

Occupational Health Provision Annual Update

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Rod Hammerton, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Lisa Vickers, Human Resources Manager (Contracts) on 01743 260211.

1 Executive Summary

This report provides the annual update on the Occupational Health Provision for the Service.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report.

3 Background

The Service's Occupational health (OH) provision is contracted out and divided into three contracts.

- Occupational Health Nurse/administration (OHN)
- Occupational Health Physician (ONP)
- Fitness testing

Prior to this OH was delivered by a single contract and prior to that inhouse except for Physician function.

The OHN / admin function is provided by Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust under a contract until 31 March 2022 plus 1 year extension, the value of this contract is £30k. This service delivers medical assessments / reviews at pre and during employment and manages OH records.

The OHP i.e. Doctor is supplied under a contract with Shropshire Council until 31 March 2022 plus 1 year extension, the value of this contract is £38k. This service delivers medical assessments / reviews at pre and during employment.

Fitness testing is provided under a contract with University of Worcester McClelland centre until 31 March 2025. This contract went out to tender at the start of 2020, the process was run jointly with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. The contract runs for 3 years with 2 possible extensions of 1 year each. The value of the contract is £22k however the Service in line with national changes is raising the fitness standard and thus retesting could increase the contract cost temporarily. Provision has been made for this with Finance, up to £34k.

2020/2021 has seen the world experience the COVID 19 pandemic and in the UK, we have had two national lockdowns and various local restrictions. This has impacted on the services provided by OH suppliers and continues to impact in a limited way now on the way these services are delivered.

As previously stated, the Fitness contract went out to tender at the start of the year and was awarded prior to lockdown. It was planned to review the market and likely go out to tender at the end of 2020 for the other two contracts, but this has not been possible. Ideally the plan would be to review the market in Autumn 2022.

The OHN provider being part of the NHS has been required to deliver on COVID 19 issues.

4 Summary of Activity to Date

Fitness

Booked Fitness Assessments

The following data represents the booked assessment figures for the last five years for the first quarter from 1 January to 31 March for comparison.

2015	249 booked assessments
2016	208 booked assessments
2017	235 booked assessments
2018	236 booked assessments
2019	235 booked assessments
2020	COVID-19 DISRUPTION
2021	266 booked assessments

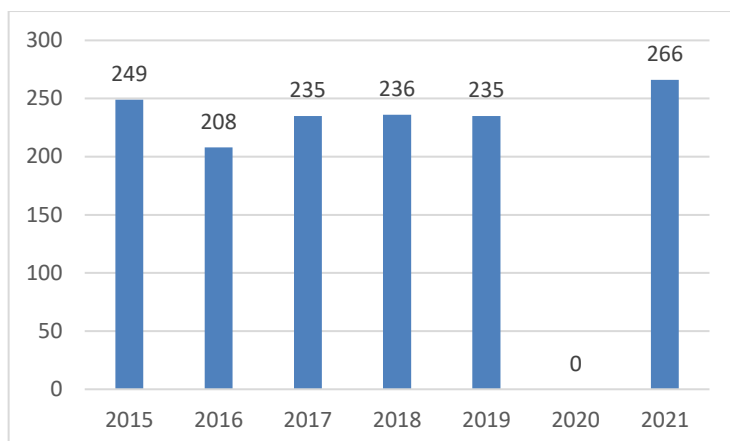


Figure 1. Fitness

Assessments booked in Q1 and Q2.

Completed Assessments Breakdown

In total, 222 fitness assessments were completed. In Q2, there was one Did Not Attend (DNA).

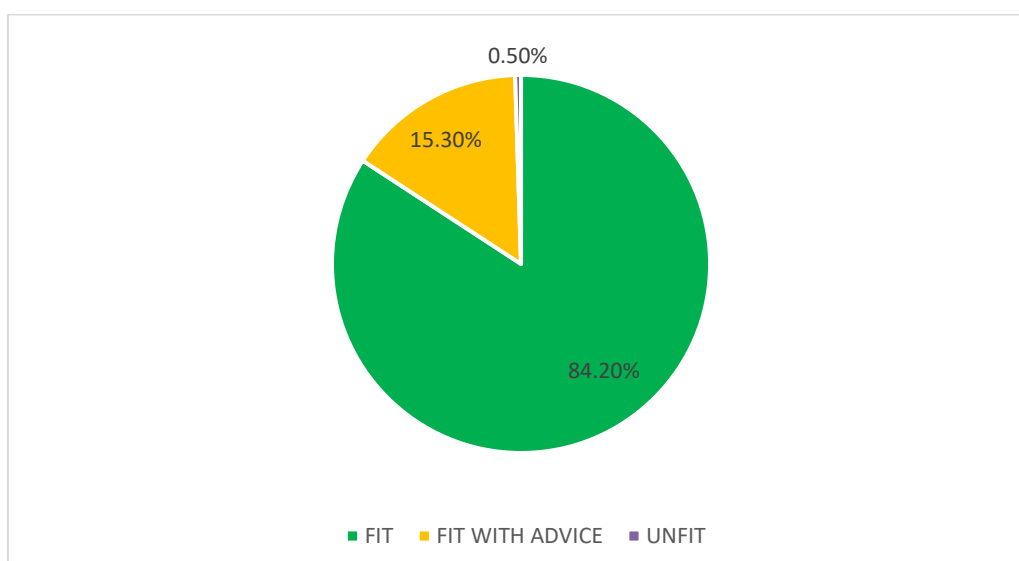
Annual Fitness Assessments	Recruit Fitness Assessments	Annual Fitness Retest	Recruit Retests
231	34	0	0

Breakdown of Aerobic Fitness (VO₂ max) Scores

As shown in Figure 2, during Q2 84.5% FFs have passed their aerobic fitness assessment, 15.3% passed with advice and 1 failed.

Figure 2. Breakdown of assessment results – Q2 2019

Fit	Fit with Advice	Unfit
84.2 %	15.3 %	0.5 %



The figure for those passed as fit with advice (amber segment on the pie chart) is down to an all-time low of 15.3%. To put this into perspective, in 2019 at Q2, this number was 30%.

Occupational Health Nurse and Doctor

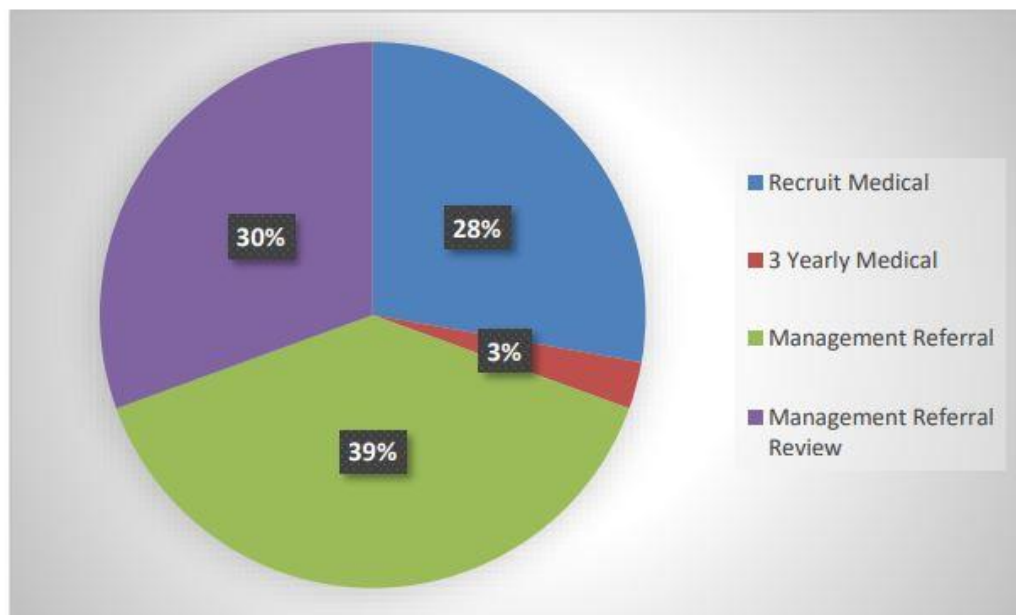
The following data covers activities undertaken by Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust Occupational Health (OH) Service for the period 1 April to 30 June 2021.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, there have been changes in the way that services have been provided which included the need to undertake the recruit medicals at Service Headquarters. Following risk assessment, in line with relevant guidelines and discussion with the Occupational Health Physician, OH are now undertaking recruit medicals and asbestos medicals at the Occupational Health Department in Shrewsbury. They have also recommenced three yearly medicals. Spirometry will not be undertaken at the present time, however this will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

	Numbers Attended January to September 2020	Did Not Attend (DNA) January to September 2020	Numbers Attended October 2020 to March 2021	Did Not Attend (DNA) October 2020 to March 2021	Numbers Attended April to June 2021	Did Not Attend (DNA) April to June 2021
Recruit Medical	18	1	13	0	20	0
3 Yearly Medical	23	3	0	0	2	0
Management Referrals	66	4	57	3	28	4
Management Referral Reviews	42	7	38	8	22	4
Pre-Employment Paper Screen	3	0	4	0	0	0
Pre-Employment Health Interview	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asbestos Medical	10	8	0	0	0	0
Hot House Medical	0	0	8 *	0	0	0
TOTAL	162	23	120	11	72	8

*Respiratory Questionnaire

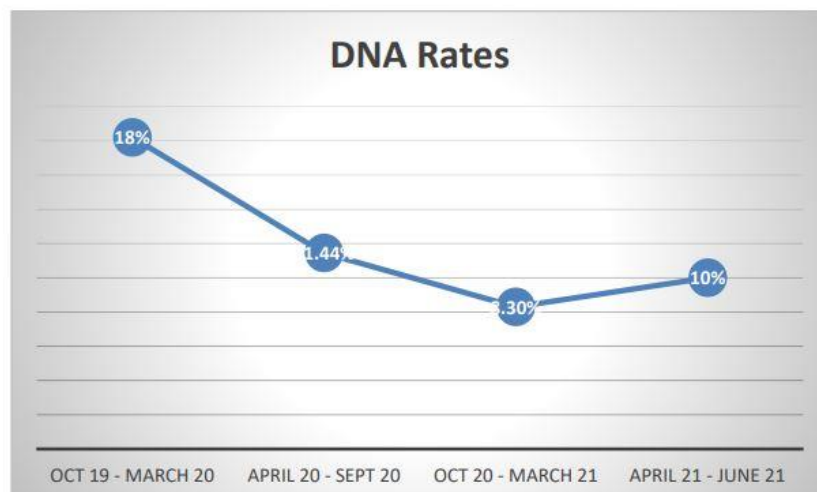
OH Advisor Activity as a % of Total Seen



As restrictions have been updated Occupational Health has reintroduced face to-face appointments. Recruit medicals had been undertaken using the large meeting room at Shrewsbury Fire Station. Due to the increased demand for this room, this will be reviewed with a view to bringing them back to the Occupational Health Department from August 2021. Face to face asbestos medicals with the OH Physician will also be reintroduced in August.

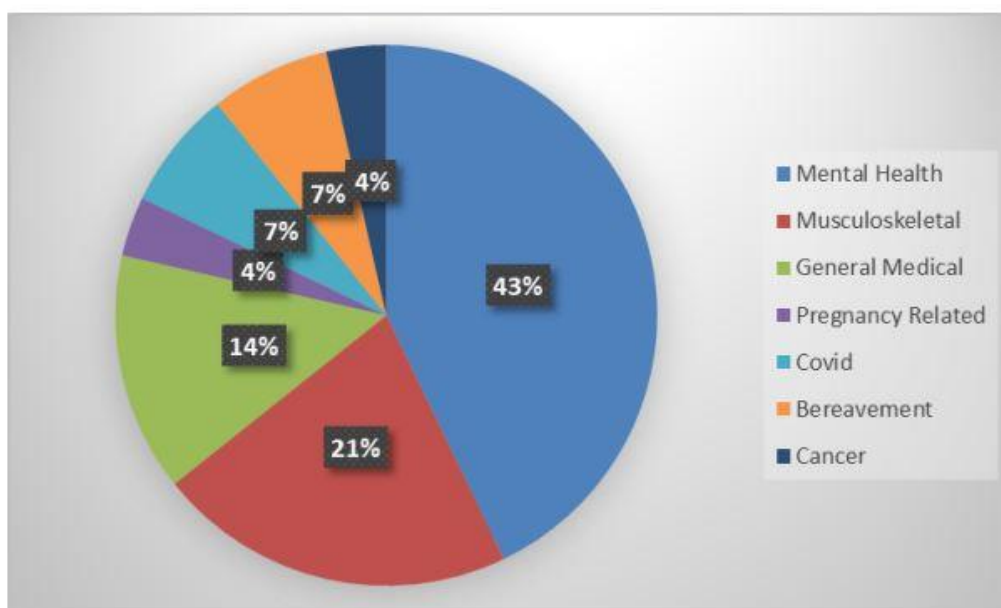
Due to the current pandemic and following guidelines from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Occupational Health have been unable to complete clinical lung function tests. Spirometry is classed as an aerosol generating procedure and therefore carries its own risks. This situation will be constantly monitored and reviewed.

There has been a slight increase of 1.7% in the DNA rate over the period April to June 2021. Measures have now been put in place whereby individuals will be contacted 2 days prior to their appointment to confirm their attendance.



Reasons for OH Advisor Attendance

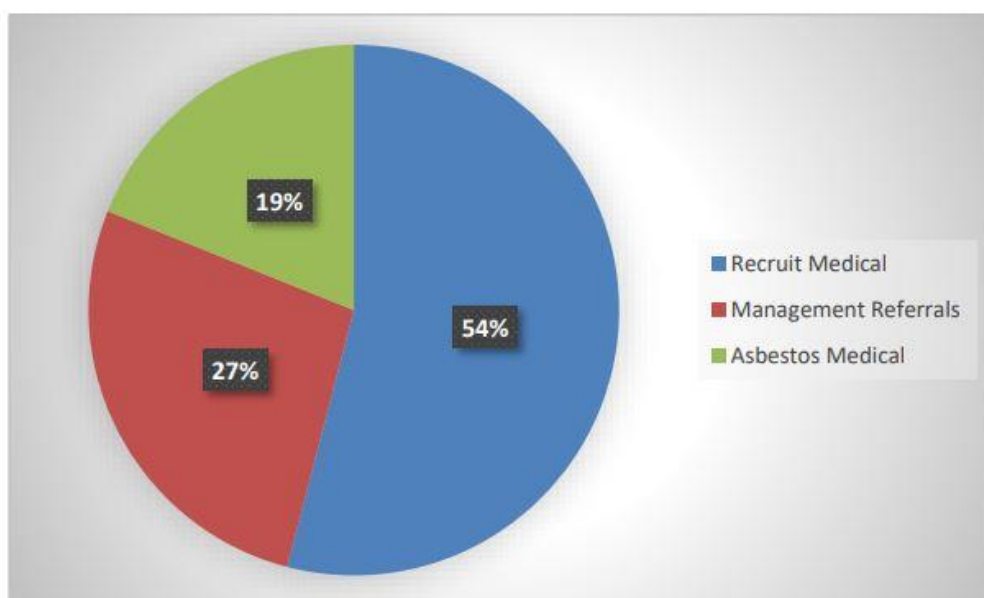
Reason	Numbers July – Sept 2019	Numbers Oct – Dec 2019	Numbers Jan – Sept 2020	Numbers Oct 2020 – Mar 2021	Numbers Apr – Jun 2021
Mental Health	11	5	20	21	12
Musculoskeletal	12	17	26	17	6
General Surgery	0	0	5	1	0
General Medicine	3	4	14	8	4
Pregnancy Related	1	1	1	2	1
Skin		1	0	1	0
Covid	0	0	0	7	2
Bereavement	0	0	0	0	2
Cancer	0	0	0	0	1



The information demonstrates that for this three-month period mental health issues were the most common reason for referral to Occupational Health.

OH Physician Activity

OH Physician Appointments	Number Attended Oct 2020 to Mar 2021	Did Not Attend Oct 2020 to Mar 2021	Number Attended Apr – Jun 2021	Did Not Attend Apr – Jun 2021
Recruit Medical	13	0	20	0
Management Referrals	13	0	10	0
Management Referral Reviews	7	0	0	0
Asbestos Medical	50	41	7	0
Bruce Protocol Assessment	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	86	41	37	0



The DNA rate for OH Physician appointments for this three-month period is 0%. This is the first time there have been no DNAs for OH Physician appointments. This could be attributed to the liaison between OH and HR to ensure contact details were up to date for asbestos medicals. Individuals are also being contacted by OH prior to their manager referral appointment to remind them to expect a call.

Reasons for Seeing OH Physician

Reason	Number Seen Jan to Mar 2020	Number Seen Apr to Sept 2020	Number Seen Oct 2020 to Mar 2021	Number Seen Apr to Jun 2021
Mental Health	2	8	8	8
Musculoskeletal	0	0	4	1
General Surgery	0	0	0	1
General Medical	0	2	2	0
Pregnancy			1	0
Covid			1	0

5 Fire Alliance / Collaboration / Partnership Working

The Fitness tender went out to market in collaboration with Hereford & Worcester Fire Service in 2020.

6 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An e-EQIA is not, therefore, required.

9 Appendix / Appendices (delete as appropriate)

There are no appendices attached to this report.

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.