respond by email or telephone that you are happy for the report to be sent to your employer within four working days, if we do not hear from you we will assume that after four full working days from receipt (email/postal) of your report that you are happy for the report to be released.

**Confidentiality**

All Occupational Health staff sign a confidentiality agreement that states that all information received whilst working within Unity remains confidential.

**Consent**

There are various methods of consent used by Unity clinicians and administrative staff. This could be:

* *Implied Consent* – when individuals attend for health surveillance with a completed and signed health questionnaire, for blood tests, blood pressure monitoring, hearing tests etc.
* *Written Consent* – this is gained either prior to your appointment via telephone/email or during a face-to-face/telephone/virtual consultation, when writing a report back to the manager is required. If you choose not to give consent for a report, Unity will need to inform your Manager about this and they would then make any management decisions without occupational health advice. The report will not contain confidential clinical information about you unless this has been agreed with you in advance and will focus on answering the questions raised in the original referral form sent to us by your Manager.
* *Written consent* will also be used if Unity is requesting a report from your GP or Specialist.

If you have refused to give consent to release information to a Manager that may have a safety implication to your role, then the clinician may advise you that they will inform the manager that you are not fit to work in that role. You will always be informed when this is going to occur.

**Occupational Health Records**

All occupational health records are held in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (preceded by the General Data Protection Regulations 2018), and Access to Medical Reports Act 1988. The notes are stored securely in locked cabinets and only the Occupational Health Team have access to the keys. Electronic records are stored securely and backed-up regularly. Records can only be accessed by Occupational Health staff who hold log in/passwords.

If information is being requested from GPs or Specialists, Unity complies with the requirements of the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 and you will be informed about this process at the time.

Solicitors may also request copies of your occupational health records if you are pursuing a claim. Your records will only be disclosed with your informed written consent.

**The Office Opening Times -** Monday to Thursday – 09.00 – 16.30 and Friday - 09.00 – 16.00

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