



Your Occupational Health Service Colleague Handbook

November 2023

Version 1.1 November 2023



Network Rail
Occupational
Health Service



everyone
home safe
every day

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. About us.....	4
2.1 Our Purpose	
2.2 Our Locations	
3. Our services	12
4. Health surveillance.....	12-13
5. Specialist and Third-Party services.....	14-15
6. Your Occupational Health responsibilities.....	16
7. Support services.....	17
8. Making a referral.....	18-19
9. Frequently asked questions (FAQs).....	16

1. Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to Network Rail's Occupational Health Service handbook. We are here to offer you a range of support when it comes to your health at work. Whether you are a new or existing employee, this handbook should be used as a reference.

The purpose of this handbook is to:



Introduce you to our vision, goals and mission



Outline the purpose of this service



Tell you which services are available



Outline the common reasons you may need to use our services



Show you the locations of our 22 centres



Detail your responsibilities both as a colleague and Manager



Signpost you to useful resources and FAQs

2.1 Our Purpose

Our Vision

A Railway Industry leading Occupational Health provision that delivers quality advice and expertise relating to health issues at work for our colleagues.

Our Goals

- To improve and protect employee health in the workplace.
- To identify and reduce health issues and their impacts.
- Supporting employees who are struggling with illness or absences related to sickness.

Our Values

We **empower** our people: to always be **safe**, **care** about the railway, its users and each other, and put **teamwork** at the heart of all that we do.



Our Mission

We are committed to delivering an exceptional Occupational Health service for our colleagues.

We will work together with our colleagues, regulators, unions and external industry partners to do this.

2.1 Our Purpose

What is the Network Rail Occupational Health Service?

- The Occupational Health service is here to provide health advice about work related health matters.
- Advise managers and colleagues in relation to fitness at work.
- Recommend workplace adjustments /adaptations and suitability to work.
- Support with Health promotion.

Why are we bringing Occupational Health into Network Rail?

To provide an Occupational Health service that really understands the needs of people working on the railway and can give you the right support at the right time.

The service is here to:

- ✓ Support your health and wellbeing at work.
- ✓ Provide you with advice and expertise from Occupational Health professionals.
- ✓ Advise and support you and your manager when you are absent from work.
- ✓ Advise managers regarding reasonable changes to your workplace for health reasons.
- ✓ Support Network Rail in adhering to its legal requirements.
- ✓ Be professional and ethical and keep your health information private, and make sure that your Health Records are stored safely and securely.

2.2 Our Locations

Our Centres

Our national service allows you to access any one of our 22 centres.

The centres will be used by all routes, regions, and business functions. You will be able to access any centre across the country, no matter where you are based for work.

The map below indicates the centres you can access within each region.



Milton Keynes
Birmingham
Crewe
Chester
Lancaster

Port Talbot
Plymouth
Swindon
Bristol

Glasgow
Perth

Ipswich
Bedford
Derby
Doncaster
Newcastle
York
Peterborough
Stratford

Ashford
Basingstoke
Victoria

3.0 Our Services

Pre-placement Assessments

Starting a new role – ‘pre-placement’

Future employees or if you are starting a safety critical role in Network Rail shall require a health assessment / and or medical before starting in their role.

The medical will consist of a simple questionnaire or a more detailed medical.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Medical (HSW)

You will require a HSW medical if you are in a safety critical role (e.g., signalling, operating trains, operating machinery, working trackside).

When you start in employment you will receive a HSW medical to assess your fitness for work, these will be repeated at regular intervals.

Key information:

- 1.5 hours -2 hours appointment
- You will receive one appointment every 3 years
- If you are over 65 or your health needs regular monitoring, you will receive an appointment annually

What is included in an HSW?

- Statutory health surveillance
- Fitness for task assessments
- Specific medical for your role including e.g., fitness to work trackside
- Wellbeing checks (optional)
- Health advice

Performance and attendance Referrals

You may be referred to Occupational Health by your manager if there is concern about your health or wellbeing. You can also ask your manager to refer you.

A report will be produced which we will share with your manager with your consent.

The following will be covered in the assessment and report:

- Advice on the employee's current health status and prognosis of the condition.
- The likely return to work date or return to full duties.
- Advice on current functional ability (if work duties are affected, advice on whether this is likely to be short term, long term or permanent.
- Rehabilitation/return to work plan, advice on adjustments if appropriate, with clear timescales.
- Advice of disability in accordance with UK legislation.

Case Conference

A case conference is a meeting that is held when an employee has health issues that affect their work performance or attendance.

The conference aims to reach a common understanding of the issues and agree on a way forward, such as adjustments, support or referrals.

Ill health retirement

If your health issues impact on you being able to undertake your job and you are a member of a relevant pension scheme, you may be able to apply for ill health retirement.

An appointment will be scheduled with one of our Occupational Health clinicians to assess further.

Fitness for Task

Night worker assessment

If your job means you spend at least three hours working during night-time (i.e., between 23:00 and 06:00) you will be offered a night worker health assessment.

The night worker health assessment is a questionnaire, where if no issues are identified an automated fit report is provided. Any health issues will require an occupational health assessment.

Working at Heights assessment

If your work involves heights, such as climbing ladders, scaffolding or working with overhead power lines etc. you will require a working at heights assessment.

The Work at Height regulations 2005, recommend that a medical is carried out to identify any health issues that may increase the risks of accidents or injuries.

Vision Testing for NDT (Non-Destructive Testing) assessment

If your work involves testing a material, structure, or system without causing damage, this is called Non-Destructive Testing (NDT).

The Occupational Health service will test your vision to make sure you can carry out this role.

Air Observer Medical

This is a periodic health assessment specifically for those who are air observers working in the air operations team.

Electromagnetic Fields at Work (EMF)

EMFs are produced whenever a piece of electrical or electronic equipment (i.e., mobile phone, electric hand-held tools, welding equipment, etc) is used. Exposure to high levels of EMFs can cause unpleasant or irritating health effects.

The control of electromagnetic fields at work (CEMFAW) Regulations 2016 require Network Rail to:

- Assess the levels of EMFs you are exposed to.
- Make sure that this exposure is safe.
- When appropriate, check the risk to you and your colleagues and stop or minimise those risks.
- Provide information and training on the risks (if any) posed to you and your colleagues by EMFs in the workplace and details of any action you are taking to remove or control them.
- Provide Occupational Health advice and services if you are exposed to EMFs above the acceptable limit.

Group 1 Medicals

Buggy Driver (Station Vehicle Driver)

If your job involves transferring goods and / or members of the public around the station in a buggy, you will need a specific health assessment.

This assessment will check that you meet the DVLA 'Group 1' Medical standards. You can receive a Group 1 licence until you are 70 (or younger depending on medical reasons) and it must be renewed every three years.

We advise that you get this assessment when you first join, at age 45 and then every five years after this until you are 65.

Forklift Truck (FLT)

If your role involves using a FLT, you are expected to meet the 'Group 1' driving standards.

You must get assessed for using an FLT when you are recruited, at age 40 and then every five years until you are 65, then every year until you retire.

Following the assessment, we will complete an Outcome Summary Report (OSR) for your line manager indicating your fitness for work and letting them know any issues identified.

Group 2 Medicals – Lorry / Bus

If your role includes driving a lorry (Category C) or bus (Category D), then you must take an assessment for a Group 2 licence.

The purpose of an HGV Assessment is to check your fitness to drive the vehicles which fall into this Group 2 category.

4.0 Health Surveillance (HS)

If your job involves exposure to harmful materials, working in compressed air atmosphere, welding, ionising radiation and some solvents, fumes and dust; you will need an annual Health Surveillance (HS) assessment.

This appointment is by phone or part of the HSW medical assessment to monitor some or all of the following:

Hand and arm vibration (HAVS)

Human Resources Shared Services (HRSS) will advise the Occupational health service of your requirement to attend an appointment based on your last assessment date / expiry.

If you are a manager and have an employee who has moved roles, or their risk of exposure to hazards in their current role has changed, please follow Network Rail guidelines and carry out a risk assessment if appropriate. If a referral is required, please refer online via the portal.

Hearing (Audiometry)

A hearing test is needed for anyone regularly exposed to noise levels above a certain limit. This is to comply with Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 and Network Rail Medical Standards.

The following tests may be completed:

- Initial baseline test when you start your role
- Annual review for the following 2 years
- A further assessment every three years, unless concerns are raised earlier
- If you are exposed to frequent/very loud noise, you should also receive more frequent audiograms based on a risk assessment.

Respiratory

Your lungs will be tested to protect your health by detecting any problems from exposure to harmful substances early.

This is not a replacement for preventing or controlling your exposure, but it makes sure that any concerns are caught at an early stage. It can also help us evaluate how effective the controls are detailed in the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).

Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS)

In the course of your work, you may be exposed to RCS.

This means your Health Surveillance will need to include a respiratory testing.

If you have been exposed to RCS for 15 years, you should also have a chest x-ray and further x-ray's every 3 years as part of the surveillance programme.

Skin surveillance

- Health surveillance such as skin checks will help to identify the early symptoms of dermatitis or other health effects caused by skin exposure.
- The earlier the health effect is recognised the better the prognosis for the sufferer.
- Health surveillance can show whether an adequate standard of control is being maintained.

5.0 Specialist and Third-Party Services

To ensure you have access to the right expertise, some of the services will be offered by external providers.

Employee assistance programme (EAP)

PAM Assist is our employee assistance programme, which provides free and confidential health and wellbeing support to you and your immediate family on work and personal issues.

They are available 24/7, 365 days a year, so you can always get the help you need.

PAM Assist will also deliver our critical incident response service through their trauma response team, to provide specific support and care where needed.

How to contact PAM Assist?

There are several options for contacting PAM Assist, all of them free and confidential, so you can pick the way that works best for you.

Telephone **08081 964 505**

Email counsellingteam@pamassist.co.uk

Webchat www.PAM-assist.co.uk (access code is NWR1).

Watch a PAM Assist App video by clicking [here](#). To log in to the PAM Assist app, you must first register as a new user on the portal via the link above.

How to get specific support for critical incidents?

PAM Assist are trained professionals, providing specific support to people affected by traumatic events

You can contact the team at CI@pamwellbeing.co.uk (Monday-Friday 08:00 to 17:00) or call **08081 964 505** for support 24/7.

Medication Enquiry Service (Chemist on call)

This service is to help our colleagues understand the impact that medication, or a change in dose of medication, might have on someone's fitness for safety-related work. It does not matter if this medication has been prescribed or purchased over the counter.

This service is not open to contractors.

Physiotherapy services

Physiotherapy helps to restore movement and function when someone is affected by injury, illness or disability.

A referral can be made by your line manager to the physiotherapy service . If you are currently off sick due to a musculoskeletal problem, you can also self-refer.

Employees can self-refer for physiotherapy appointments by calling 01284 333543 or emailing a [referral form](#) to network@vhg.co.uk.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment

All new starters will receive an email invitation to complete an online Display Screen Equipment (DSE) training and assessment.

6.0 Your Occupational Health responsibilities

Everyone must play their part to support each other to work safely, provide accurate information to Occupational Health Services, and attend appointments on time.

All colleagues should:

- ✓ Attend Occupational Health appointments as requested. If you need to re-arrange or cancel, please give 72 hours' notice.
- ✓ Inform Occupational Health staff of any change in your health that could impact on you undertaking your role.
- ✓ Provide Occupational Health with accurate health information.

If you are a manager, you should:

- ✓ Make sure that all colleagues know how to access Occupational Health Services.
- ✓ Carry out relevant risk assessments in your areas to identify risks and hazards that may affect colleagues.
- ✓ Monitor colleagues' performance and refer colleagues to Occupational Health if you think there is a need for it.
- ✓ Stay in touch with colleagues who are absent from work for long or repeated periods and follow the sickness absence policy.
- ✓ Make sure that colleagues attend appointments when requested to do so.

7.0 Support Services

Occupational Health Telephone

Below is a freephone telephone number should you want to contact us.

Tel: 0800 3160066.

HR Direct

HR Direct offers expert advice and guidance on all people issues. It is a service for all managers and band 1 and 2 colleagues, providing professional support and guidance.

Please note, this service does not offer information on policies, procedures or general people related information.

If you require information on policies, procedures and general people related information, you can call the colleague Helpline.

Contact details / Referral process:

- Web Portal: Visit the HR Page on **MyConnect**.
- Line Manager Helpline **Tel: 08000 546 547** (Open Mon to Fri 08:00-18:00)
There is also call back out of hours service in operation.
- Colleague Helpline **Tel: 0844 371 0115**.

8.0 How to make a good referral (if you're a line manager)

When to refer to occupational health?

It is important as a manager that you make a timely referral so that our colleagues receive the support they need when they need it.

Please refer an employee when:

- They request a referral.
- There is a continued concern about short-term sickness or long-term sickness absence, including the management of return to work .
- If there are concerns that an employee's health may lead to sickness absence.
- You have a direct employee with a health concern that may require, Occupational Health advice including recommendations for adjustments, information, guidance and/or signposting for support.

Background History

When making a referral please include as much relevant information as possible. This will make the process quicker and make it easier to deliver the service you need.

Please aim to include:

Context

- State what advice/information you're hoping to obtain.
- Are they able to carry out their job?
- Do they have any previous history of their current condition?
- State the diagnosis on their medical/self-certificate.

Absence details

- State whether they are currently absent from work. When was the first day of absence? Is their attendance pattern causing concern?
- Do you have a confirmed return to work date or an indication from them or their GP about how long they may absent?
- Are they on long term sickness absence?
- Are there any personal issues that they have disclosed?

How to make a good referral (if you are their line manager)

Role

- The role member of staff is contracted to do.
- Do they work full time or part time?
- Do they work shifts? If so what pattern/times.
- Job title and a description of the type of work the colleague does. Please state if their role is safety critical.
- Whether their role involves driving.

Workplace Adjustments

In some cases, a direct report may have returned to work on adjusted duties but still require Occupational Health advice.

Please outline in the referral that you make:

- Has there been agreement on adjusting their work practice?
- If so was it successful? If not, what difficulties were they experiencing?

Questions

Please include any questions you would like the clinician to address within the occupational health report. To do this, you should outline any other issues that you would like addressed, specific to this person and the current referral.

Occupational Health will provide advice on the following when requested:

- Any adjustments to the work role or work environment that you should consider.
- A timescale for return to work (where possible).

9.0 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the service for?

The Occupational Health service provides independent and impartial advice with the aim to provide quality expertise relating to health issues at work.

How is this service different from the previous service?

We will ensure our service continues to provide quality and impartial advice.

You will have access to 22 new centres across the network and be seen by Occupational Health professionals who work solely on delivering a quality service for those working in the rail industry.

Are the team clinical professionals?

Yes, those conducting the clinical assessments hold the required experience and Occupational Health Qualification/ competence . Our Occupational Health Nurses will adhere to the standards of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), whilst doctors will adhere to the General Medical Council (GMC) standards. They are bound by the same confidentiality agreements and codes of conduct as other health professionals.

What is the outcome of the assessment?

The Occupational Health service may produce a report for your manager. This report will not detail information about your condition or any sensitive personal information. The contents of this will be discussed with you during your appointment.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How do I make an appointment?

The easiest way is to speak to your Line Manager and ask them to refer you.

Why has my manager referred me to Occupational Health?

Referrals are made by Line Managers to help ensure colleagues are safe and well. If a manager has identified a health problem which has caused you to be absent from work, they may refer you to Occupational Health.

Being referred is not a negative reflection of performance at work.

How can the referral help me?

If necessary, the Occupational Health service may make a range of recommendations such as adjustments to the hours or days that you work, or that temporary or permanent alternative duties be considered.

If you are currently absent from work, the Occupational Health service will support you to return to work when possible.

Where will I need to go for appointments?

You can attend appointments at the centre nearest your home, regardless of where you work.

What are the centre opening hours?

Our centre opening hours will be 08:30 to 16:30

The following Third-party services will be available out of office hours (24/7).
Sharps Line, Chemist on call and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Is the service confidential?

Yes. As with your GP or hospital medical records no-one outside the Occupational Health Service is permitted to see the medical records from the consultation without your explicit written permission.

How does this help my employer?

The advice aims to help us consider steps to assist you to work safely or to help you return to work if you are currently absent. The report is advisory, and your manager would need to consider the practicality of implementing any recommendations.

Will my line manager see my data as it is an in-house occupational health service?

No. Your personal medical data will be seen only by the trained clinical professionals who provide the same independent service as previous external occupational health providers.

With an individual's consent, line managers will be provided with a summary outcome report which advises on fitness for work. This follows formal guidance provided by the Society of Occupational Medicine.

Will the in-house Network Rail Occupational Health Service integrate medical data from my personal GP or hospital visits?

No. The Network Rail Occupational Health Service is separate from the NHS and other private practices, including your GP, so data will not be integrated between the two. The Network Rail service focuses on occupational health records only, and not general medical data.