A guide to your Independent Medical Assessment (IMA)

What is occupational health?

The occupational health service is an independent, confidential health service provided by Health Management Ltd. Your organisation has a duty to care for your health and safety at work and is committed to developing a healthy workforce.

The occupational health service is delivered by a team of health professionals who have training in occupational medicine, the branch of medicine that deals with the relationship between your work and your health. Working to high professional standards, you can expect the team to treat you courteously and with respect for your privacy and dignity.

Our aims are to:
- Enable the rehabilitation of employees returning to work following ill health.
- Assist employees to achieve good health by providing health advice and support.
- Prevent employees from becoming ill as a result of the work they do.

The occupational health team will also work in partnership with you and your employer to resolve issues in the workplace that might have an adverse effect on your health. Together we hope to ensure that your well-being at work is maintained and given the priority it deserves.

Will this assessment replace the care I am receiving from my doctor/specialist?

No, the OH service is not responsible for your medical care. That continues to be the responsibility of your own GP or Specialist.

The OH team may co-ordinate with your GP to ensure continuity of care but they do not replace his/her service. However this will only ever be done with your consent.

Your appointment details

If you have been referred to the occupational health service, Health Management will arrange an appointment for you to see a doctor close to where you live or work. Sometimes it may be necessary to travel further depending on the availability of appointments in your area.

Consultations take between 30 minutes and an hour. Sometimes a little longer if the issues are complex.

Should you require assistance upon arrival at your IMA please inform us prior to the appointment and we will organise the appropriate provision.

If you are not sure why you have been referred, please ask your HR/Manager to clarify this.

Your HR/Manager will also have additional information regarding confidentiality of your information and your rights which they will share with you.

Prior to your assessment Health Management may have written to the doctor who is due to see you (an occupational physician or, in some cases, a different type of specialist) to explain the circumstances to your referral and to clarify the questions that the consultation is intended to address it.

If you are not happy for this to occur then you should advise your line manager or your HR representative immediately, but this may mean that Health Management is not able to gather the information that they would need in order to advise on your case and in those circumstances your employer would not have the benefit of occupational health advice which is unlikely to be in your best interests.
Please note that should you not arrive for your appointment we will need to inform your organisation of the missed assessment and this will also result in a charge to your organisation too.

**What information should you take?**

In order to obtain the best advice from the medical assessment we would recommend where possible you consider taking the following information for the examining doctor:

1. Details of any current prescription medication from your doctors.
2. Copies of any relevant health information, such as diabetic glucose monitoring diaries, peak flow diaries for asthmatics, mood diaries for psychological disorders if relevant.
3. Names of any specialists you are under the care of and details of any forthcoming outpatient appointments or operation dates awaited.
4. If you have had any recent reports of investigations, blood tests, X rays or scans, it would be very helpful to know if these demonstrated any abnormalities. (you may wish to ask your GP about this).
5. Details of how long your current medical certificate runs if relevant.

If you wear glasses or a hearing aid then please do bring these with you

**When you arrive**

Please ensure that you bring your appointment letter to your assessment.

Please try to arrive in good time for your assessment. If you are delayed it may not be possible for the doctor to see you that day and another booking may need to be made. This will result in a cancellation fee being incurred by your employer.

Please note that children are not allowed to be present during the assessment, and there are no childcare facilities available.

**Your medical assessment**

The doctor will first discuss with you what their role is, explain the purpose of the assessment and the confidential nature of the assessment.

The doctor will have received details from Health Management concerning your illness and reasons for the referral. They may well ask you questions about your job role and then they will assess your specific health issues.

The doctor will also ask you to complete a consent form, which asks for your consent to release a medical report about the assessment to Health Management and designated officers within your organisation.

In many cases, the consultation will include only a relatively short medical assessment and will rarely require a full physical examination.

During your assessment the physician may undertake a limited physical examination. If you would prefer a chaperone to be present, in case that is required, you are welcome to bring a suitable person with you for your appointment.
Is the assessment confidential?

As with all medical professionals, the occupational health team work within strict guidelines regarding medical information and confidentiality.

Your explicit consent is required for all the stages identified on the consent form without which an Occupational Health Report cannot be produced to your employers.

Your line manager/HR has additional information on this point should you require any clarification.

Please be aware another clinician may audit your case for quality purposes to ensure all our clinicians work to best practice standards and to participate in national clinical audit. When this is undertaken anonymised information may be provided but this will not contain any personal identifiers and will not be linked to any individual and no personal data is shared.

What happens next?

Following the consultation, a medical report will be sent to Health Management, normally within 5 working days, which will be interpreted by the occupational physicians at Health Management who will have detailed knowledge of your organisation and work practices. The Health Management Occupational Health Doctor will provide a report without unreasonable delay and in a manner which is not biased towards the employee or the employer.

He or she will send a report to your HR/Manager, or designated referrer, which will answer the questions raised in the referral, and usually contain a brief description of your illness, recommendations about the sort of work for which you are fit and any adjustments to your duties which are needed on medical grounds.

Usually the report will cover questions about the likelihood of you rendering reliable service and attendance to your employer in the future and whether your case can be managed administratively in line with the organisation’s procedures and policies.

The examining doctor will summarise his/her conclusions to you at the end of the consultation; and in the case of HML run clinics may write directly to your employer covering the issues above.

Should you wish to receive a copy of the management report before or at the same time Health Management sends it to your employer, please let the examining doctor have your email address so that this can be added to the consent form. If you do not have an email address please advise the examining doctor of your postal address.