BEING PROACTIVE WITH OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Can occupational health be the key to a happier, healthier workforce? The answer is yes! Occupational health is an extremely beneficial tool for companies seeking to reduce leave or sick days, all the while maintaining a happier workforce.

Why occupational health?

An Occupational Health department/service will manage risks to the tune of taking preventative measures to increase staff happiness and their feelings of safety and stability. Having an occupational health service at your company's fingertips, can decrease sickness absence levels within your business and increase morale, physical, mental and emotional health of your employees.

An occupational health service helps an employer fulfil their duties of keeping a safe, secure, and healthy work environment. They will assist with risk assessments and look after health across the company. They can also provide: fit to work assessments (for new employees and any returning employee), health surveillance, vaccinations/immunisations, travel health, risk assessments, DSE assessments, health promotion/education, management referrals (short and long-term sickness), sickness absence management and return to work assessments or phased returns. An occupational health professional can also look at sickness trends within the business and recommend solutions to reduce sickness, some solutions can be simple and some more complex.

Promoting mental health

Mental health within the workplace is one of the biggest topics within workplace health. Businesses who promote mental health awareness within their workplace remove the stigma around the issue. Occupational health can help with mental health, not just by speaking with people who are affected by this in the workplace but by promoting it within the workplace so that people are aware of mental health and its affects and triggers.

By allowing an open-door policy, workers will feel safer and it allows them to step forward instead of taking steps back, especially in cases of mental health. As an employer, having this necessary tool in a workplace can help employees through their situations and reduce the impact of people being off work.

Disabilities

An occupational health service will always protect those who are more vulnerable or have a disability. They will promote and support the general health and well-being of a company as a whole by helping each individual who works there.

Why being proactive works

Having a proactive occupational health setting within your business (no matter how big or small) can help you reduce injury, sickness absence and instead, have a more productive, healthier, happier and profitable work force.

The most common reasons for sickness absence in the UK is:

- Minor illness
- Stress
- Mental health
- Back pain
- Addiction

- Musculoskeletal disorders
- Recurring medical conditions
- Acute medical conditions
- Musculoskeletal injuries

Investing in staff

The WHO states, *"Poor working conditions result in a total of 300,000 work-related deaths and economic losses of 4% of the gross domestic product of the European Region every year. Less than 10% of the working population has access to occupational health services in many European countries."*

So in conclusion, investing in your staff's physical and mental health is a smart investment. A happy workforce is a more productive one!