



# **An employee guide to your Occupational Health Referral - Telephone assessments**





## Introduction

Health Partners provides Occupational Health (OH) services to your organisation.

If you have been referred to the occupational health service, then you may want to know a little more about who we are, what we do and what is likely to happen next.

## Who are we?

The occupational Health (OH) service provides your organisation with an independent, confidential service focused on helping people stay well and work to their potential, even when health challenges arise.

We understand that work plays a vital role in maintaining wellbeing and can benefit individuals managing illness. Supporting people to stay in work is not only good for employers—it's good for employees too.

Our service is delivered by a multidisciplinary team of OH professionals, including:

- Doctors/Physicians
- Nurses/Advisors
- Physiotherapists
- Psychologists
- Technicians and
- Occupational Therapists

## What happens when we receive a referral?

When we receive a referral from your employer, one of our team of OH professionals review it to determine the best approach for your case. In most cases, we use telephone or video calls for assessments. This approach is not only more convenient, saving you travel time, but also allows us to connect you with the right professional more quickly. However, if a physical examination is required, we will arrange an in-person appointment at one of our network of clinics around the country.

Occasionally, we may request a report from your GP or specialist, but most of the time this won't be necessary. In Occupational Health, the most valuable insights often come directly from you - understanding your experience of your illness and how you feel about it. Talking with you is usually the best way to gather this information.

## What should I expect from my assessment?

### Before the assessment

We encourage your involvement, so if you have letters from your GP or specialist about your condition, please have them available. Additionally, be prepared to provide details of any medication you're taking or treatments you're undergoing during your assessment. All information you share is kept securely and in strict medical confidence, accessible only to our team.

### During the assessment

The clinician may call slightly after your scheduled time to review your medical record first. The call will come from a 'blocked', 'withheld' or 'private' number, so ensure you're in a private space, your phone ringer is on and allows these types of calls (you can check and change this in the settings function), and you're ready to answer at the appropriate time.



The OH professional will ask how your illness or condition is affecting you, your ability to carry out tasks, and what support might be helpful. Our primary goal is to assist you in staying at or returning to work while supporting your recovery. At the start of the process, we'll confirm that this aligns with your goals to ensure we provide the right kind of help.

If you've been referred due to work-related difficulties or anxiety, we'll ask for an overview of your challenges. However, we focus more on how these issues have impacted you and how we can help you work with your employer to find a resolution.

During the assessment you will be asked for consent to release a report to your referrer. We also offer you an ethical option to see this report prior or at the same time as the referrer to check for any factual inaccuracies.

Your appointment may be booked for 45 to 60 minutes, but the assessment itself will likely be about 30 minutes in length, as the remaining time is needed for the preparation of clinical notes and writing a report to your referrer.

### **The assessment report**

At the end of your assessment, we'll discuss potential steps you, your GP, and your employer can take to support your ability to work. With your consent, we'll include these recommendations in the assessment report to share with your employer and, if appropriate, your GP.

The OH Service treats all information you share as confidential and will not share it with your employer or GP without your explicit consent.

Our reports focus only on health issues relevant to your work. We avoid including unnecessary detail about workplace challenges and instead emphasise solutions and next steps. We'll explain what will be included in the report, so there are no surprises. You'll have the option to review the report before or at the same time as your employer to check for factual accuracy. If you'd like a copy, please ensure you ask the OH professional and they will ensure this is shared with you through the employee portal, My Gateway.

As most health problems are temporary, one assessment is often all that is needed to help understand the support you may require. If your case is more complicated and we think that further review is going to be helpful, then we will also advise what the follow-up arrangements should be.

### **Additional information**

If you need additional information, there are more guidance notes on employee rights and consent, and data protection on the employee portal, My Gateway, as well as a helpful video giving further information.

