PROCEDURE SUMMARY

The procedure sets out the framework for the Occupational Health and Wellbeing service for managers, staff and staff representatives as well as the scope of the procedure to whom it applies.

It confirms the commitment to open and meaningful communication and consultation in relation to Occupational Health and Wellbeing services, its expectations around duties and responsibilities of all parties, as well as confirmation that all interactions change will be fair, equitable and reasonable in the circumstances.

The Trust monitors the implementation of and compliance with this procedure in the following ways:

This procedure will be subject to review as per the agreed review schedule of Trust HR policies and as agreed by the Trust’s Partnership Committee. Compliance with this procedure will be against the Trust’s agreed minimum requirements /standards as detailed within its Auditable Standards and Monitoring Arrangements, as well as the use of internal reporting and recording within the Human Resources department.

This procedure must be read in conjunction with the Employee Wellbeing and Sickness Absence Policy.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Applicable</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<td>Trust wide</td>
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The Director responsible for monitoring and reviewing this procedure is Executive Director of People and Culture
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1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Employee Wellbeing, Sickness & Ill Health Policy.

1.2 The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service has no disciplinary or “policing” function. The concept of Occupational Health is to provide an independent, confidential service with professional support to both employees and management.

1.3 The aim of the procedure is to provide adequate welfare facilities, safeguard Health and Safety and provide effective Occupational Health to staff and ensure the Trust have a fully fit workforce. The Occupational Health Service must be an accredited service in line with the Safe Effective Quality Occupational Health Service (SEQOHS) accreditation scheme.

1.4 The duties include giving employees the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary for their health and safety.

1.5 The Trust aims to strengthen the pre-employment and post appointment procedures.

1.6 Employees will be given appropriate access to Occupational Health Services.

1.7 The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) includes a counselling service; this supplements the provision of the current Occupational Health Service.

1.8 It is envisaged this procedure will enhance working relationships between management and members of staff as well as ensuring the Occupational Health Service has a clear understanding of the exact information being sought.

1.9 In the provision of Occupational Health and Wellbeing services, these are the core principles that will underpin our practice:

- Consulting and communicating in a meaningful way. ‘Meaningful’ is defined as a process to enable matters of interest to be jointly examined and discussed by management, staff, and recognised trade unions; ensuring that appropriate information is provided to all, in order to ensure that proper and informed contributions can be made by all to the process.
- Maximising staff involvement and participation in process of change.
- Ensuring decision-making is based upon clear, consistent and fair criteria.
implementing measures aimed at avoiding redundancy wherever possible.
• Ensuring equality of opportunity for staff, through the application of best practice in relation to employment law.
• Recognising the abilities, range of experience and competencies of all staff.
• Providing opportunities for support and development of employees affected by change.

2. SCOPE

2.1 The procedure applies to staff directly employed by the Trust including Bank Workers.

2.2 The procedure does not apply to:

• agency workers, medical locums or to contractors.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 For the purposes of applying the provisions contained in this document a glossary of terms that are used within the procedure are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protected Characteristics</th>
<th>Protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010 is a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long term effect on the individual’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAP</td>
<td>Employee Assistance Programme</td>
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</table>

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 The Trust will adhere to the appropriate legislation and other frameworks such as Agenda for Change, local agreements and Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) code of practice. 

4.2 The Trust seeks to promote fair, reasonable and consistent employment practices referring to relevant policies as required. In drawing up this procedure, aspects of discrimination have been considered so that particular groups are not disadvantaged.

4.3 All employees have a responsibility to comply with the provisions set out in this procedure.
4.4 All employees have the right to privacy and confidentiality. Any correspondence between the Trust and the Occupational Health Service will be with the full knowledge of the employee and will relate solely to their fitness to work, i.e. will not divulge specific medical information, unless the Occupational Health Service deem it necessary and have the employee’s written consent.

4.5 Managers and employees can seek further advice from the HR team with respect to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service.

4.6 The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service will meet with the Trust on a regular basis and will work together with the Trust to deliver a quality service. This contract monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that the service specification is adhered to.

4.7 If quality improvements to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service are required managers should contact the HR directorate with specific queries. These problems will be discussed and resolved at regular monthly meetings with the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service.

4.8 Definitions of Short and Long term sickness are in line with the Trust’s Management of Sickness and Absence Procedure should be referred to whenever there is a management referral.

4.9 In accordance with the Disability in Employment of the Trust’s Recruitment and Retention Procedure, Section 4.4 and the Equality Act 2010 the Occupational Health Service will, if appropriate, suggest reasonable adjustments to the workplace and / or modification to the job task.

4.10 The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service will be accessible to all employed staff as stated in Section 4.1 of this procedure in line with the Trust’s commitment to its Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights Policy and Procedure.

4.11 If appointments are continually missed or cancelled without appropriate notice or due reason the Trust’s Disciplinary (Conduct) Policy and Procedure may be invoked.

4.12 Where a worker is unwilling or unable to engage with the Occupational Health Procedure the Managing Sickness and Absence Procedure will progress based on any and all health information available at that time.
5. CONTACTING THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

5.1 All queries including the cancellation of appointments, manager’s log on details for referrals must be made using the contact telephone number or the email address as follows:

Optima Health

Telephone: 0333 121 3000
Email: nhseast@optimahealth.co.uk

5.2 Telephone contact should be made during normal office hours between 9:00am and 4:45pm on the above number.

5.3 Any appointments that need to be postponed or cancelled should (where possible) be made at least 24 hours before the scheduled appointment giving the service as much notice as possible.

6. IMMEDIATE ADVICE

6.1 Any employee who has sustained a sharps / contamination injury, or is concerned regarding the possible contamination from a patient’s body fluids, is advised to contact Occupational Health immediately.

6.2 For sharps injuries sustained out of hours including weekends and bank holidays, staff should contact Occupational Health on 0330 008 5906.

7. SERVICES OFFERED BY OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING SERVICE

7.1 Pre-placement Questionnaire

The Pre-placement questionnaire is completed by an applicant via the Occupational Health portal. Information contained within the pre-placement questionnaire can only be used upon conditional offer of appointment.

7.1.1 Job applicants will be provided with a sign on and link for the Occupational Health portal. Failure to complete the pre-placement questionnaire may result in a delayed employment offer/start date.

7.1.2 Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service will assess the questionnaire, and if necessary telephone the applicant or arrange a face to face meeting to discuss any identified relevant health issues.

7.1.3 The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service certificate of fitness will be returned to the recruitment department via the portal, who will in turn contact the employing manager and provide a copy of the certificate of fitness form.

7.1.4 The formal offer of employment will be made by the manager, subject to medical clearance and satisfactory references.
7.2 Sickness

Following a referral to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service for a post sickness absence health assessment, the manager will be provided with a written response via the portal detailing, if appropriate, any proposed job modifications and / or suggested graded return to work schedules, together with advice regarding the making of any reasonable adjustments.

- In case of short-term illness, the employee may not need to see an Occupational Health Practitioner. However, if the employee’s sickness absence record is above the accepted level, the manager may wish to refer the employee to them prior to taking further action.

- In case of long-term illness, the health issues should always be assessed by the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service prior to the employee’s return to work.

- In the case of an employee who is fit to attend work but due to a health condition(s) is unable to fulfil the duties of their role advice from Occupational Health should be sought to determine reasonable adjustments and / or redeployment prior to considering termination of employment.

7.3 Health Surveillance

The outcome of a Risk Assessment should determine the need for statutory Health Surveillance (please refer to the Trust Policy on Health & Safety); this information must be communicated to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service. Further advice on the Risk Assessment process may be sought from the Health & Safety department.

Health Surveillance may be required under the COSHH Regulations. The Trust’s Health and Safety team will use the HSE’s document entitled ‘EH40’ to identify products that require staff surveillance as part of the COSHH Risk Assessment process. Both the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service and the employee will be notified formally of the need for health surveillance.

7.4 Immunisations

Appropriate immunisations will be offered to any employee exposed to work related infection risks, or who may pose a risk to patients as a result of their non-immune status. Specific advice regarding infectious diseases can be obtained from the Infection Control Nurse Specialist.

7.5 Procedure Health Promotions

In conjunction with the Staff Engagement Team, the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service will participate in various health promotional, educational and training events.
7.6 **Confidentiality**

All Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service records are maintained by the Service. Access to these records is limited to Occupational Health staff and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2016 and Data Protection Act 2018.

8. **EAP and COUNSELLING**

8.1 This is an external employee assistance and counselling service and is completely confidential; all contact and appointments must be made by using the relevant contact details:

   Telephone: 0800 731 8627 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

   Website: eput.helpeap.com

   Organisation code: EPUT1

9. **MANAGEMENT REFERRAL PROCEDURE**

9.1 The following procedure is used when employees are absent due to:

   i. Long term sickness (see also Management of Sickness and Ill Health Procedure)
   
   ii. Short term sickness (see also Management of Sickness and Ill Health Procedure)
   
   iii. Staff who have conduct / capability issues which may be due to health issues
   
   iv. Staff who are fit to attend work but unable to fulfil the duties of their role for health related reasons.

9.2 Prior to referral to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service, the line manager should contact the HR department for advice.

9.3 The manager is responsible for contacting the employee directly to explain the reasons for referral.

9.4 All referrals to Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service should be made via the Occupational Health portal at:


   The manager must ensure that the employee is aware of the referral to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service referral; if the employee has any issues with consenting to the referral they should consult the HR directorate.
9.5 The manager is responsible for detailing the reason for referral and ensuring that they ask relevant questions. The quality of the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service’s response is dependent upon the quality of the referral.

9.6 A copy of the completed referral and any accompanying information should be provided to the individual.

9.7 The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service will contact the employee either by phone or in writing to make any necessary arrangements. If the employee cannot attend any appointment arranged they must re-arrange the appointment directly with the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service who will then contact the referring manager informing them of the revised arrangements.

9.8 If the employee does not re-arrange the appointment and consequently does not attend their appointment, it is the responsibility of the line manager / employee to request another appointment.

9.9 If the employee fails to attend the rearranged appointment, without contacting the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service it will be recorded as ‘did not attend’ (DNA) the manager should discuss this with the HR department prior to discussion with the employee.

9.10 If a recommended change to working practice is the outcome of the meeting between the employee and the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service, the manager will be informed in writing.

9.11 Any suggested changes to working practices will include, if appropriate, specific modification to the job, review appointments and anticipated return to work date.

10. SELF REFERRALS

10.1 Employees may self-refer in circumstances which may not be deemed appropriate for management referral providing the issues are health related and should contact the HR department in the first instance. The Trust aims to develop a pro-active service to encourage employees to discuss, at an early stage, any problematic health issues.

10.2 The manager will not be informed of the employees’ self-referral to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service. However, if the service deems that management involvement is appropriate, disclosure of information will be dependent upon written consent from the employee.

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