

Royal Northern College of Music

Policy for the Provision of Occupational Health

Policy & Procedure

Department: Operations

**Document owner:
Health and Safety Advisor**

**Approval Committee: Health and
Safety Committee**

Revised: November 2021

Period of Approval: 3 years

Review Date: November 2024

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 members of staff and students and a variety of regulations which supports this. The College aims to ensure early identification and management of occupational health.

2. SCOPE

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

3. DEFINITIONS

Occupational Health - has been described by the Health and Safety Executive as embracing:

- the effect of work on health
- the effect of health on work
- rehabilitation and recovery programmes
- managing work-related aspects of illnesses and helping staff to make informed choices regarding lifestyle issues.

Food handler - mainly 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, leading the referral process, arranging health checks for food handlers and for referring staff with specific physical or mental health needs including managing long term sickness.

4.2 Health and Safety Advisor

The Health and Safety Advisor is responsible for initiating the referral for health surveillance in conjunction with the HR and the line manager.

4.3 Line managers

Line managers are responsible for raising any concerns about mental or physical wellbeing that is impacting on work performance and ensuring that where risk assessments identify the requirement for health surveillance, that the Health and Safety Advisor is notified and for cooperating with the Human Resource officers where referrals are required.

4.4 Head of Conferencing and Catering

The Head of Conferencing and Catering will conduct return to work interviews for excluded conferencing and catering staff and, if required, request the HR to arrange a referral.

4.5 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.

4.6 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.

4.7 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 Health checks for food handlers

The law requires that in all food businesses that:

“No person suffering from, or being a carrier of a disease likely to be transmitted through food or afflicted, for example, with infected wounds, skin infections, sores or diarrhoea is to be permitted to handle food or enter any food-handling area in any capacity if there is any likelihood of direct or indirect contamination.”

“Any person so affected and employed in a food business and who is likely to come into contact with food is to report immediately the illness or symptoms, and if possible their causes, to their manager or supervisor.”

The people to whom these requirements apply are commonly referred to as food handlers. Pre-employment checks on the health of food handlers in food businesses are not required by law, but are common in the food industry. Checks provide medical clearance certificates. The College requires all food handlers to undergo a food hygiene health check with the occupational health service provider within their first month of employment.

The law requires the College to exclude anyone from work if they have an infection that can be passed on through food and there is any likelihood of them contaminating food directly or indirectly. This would apply to people employed as food handlers or to other staff working in areas where open food is handled. 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. The Head of Conferencing and Catering may at this stage refer the employee to the occupational health service provider for a health check in which case the procedure in 7.3 should be followed.

5.3 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.

5.3.1 Who can refer?

HR lead the referral process for members of staff. They are able to refer in cases of identified patterns of short term sickness absence and ongoing long term sickness absence, according to attendance records. Human Resource officers will contact the

individual's line manager before making a referral. If managers have any concerns regarding their staff they should contact the appropriate HR who will lead them through the referral process.

5.3.2 When to refer

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

- they have had several episodes of short-term absences that cannot be managed locally (see: Sickness Absence Management Policy);
- 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.

5.3.3 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 employees 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.

5.4 Health surveillance

Health surveillance can be defined as any activity which involves obtaining information about an employees' health and which helps protect employees from health risks at work. The benefits of carrying out health surveillance are:

- To protect employees from illness caused by being exposed to health risks at work, by detecting any adverse health effects at an early stage;
- To enable management of any health risks effectively by providing a check on how existing control measures are working and provide information on whether further measures are needed;
- To enable compliance with legal requirements;
- To provide an opportunity to reinforce key health and safety messages to staff.

Health surveillance is necessary when either there is a disease associated with a substance in use, for example asthma or dermatitis, or when it is possible to detect the disease or adverse change and be able to reduce the risk of any further harm to the individual by for example carrying out a lung function test or skin inspection.

The first stage is to identify the hazards to health in the workplace through risk assessment. If the hazard cannot be completely controlled and risks remain, further steps need to be taken to protect employees, one of which is to consider health surveillance. Examples of workplace hazards include, noise, vibration, solvents, fumes and dusts, and asbestos.

Once a risk assessment has identified a need for health surveillance, the Health and Safety Advisor will advise Human Resources to arrange for the employee(s) to be referred to the occupational health service by completing an Occupational Health Referral Form HS-39-A1.

Records of health surveillance are maintained by the occupational health service provider for a minimum period of 40 years. In most cases no adverse health effects are found, however, in some cases further investigations are required to assess any possible adverse ill health effects. Adjustments may be advised to the workplace or for the individual such as further training and/or improved personal protective equipment or transfer to alternative work.

5.5 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. For further information on ill health retirement provisions contact HR.

6. PROCEDURE

6.1 Pre-employment screening

Where the role attracts the requirement and a conditional job offer has been made, staff will be asked to complete a pre-employment health questionnaire that the College's occupational health service provider will use in order to assess medical fitness to undertake the duties of the post.

The information provided on the questionnaire will be used to assess medical capability to do the job and to determine whether any reasonable adjustments may be required to accommodate any disability or impairment which individuals might have. The occupational health provider notifies HR that the new starter is fit to begin work or indicate that an appointment is required with an occupational health adviser (who will contact the new employee to make the appointment).

6.2 Health checks for Food Handlers

HR will refer all food handlers to occupational health for a food hygiene health check. This must be conducted within the first month of employment at the College. The Occupational health services provider sends a letter to the HR on the outcome of the health check including any recommendations. HR will notify the Head of Conferencing and Catering on the outcome of the health check.

Employees will be excluded from work by the Head of Conferencing and Catering if they have an infection that can be passed on through food and there is any likelihood of them contaminating food directly or indirectly. Excluded employees will undergo a return to work interview. The Head of Conferencing and Catering requests a referral as required.

6.3 Referrals

Line managers should discuss this with HR before completing an occupational health referral form. HR will contact occupational health and agree an appointment date/time with the member of staff. HR will write to occupational health using the information provided by the line manager on the referral form.

Following the appointment, a follow up meeting will be arranged by the line manager with the member of staff to discuss the contents of the occupational health report and to agree any actions that may need to be taken as a result. The line manager may request a HR representative to attend the meeting.

6.4 Health Surveillance

The line manager will notify the Health and Safety Advisor where a risk assessment has identified the need for health surveillance. The Health and Safety Advisor will then assess the requirement. The Health and Safety Advisor will notify the HR of the requirement of an employee to undergo health surveillance monitoring by submitting an occupational health referral form.

For audiometric testing, the Health and Safety Advisor will arrange the health surveillance monitoring and will inform HR and the line manager.

6.5 Ill health retirement

Both the Greater Manchester Pension Scheme (GMPS) and Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS) have provisions for ill health retirement based on meeting each schemes 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. ATTACHMENTS

- Occupational Health Referral form HS-039-A1

Occupational Health Referral Form HS-039-A1

Please complete this form and return to the Human Resource Officer.

Name of Employee to be referred	
Department/School	
Name of person making referral	
Date	
Reasons why the referral is required. Please provide information on what the actual problem is; how this is affecting the employees work; what problems it is causing; Has the employee been off sick as a result ; What advice do you feel you need from Occupational Health	
Request approved by and date:	