

Occu-what.....?

Who the health needs that?

Dr Brian Fitzsimons M.B.Ch.B D.Occ.Med. F.R.C.G.P

4 Good Reasons

1. Work Is Good For you
2. The costs of sickness absence to government and industry are substantial
3. Research shows that the longer people are off sick, the less likely they are to make a successful return to work
4. Obligation in Law

Occupational Health/Occupational Medicine is concerned with the interaction of health and work, recognising that work can affect health and vice versa.

Occupational Health Providers exist to:

- Support both the Client business **and** the individual worker.
- Help to ensure that the workplace is a safe and healthy place to be.
- Support workers in the workplace.
- Address health problems when they arise.
- Support Clients in compliance with HSE legislation.

Being in business involves risk. Business opportunities are inherently uncertain and need to be assessed and managed, but other risks are also part of running any business.

Important areas of business risk:

- Employee Health.
- Appropriately managing funds for the benefits pension scheme for employees (or other employee benefits for long-term ill health).

How Occupational Physicians can help an employer significantly reduce the risks; optimising productivity whilst reducing costs related to health.

- Identifying the baseline in new employees – Employee Rights Act 2025.
- Ensuring aware of the Disability Discrimination provisions of the Equality Act 2010.
- Identifying work-related disease at the earliest point.
- Statutory health surveillance.
- Assessing fitness for work during and after illness/disease onset.
- Assisting managers to manage attendance.

First, be clear about what tasks need addressing, who else will be involved in the work and what you expect the occupational physician to do.

Second, having established what contribution you want from the occupational physician, choose an occupational physician to work with you.

Absence Management

OH can assess your workers, provide impartial and professional advice on any absenteeism / presenteeism, and offer support to assist your employees to get back to work as quickly and effectively as possible. OH absence management strategies focus on early interventions and will help your business to:

- Reduce levels of absence.
- Cut the cost of absence to your organisation.
- Drive up productivity and decrease disruption resulting from employees being absent.
- Create greater engagement and motivation of employees as they feel more valued.
- Enable employees to return to work sooner.
- Address rehabilitation needs.

Health Surveillance & Prevention

Ongoing checks can prevent health problems from occurring and ensure that your employees are safe and able to work in their current or future role.

Employees who are exposed to noise or vibration, ionising radiation, solvents, fumes, dusts, biological agents and other substances hazardous to health may be required to be checked by law.

Immunisations and Travel Health

If you have staff exposed to risk of disease, OH can identify which vaccinations may be appropriate.

And... if you are in the position of your workers also servicing international contracts, then OH can advise regarding Travel Vaccines and Travel Health.

Health Promotion and Wellbeing

OH can support you to create a positive and healthy working environment and promote wellbeing amongst your staff.

In short, OH can provide a bespoke service that meets your needs as a business.

Examples:

- Lead - CLAW 2002 ACoP
- Silica - Health surveillance for those exposed to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) - Supplementary guidance for occupational health professionals (amended May 2024)

Questions?

With the plethora of regulations, the rising cost of sickness absence, and the increasing risk of civil and criminal procedures, appropriate Occupational Health advice and support is a must, and not a maybe.

Occupational Health – who needs it?

We all do!

The Team at Granite Occupational Health is there to deliver this, to you!