



Occupational health advice line for small business

Background

Government is piloting a national occupational health advice line service.

Small and micro businesses rarely have in-house human resources or occupational health services and in many cases feel that they do not have enough time or resources to tackle health at work problems and well-being issues when they arise.

Line managers have a key role to play in supporting people to stay in work or return to work quickly and this advice line will give small business managers access to free, professional and confidential workplace health support.

Aim of the service

To provide small (and micro) businesses with early and easy access to high quality, professional advice tailored to their needs, in response to individual employee occupational health and well-being issues.

Target audience

Employers/managers working in businesses with fewer than 50 staff.

Although the following groups are not the primary focus of the service we will also provide advice to:

- Businesses with between 50-249 employees
(For England and Wales. In Scotland, the service is available to all businesses)
- Employees working in businesses with up to 249 employees
(For England. In Scotland and Wales, the service is available to employees in businesses of all sizes)
- GPs
(For England and Scotland. In Wales, GPs have access to support through Healthy Working Wales service)

Service

- Telephone advice on individual employee workplace health (occupational health) issues.
- Callers eligible for the service will speak to a qualified occupational health nurse
- Free
- Confidential
- A pilot project running from 7 December 2009 until 31 March 2011

Opening Hours

- Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm (9am - 4.30pm on a Friday in Scotland)

Remit

Any occupational health issue:

- Sickness absence/attendance management
- First aid
- Mental health:
Anxiety, depression, , schizophrenia, psychosis, paranoia, post traumatic stress disorder, mania, bipolar, eating disorders or symptoms of distress
- Musculoskeletal:
Back pain, Upper limb disorders - carpal tunnel syndrome, repetitive strain injury, tenosynovitis, (aches, pains, tension and disorders involving any part of the arm from fingers to shoulder, or the neck), lower limb disorders
- Health surveillance:
Pre employment screening¹, respiratory (lung function), hearing (audiometry), lead, asbestos, confined spaces, gas, drugs & alcohol, noise, radiation, compressed air, vibration, infection (bloodborne virus'), vision screening
- Other:
Pregnancy, risk assessment (stress, environment, workstation, pregnancy), working with display screen equipment (DSE) and visual display units (VDU), pre employment assessment, bullying and harassment, night work, health promotion, statutory requirements (legislation), policies (flexible working, leave etc), manual handling, advice on disabilities, return to work planning, workplace adjustments

The following groups should not be referred to the service:

- Employees or employers from large businesses (more than 250 staff)
- Individuals calling about personal non health related issues
- Anyone outside of the pilot areas

Advice not in scope of this adviceline:

- Anything other than occupational health advice. We anticipate most out of scope calls will relate to:
 - General health and safety
 - Employment law

General enquiries:

For further information on the occupational health adviceline project for small business, please contact oh.adviceline@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

¹ Using disability-related information gained from pre-employment questionnaires to screen applicants on health grounds may be discriminatory and open to legal challenge. We encourage employers to limit the use of such questionnaires for any health conditions (other than for essential health related criteria for the post), to identifying the reasonable adjustments that a job applicant may require for the recruitment process.

Pilot locations -

In each country the adviceline has its own name & number

England

Health for Work Adviceline

0800 0 77 88 44

www.health4work.nhs.uk

North-East

Redcar & Cleveland
Stockton-on-Tees
Chester-le-Street
Derwentside
Durham
Easington
Sedgefield
Teesdale
Wear Valley

Alnwick
Berwick-upon
Tweed
Blyth Valley
Castle Morpeth
Tynedale
Wansbeck
Gateshead
Newcastle upon Tyne

North Tyneside
South Tyneside
Sunderland
Allerdale
Barrow-in-Furness
Carlisle
Copeland
Eden
South Lakeland

North and West Yorkshire

East Riding of Yorkshire
North Lincolnshire
York

Hambleton
Harrogate
Richmondshire

Ryedale
Scarborough

Portsmouth, South Hampshire, East Sussex & Isle of Wight

Portsmouth
East Hampshire
Fareham

Gosport
Havant
Chichester

Worthing

East Anglia

Babergh
Breckland
Broadland
East
Cambridgeshire
Forest Heath

Great Yarmouth
Ipswich
King's Lynn &
West
Norfolk
Mid Suffolk

North Norfolk
Norwich
South Norfolk
Waveney
Suffolk Coastal
St Edmundsbury

Merseyside

Knowsley
Sefton

Liverpool

St. Helens

South Buckinghamshire, South Oxfordshire, West Berkshire

Aylesbury Vale

Chiltern

South Bucks

West London

Camden
Hammersmith
& Fulham
Kensington & Chelsea

Wandsworth
Westminster
Brent
Ealing

Hounslow
Kingston upon Thames
Merton
Richmond upon Thames

Wales

Health at Work Advice Line Wales

0800 107 0900

www.healthyworkingwales.com

This pilot covers all areas in Wales

Scotland

Healthy Working Lives Adviceline

0800 019 2211

www.healthyworkinglives.com

This pilot covers all areas in Scotland