



Your Occupational Health Referral and Records

What to expect from your referral

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| Authors: | Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing |
| Publication date: | August 2024 (version 2) |
| Review due: | August 2026 |

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What to expect from your Occupational Health Referral

You have been referred to receive Occupational Health advice relating to your health and work. This may be because you are returning to work following a period of absence, or that you are struggling to fulfil the duties required of you in your role due to your health issues or there may be concerns that work is having an impact on your health.

The content of your referral should have been discussed with you by the person referring you. You should be aware of the content of the referral and have given your consent for it to be sent to Occupational Health. The Occupational Health Adviser (OHA) will go through the content of your referral again at the appointment and gain your verbal consent to continue with the assessment.

If you are not happy with the content of the referral and wish for the assessment to be delayed, the assessment will not continue, and we will ask your referring manager or Employee Relations Adviser to discuss the aspects of the referral with you that you are unhappy about.

Occupational Health Assessment

The Occupational Health Adviser (OHA) will undertake an assessment with you either face to face in a private office, or via video call or telephone.

The appointment can take up to one hour. If you are taking a call from OH, we will always check with you to make sure you are somewhere confidential and convenient to take the call. If you have any queries before your appointment, please ask one of our administrators [via email](#) or ask the OHA before your appointment starts.

The OHA will take history from you relating to different areas including general health information, your domestic support arrangements, any past medical history that is relevant and the details of the reason you are being seen. They will also discuss aspects of your work including your normal role and if any adjustments have been put in place with any specific difficulties you are experiencing. This information gives the OHA a holistic assessment and allows a good base on which to answer the questions from the referring manager or HR that are outlined in the referral form. It will also help us to identify ways we can suggest to your manager to support you and strategies we can suggest you could use to enhance your wellbeing and recovery.

Occupational Health Report

An Occupational Health report is written following every assessment undertaken unless you withdraw your consent. Prior to a report being sent from Occupational Health, you will be asked to give your consent to share the report with your manager and/or Employee Relations. Your consent options to consider are:

1. Give consent for the report to be sent to your manager and ER without you seeing the report first, you will be sent a copy at the same time.
2. Give consent for the report to be sent to the above people only after you have viewed the report first, called having prior sight.
3. Not give consent for the report to be sent to one or both of the people above.

The OHA will ask for your choice at the end of your appointment.

The report will detail a background of your health issues and provide an opinion on your fitness to work and whether any adjustments are advised/recommended to assist you returning to or remaining in work. The report will also answer the referral questions asked and the answers to these will be discussed with you at the end of the assessment.

It is up to the manager whether they can accommodate the recommendations from Occupational Health. We advise that you meet your manager after the report has been sent to discuss its content and any advice that has been suggested.

Requesting reports for additional information

If the Occupational Health Adviser wishes to gain further information from your GP or another specialist, you will be asked to complete a written consent form during the assessment. This will be sent with the letter from Occupational Health to the GP or specialist we are requesting information from. You have three options to consider:

1. To not give consent for your information to be released to Occupational Health.
2. To give consent for information to be released and not to view the report before it is sent to us.
3. To give consent for information to be released to Occupational Health after you have viewed the report first. In this situation, you will need to travel to the place where the report is written to view it. It will not be sent to you to view by post and will not be released until you have viewed it and given your consent for it to be forwarded to us.

If you do not give consent for information or a report to be shared with occupational health, then a clinical decision will be made on the clinical information gained from the assessment.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

Within the University of Essex, only the Occupational Health team can access your clinical file. Your manager and Employee Relations do not have access to this information. Any requests from 3rd parties, such as your GP or specialist, for information either held on your file or about you, need to be accompanied by your written consent. Without this, all requests for information will be denied.

Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy

The Occupational Health department works under strict data protection and confidentiality guidelines. We have ensured we are compliant with the further changes coming into force under the Data Protection Act 2018 and under the EU directive General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018.

The departmental policy on confidentiality is reviewed regularly and the Director of Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing ensures all employees are aware of the importance to adhering to this policy. Each employee working within Occupational Health has signed a confidentiality agreement.

Storage of Clinical Data

Clinical information is held on an Occupational Health system called Cority. This has restricted access to Occupational Health and Cority only. The data from Cority is held within data centres based in Bedford, in the UK. The database is secure and is protected with spam filters, encryption codes and firewalls. If you have any questions regarding the storage of your data, please speak to our office administrator.

Some clinical data is also stored on Occupational Health' Box drive, and access to this is limited only to those working within Occupational Health.

There are confidentiality policies in place that ensure Occupational Health employees accessing your information are allowed to do so only when required.

If you have any queries or would like any additional information, please contact ohquery@essex.ac.uk