



YOU MATTER!

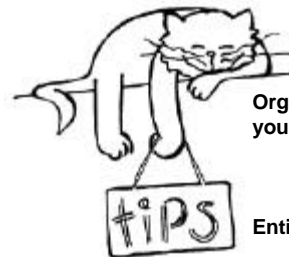
The Newsletter
keeping you informed
of what's going on in
Occupational Health

Issue No. 7 ~ April & May 2001



Diary Date - OH Conference

Following the success last year we are planning another event for the 22 November at St. Mellion – watch this space



Stress Buster!

Organise your holidays **BEFORE** you get tired, not when you have reached that stage!

By organising most of your Entitlement early you can spread them out more evenly - and have time to look forward to them!

It is important to take time away from your work!

RIDDOR reporting: Information about the new incident centre

RIDDOR stands for the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995

If you are an employer, self-employed, or in control of work premises, you are required under RIDDOR to report some work-related accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences. This is a **legal requirement** which enables the HSE and local authorities to identify where and how risks arise and to investigate serious accidents.

You **must** report the following:

- ❖ A death or major injury;
- ❖ An over three day injury (where an employee or self-employed person has an accident at work and is unable to work for over three days, but does not have a major injury);
- ❖ A work-related disease;
- ❖ A dangerous occurrence (this is when something happens that does not result in a reportable injury, which clearly could have done) - sometimes called a 'near-miss'.

New arrangements

- ❖ All incidents that occur on or after 1st April 2001 may be reported to a single point - the Incident Contact Centre (ICC).
- ❖ You can report by telephone/fax/Internet or by post.
- ❖ If you use the Internet or telephone service a copy of the official reporting form (2508 & 2508A as appropriate) will be sent to you or you should retain a copy of the form you sent. You **must still** retain a copy for inspection by a visiting inspector.

Contact

Post: Incident Contact Centre,
Caerphilly Business Park,
Caerphilly, CF83 3GG

Internet: www.riddor.gov.uk

Telephone: 0845 300 9923 **Fax:** 0845 300 9924

Email: riddor@natbrit.com

Need help in deciding whether to report or not? Contact the OH HELPLINE
Details on back of this newsletter.



MEDICAL SICKNESS SOCIETY
PART OF THE WESLEYAN ASSURANCE SOCIETY

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Seeing The Occupational Physician

*Dr Gerard Woodroof,
Consultant Occupational Physician*

Under the OH for Primary Care Staff scheme individuals may ask to see the OH physician, or be referred by their manager. Some individuals feel somewhat hesitant or daunted by the prospect! They have no need to - the OH physician is there primarily to listen and support.

Firstly, the service is confidential and the doctor will confirm the confidentiality "rules" before anything is discussed. Secondly, the OH doctor is independent in the sense of being there to offer help and advice to both individuals and their employer fairly and equally.

It may be you have concerns that work is making you ill and would like to discuss this with someone other than your employer - or perhaps you have recently been ill and have concerns about getting back to work. The OH doctor will not diagnose and treat ill health in the way your GP does, but may be well placed to help you with the work aspects.

The most common reasons for referral include:

- ❖ Long term sick spell - generally exceeding 4-6 weeks or so;
- ❖ Apparently excessive sickness absences;
- ❖ Concerns about fitness to be at work; returning to work, and in particular discussions surrounding a phased return with modified hours or duties;
- ❖ Occasionally, ill health retirement or other matters.

An appointment letter will usually be sent to you following OH receiving a request from your manager. The manager should have discussed the referral with you first, to explain their concerns and reasons why they are seeking advice from OH. If they have not, you may wish to speak with them - it may be that this will remove the need for the referral, or you can clarify with your manager the outcomes for which you may both be looking.

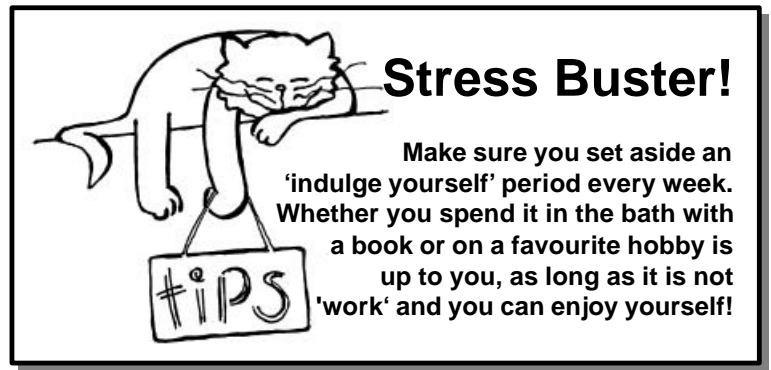
With your agreement, the OH doctor may be able to discuss with your employer a phased return to work, and a gradual take on of your duties, or perhaps help with even getting them changed if you feel it would be of assistance. The OH doctor can - should you feel it helpful - also liaise with your own GP and then, on your behalf, turn any medical suggestions into practical advice for your employer.

The OH doctors are presently based in the district general hospitals, but when you see them you are not in any way being seen as a patient of the hospital. The OH service for Primary Care Staff is nothing to do with the hospitals, but it just so happens that is where the OH doctors have their offices. At present, Primary Care Staff are offered appointments at either Derriford (Plymouth), or Torbay. In time, the project intends to offer you a wider choice of locations.

The OH doctor will offer you about half an hour, longer if needed, so there should be plenty of time to explore any matters you wish to raise - anything to do with your health, your work or indeed any matters which might be affecting them. With your agreement, it may be helpful for the OH doctor to write to your employer. You will be able to discuss with the OH doctor what may or may not be in the letter and you will be offered a copy should you wish.

In summary, the OH service for Primary Care Staff exists to support. It can offer professional and impartial advice, to both you and the employer. It will respect confidences, but equally will be open in that you may see anything that is written about your health and your work. Although the OH doctors are physically based in the hospitals, the service to you is entirely separate from them. In conclusion, view the service as one that has the potential to help, and recognise that it is there because "You Matter".

**Do please phone OH if you wish to change the appointment,
rather than just not turn up!**



Commonly Asked Questions

This is the first in what we would like to become a regular feature in the newsletter.

We find that many of the queries that the OH Service receives from Practices revolve around similar themes. So, in each edition we will feature one or two of the current 'commonly asked questions'. If there are any burning issues that you would like to see featured here please let us know. (Eat your heart out Claire Rayner!!)

Pre-Employment Health Assessment

Q - "What is the point of pre-employment health assessment?"

Pre-employment health assessment (PEHA) ensures that an individual is fit to do a particular job and that the job will not harm the individual in any way.

For example, someone who has an active skin condition of the hands should not be allowed to undertake wound dressings at least until the skin condition has resolved.

Fitting the right person to the right job in terms of health means that you and they are more likely to enjoy a hassle-free and productive employment in the future.

Q - "Why can't we just ask someone at interview if they have any illnesses/conditions which might affect their job?"

It would be inappropriate for the appointing manager (GP or Practice Manager) to be party to an individual's medical history, even if they had sufficient medical knowledge to judge their fitness to work. Would you want your Boss to know about your haemorrhoids?

If you ask all interviewees to give you details of their health at interview you run the risk of being accused of discrimination – i.e. that you did not appoint someone because of something that they told you regarding their health.

It is appropriate to find out about an individual's sickness absence record in previous jobs – if you have concerns over the level of sickness absence reported via references ensure that you raise it as an issue with the OH Service during the PEHA process.

Q - "If a new member of staff is given the 'all clear' by the OH Service does it mean that I can rely on them not to go off sick?"

Unfortunately not! Even the most rigorous and invasive of medical examinations could not predict an individual's sickness absence pattern. But, thankfully for most of us there is not a dose of the Azkaban 'flu waiting for us next week.

Q - "Will it cost the Practice anything?"

No, it is free – all part of the service.

Q - "When I have interviewed someone how long will all this take?"

You will hear back from the OH Service the same day that they have received the completed PEHA form. In a very few cases you may have to wait a little longer for clearance – for example when further health information needs to be sought by the OH Service.



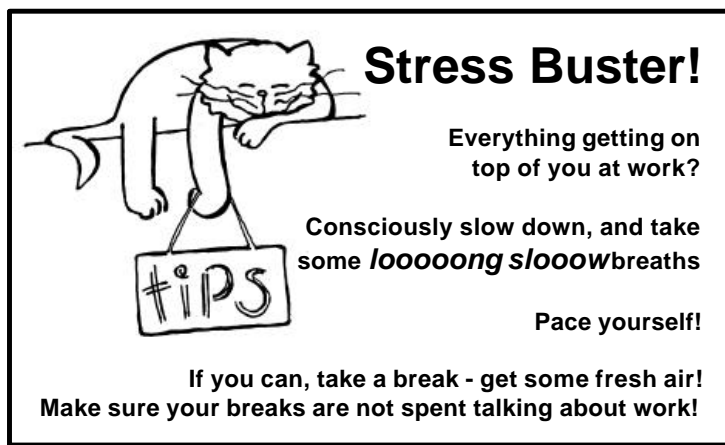
Q - “ This system sounds simply marvellous! How do I get going?”

All the relevant forms and advice and how they should be used are contained in the Occupational Health Service Manual (white lever-arch file) which is held in your Practice. You can start using them on the next occasion that the practice appoints a new member of staff.

Please feel free to ring us for any further information or advice (contact numbers below).

CONGRATULATIONS to Susan Newman,
Health Visitor Advisor at Paignton Hospital.

Susan won the Occupational Health free prize draw at the Primary Care Conference in Dartington - a Murder Mystery weekend for two! Many thanks to everyone who took the time to introduce themselves to us at the conference. It was good to talk to you and to meet up again with those we already know.



Needlestick/Contamination Incident Procedure

The OH Service has received several recent enquiries regarding the proper procedure for dealing with staff who have received a needlestick injury. As previously promised, we are putting together a procedure and guidelines specifically for the use of GPs and their staff.





If you are not certain that your query or concern is related to Occupational Health, do not let this stop you – we will do our best to help.

All enquiries will be treated in confidence.

We apologise for the delay in making this available, but we are working very hard to set up a system that is robust but pragmatic and that will, therefore, be used by you.

We are in the final stages of agreement on a system that is acceptable to all parties involved – so watch this space and it will be with you soon!

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact the OH Service for advice in the event of a needlestick injury. We continue to deal with individual cases as and when they arise.

	0117 923 2381 any Wednesday morning from 09:00 – 12:30hrs
	You can fax us at any time on: 0117 923 2382 or 01530 224 762
	You can email us any time at: sue@abbottburke.co.uk or lesley@abbottburke.co.uk
	Our postal address is: 33 Logan Road, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8DS



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