

Royal Northern College of Music
<b>Policy for the Provision of Occupational Health</b>
Policy & Procedure
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RNCM  
ROYAL NORTHERN  
COLLEGE of MUSIC

## **1. PURPOSE**

To define the policy for the provision of occupational health in the College.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, there is a general obligation for the College to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of all employees. The policy focuses on preventing work-related injuries, illnesses, and hazards, ensuring compliance with relevant health and safety laws, and promoting a healthy work environment.

## **2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all employees of The Royal Northern College of Music. This excludes casual workers, students, agency staff (other than food handlers), contractors and volunteers (other than those with food handler requirements).

## **3. DEFINITIONS**

**Occupational Health** - how work and the work environment can impact on workers' health, both physical and mental. It also includes how workers' health can affect their ability to do their job. Put simply this means the effect of work on health and that of health on work.

**Food handler** - refers to people who directly touch open food as part of their work. They can be employed or agency staff.

## **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **4.1 HR**

HR are responsible for:

- Arranging pre-employment screening where appropriate
- Referring staff with specific physical or mental health needs including managing long term sickness.

### **4.2 Line managers**

Line managers are responsible for:

- Raising any concerns about mental or physical wellbeing that is impacting on work performance.
- Providing the information needed for a referral to be made, where required.
- Ensuring that where risk assessments identify the requirement for health surveillance, that the Health and Safety Advisor is notified.

### **4.3 Head of Conferencing and Catering**

The Head of Conferencing and Catering must ensure all food handlers follow the fitness for work guidance as described in the Departments Food Safety Management Procedure.

No person suffering from or being a carrier of a disease likely to be transmitted through food is permitted to handle food or enter any food-handling area if there is any likelihood of direct or indirect contamination. The exclusion period is normally 48 hours from when symptoms stop naturally.

When excluded staff return to work, they will be required to undergo a return to work interview

### **4.4 Employees**

Employees are responsible for reporting any ill health conditions which they suspect may be work related, to their line manager and are responsible for cooperating with the College where a referral to the occupational health service is required. In some cases, attendance will be mandatory particularly where there is a legal requirement.

### **4.5 Food handlers**

Food handlers are responsible for reporting to their line manager immediately if they are ill and if they have been ill, for example on holiday.

### **4.6 Occupational health service provider**

The appointed occupational health service provider is responsible for providing the relevant reports to the employee, HR and Health and Safety Advisor as required.

## **5. POLICY STATEMENT**

### **5.1 Pre-Employment medical screening**

Pre-employment medical screening will be undertaken for those roles where it has been determined that this is a requirement. The purpose of this screening is to:

- Ensure that a prospective staff member, whose employment is conditional upon satisfactory medical clearance, is medically fit to undertake the type of work they will be employed to do;
- Advise on the impact of a disability on work together with adjustments that the College should reasonably be expected to make;
- To accommodate a medical condition in compliance with the Equality Act.

### **5.2 Referrals**

The main purpose of management referrals is to support effective and proactive management of staff with health issues impacting on attendance and/or performance at work, with the ultimate aim of helping to keep employees healthy and at work. Health referrals provide independent and objective advice to managers to assist them in dealing

fairly with employee health issues, whilst balancing the needs of the employee with work requirements. The assessment and report aims to provide a clear opinion on:

- Fitness for work: whether or not the employee has a health problem that may affect their fitness for work, or issues at work affecting their health;
- Return to work: if the employee is currently absent, when they are likely to be ready to return;
- Rehabilitation advice: measures that may enable the employee to return to work before full recovery including temporary adjustments to hours/duties;
- Future attendance: how much absence is likely in future due to health problems and whether the employee is fit to undertake all duties?
- If the person is not fit to return to their previous work, the report will outline prospects for re-deployment and/or retirement on medical grounds;
- Meeting obligations in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Any recommendations made in an occupational health report for workplace adjustments will be subject to further consideration by managers and the member of staff in terms of what would constitute a reasonable adjustment in each individual case, taking into account factors such as operational requirements and the impact on others.

The assessment also provides the individual referred with an opportunity to discuss any health concerns in confidence with an occupational health advisor and receive advice on what they can do to improve their health and any impact on their work.

### **5.2.1 Who can refer?**

HR lead the referral process for members of staff in liaison with the line manager. They are able to refer in cases of identified patterns of short term sickness absence and ongoing long term sickness absence, according to the attendance record

If managers have any concerns regarding their staff they should contact Human Resources who will discuss the referral process.

### **5.2.2 When to refer**

A member of staff may be referred for an assessment when:

- they have had several episodes of short-term absences, and it is considered that advice should be sought to help manage the absences;
- there is concern that they may have work related health problems, or that existing health problems are being aggravated by work duties;
- they may have difficulties coping on return after being absent e.g.: following a serious illness or disability;
- there may be an underlying health factor contributing to performance issues, there is long term or continuous sickness absence i.e. longer than four weeks, or advice is required about early retirement on health grounds.

### **5.2.3 What to expect at the appointment - guidance for staff**

The employee is interviewed by an occupational health advisor about their health and the effects of any health problems on their work and home life. The advisor will also ask about other issues that may affect their health and about any treatment they have received.

If necessary, the employee will be referred to see the occupational health physician for further advice/assessment. In some instances, further supporting medical information will be requested from the employee's GP or treating specialist, with their written consent. It may also be necessary to review the employee after a period of time sufficient to assess recovery or response to treatment, before a firm opinion can be given on when an employee is ready to return to work or to full duties.

### **5.3 Ill-health retirement**

Employees may be granted retirement on the grounds of ill health at any age if they meet the criteria for ill health retirement. The criteria for consideration of an ill health retirement benefit and the level of benefit that could be awarded are subject to the terms of the relevant occupational pension scheme the employee is a member of.

Both the Greater Manchester Pension Scheme (GMPS) and Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS) have provisions for ill health retirement based on meeting each scheme's respective criteria.

**GMPS:** Employees must have at least two years membership and must be permanently unable to undertake their duties due to their health condition, and they must have no immediate capacity for 'gainful employment' (This means paid employment of at least 30 hours a week for at least 12 months). There are three 'tiers' of ill health retirement.

**TPS:** Ill health benefits come in two different types; (a) Permanently cannot teach but can do other work or (b) Permanently cannot teach and cannot do any other work. When a medical condition is severe enough to warrant ill health retirement being a consideration, further advice should be sought from HR. In all cases it will be necessary to consult a specially qualified doctor to assess eligibility.

For further information on ill health retirement provisions contact Human Resources.

## **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Medical information given by College employees will be treated as confidential. Medical records are stored in line with data protection requirements and only accessible to the occupational health service provider whose staff adheres to a strict code of ethics in relation to the confidentiality of all consultations, telephone contact and the maintenance of medical records.

In some cases the employee may be asked to sign a disclaimer by the occupational health service provider in order to release information to the nominated person in the College, this is solely at the discretion of the employee. The purpose of this is to enable

the College to assist the employee with any recommendations made and to uphold the College's legal responsibilities.

## **7. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- HSG 65 Successful Health & Safety Management.
- Sickness Absence Management Policy
- Fitness for work section of Food Safety Management System.

# ROYAL NORTHERN COLLEGE OF MUSIC

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### **AMENDMENTS SINCE DRAFT**

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### **Approvals**

This document requires the following approvals.

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Human Resources Committee	25 February 2025	2