

Occupational Health Provision Annual Update

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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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 (OHP)
- Fitness testing

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

The OHN / administration function is provided by Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust (SHROPCOM) under a contract until 31 March 2023, the value of this contract is £30k. This service delivers medical assessments and/or reviews both pre and during employment and manages OH records.

The OHP i.e. Doctor is supplied under a contract with Shropshire Council until 31 March 2023 plus 1 year extension, the value of this contract is £38k. This service delivers medical assessments and/or reviews at pre and during employment.

On 2 November 2022, the service was informed that SHROPCOM had been instructed to cease all external contracts. Therefore, work has now started to review the YPO framework to see if a direct award can be awarded as a suitable alternative or whether Shropshire Council (where the current OHP contract exists) can support this area of work moving forward. Either way the service will be considering all its options and reviewing the market.

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 and 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 £34k.

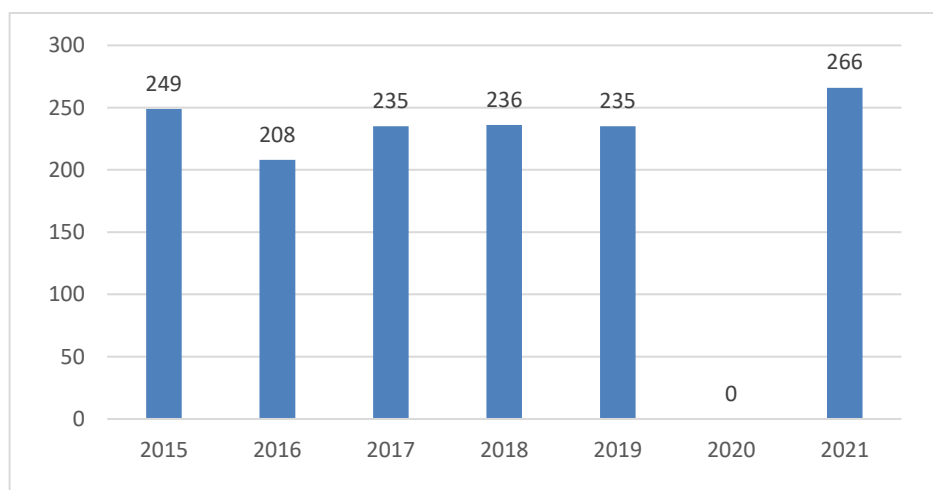
4 Summary of Activity to Date

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
2022	267 booked assessments



Fitness Assessments booked in Q1 and Q2 for previous years.

Completed Assessments Breakdown

The following data represents the cumulative booked assessment figures across the last 6 years (between 1 January and 31 December) for comparison.

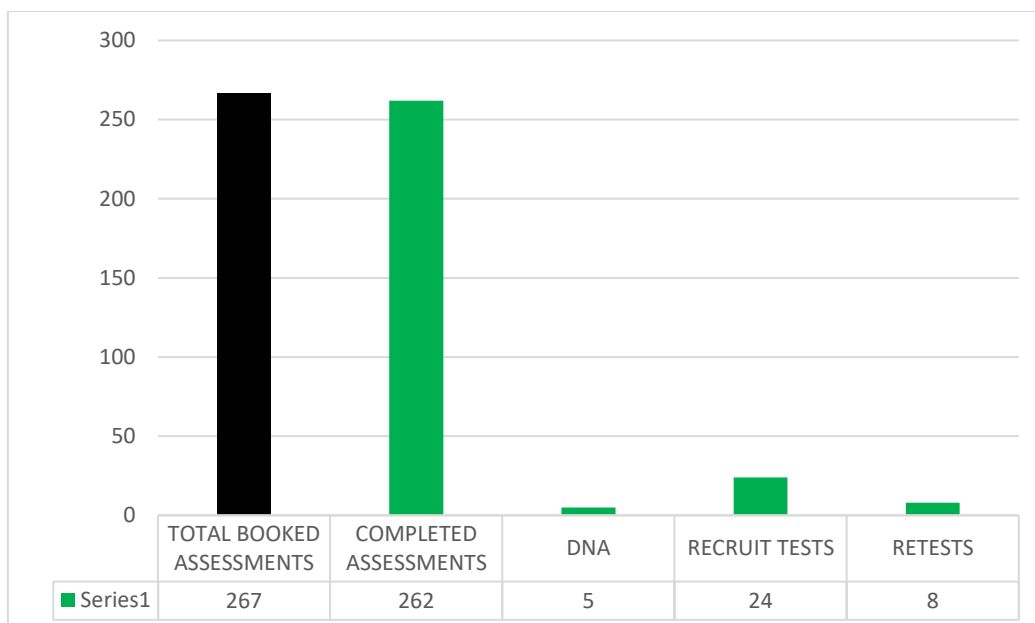


Figure 1 – Assessment bookings Q1 – Q3 2022

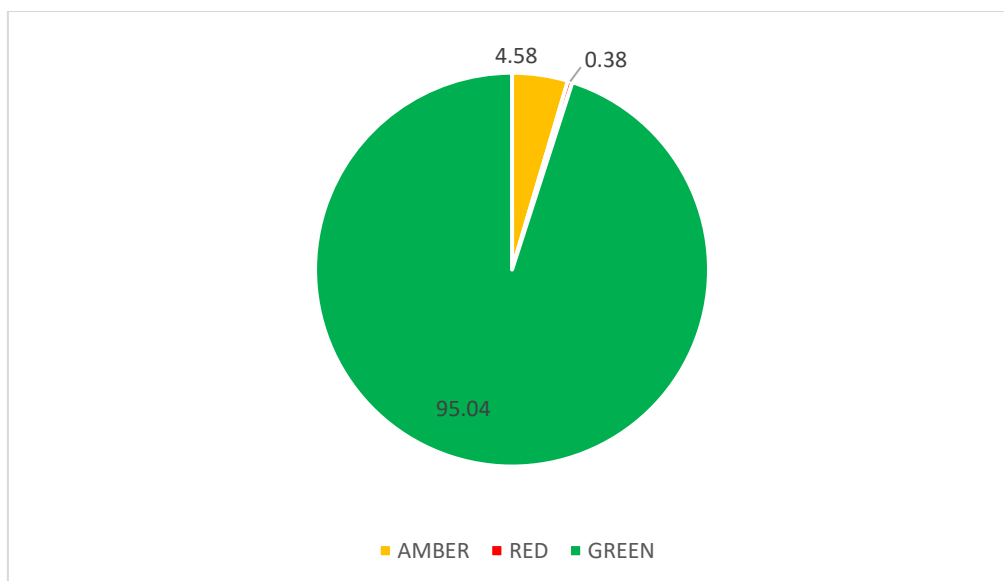
Figure 1 shows that between Quarter 1 and Quarter 3 of 2022, 267 assessments were booked. In total, 262 assessments were completed. During this period there were 5 individuals that Did Not Attend (DNA), 24 recruit tests and 8 Retests.

Breakdown of Aerobic Fitness (VO₂ max) Scores

As can be seen in Figure 2 below, there is a total of 4.58% of staff who fall within the amber category. This number is significantly lower than previous years. This is a testament to the efforts of the Fire Service staff and the Fitness Advisor, who has helped those who fall into the amber zone with 12 week plans in addition to the additional advice and support offered to all staff and the introduction of the treadmill assessment. There are, however, many staff who are yet to be tested and this number is subject to change once all staff have been assessed.

Figure 2. – Breakdown of assessment results

Year	Fit	Fit with Advice	Unfit
Q2 2019	84.20%	15.3 %	0.5 %
Q3 2022	95.04%	4.58%	0.38%



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 September 2022.

The Occupational Health Service continues to work closely with the Human Resources team. All reports following assessment by the OH Adviser continue to be emailed on the same day that the individual is seen on, and telephone contact is made where necessary, for example to give urgent advice on restricted duties / unfit for tour of duty. Appointments with the OH Adviser continue to be Monday to Friday giving flexibility to fit in with working patterns.

Following risk assessment and in line with relevant guidelines and discussion with the Occupational Health Physician, the Service is now undertaking Spirometry testing as part of the 3 yearly medicals and Asbestos medicals.

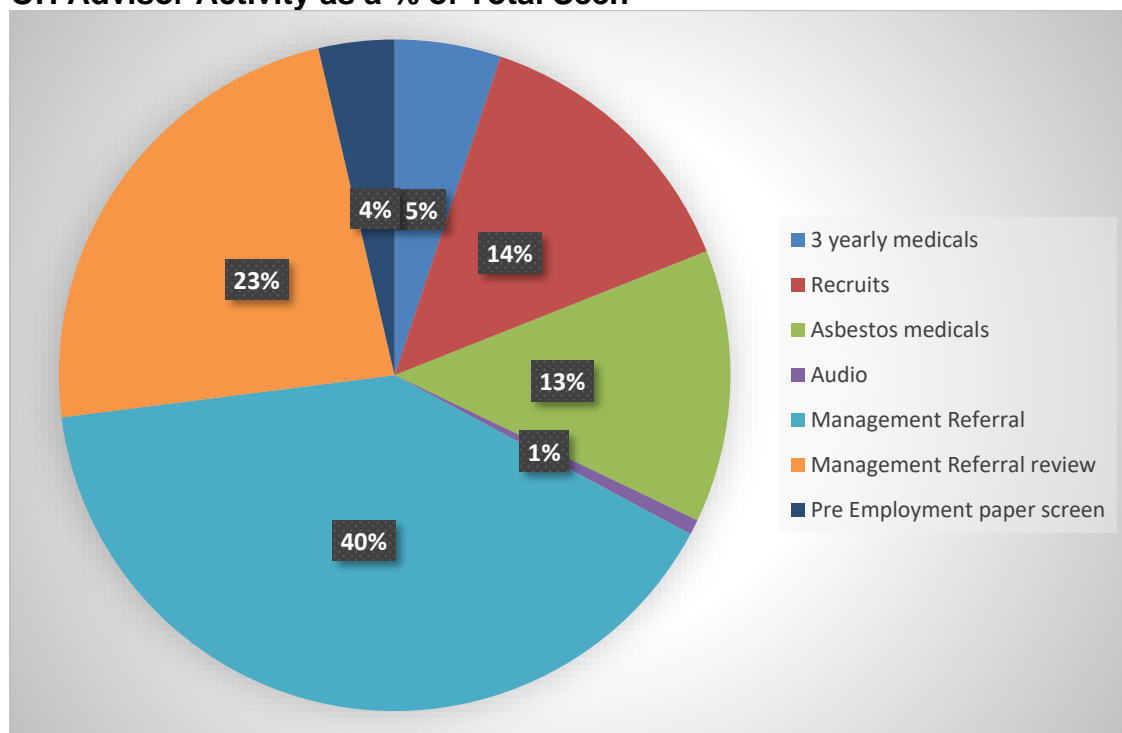
There has been OH representation at the Staff Attendance meetings now taking place at Service Headquarters, Shrewsbury. Dates for the Service's Health and Safety Meetings have been noted.

Flu clinics have been arranged to take place at various stations around the County in October and November. At the time of writing this report uptake for appointments was low and the Fire Service are working hard to promote these sessions to staff.

	Numbers Attended Oct 2020 to March 2021	Did Not Attend (DNA) Oct 2020 to Mar 2021	Numbers Attended Apr to Jun 2021	Did Not Attend (DNA) Apr to Jun 2021	Numbers attended Apr to Sept 2022	Did not attend (DNA) Apr to Sept 2022
Recruit Medical	13	0	20	0	19	2
3 Yearly Medical	0	0	2	0	17	3
Management Referrals	57	3	28	4	55	5
Management Referral Reviews	38	8	22	4	32	8
Pre-Employment Paper Screen	4	0	0	0	5	0
Pre-Employment Health Interview	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asbestos Medical	0	0	0	0	18	16
Hot House Medical	8 *	0	0	0	0	0
Audio					1	0
TOTAL	120	11	72	8	147	34

*Respiratory Questionnaire

OH Advisor Activity as a % of Total Seen



The DNA rate for this period is 23% which is an increase of 6.2% compared to the same period last year. Measures are in place whereby individuals are contacted 2 days prior to their appointment to confirm their attendance. Out of the 34 asbestos medicals arranged for this period, only 18 attended their appointment – a DNA rate of 47%. Occupational Health continue to work with HR to look at ways of reducing the poor attendance for these medicals and line managers are being asked provide details as to why people are not attending.

Information is sent out on the weekly staff newsletter (The Pink) on a 6 monthly basis as a collaborative message from Human Resources, the Health and Safety Officer and the Fire Brigades Union Health and Safety Rep explaining the importance of attendance at these medicals.

Reasons for OH Advisor Attendance

Previous Years Data:

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

Reason	Numbers April-Sept 2022
Mental Health- Personal	15
Mental Health - Work	3
Musculoskeletal - Back/Neck	2
Musculoskeletal Upper Limb	5
Musculoskeletal Lower Limb	8
General Surgery	1
General Medicine	12
Pregnancy Related	2
Skin	1
Covid	4
Bereavement	1
Cancer	1

The information demonstrates that for this five-month period mental health issues were the most common reason for referral to Occupational Health followed by combined Musculoskeletal issues. The table is now illustrated in greater detail for 2022 to emphasise the difference in cases between Personal and Work mental health issues and additional categories have been added as a point of reference.

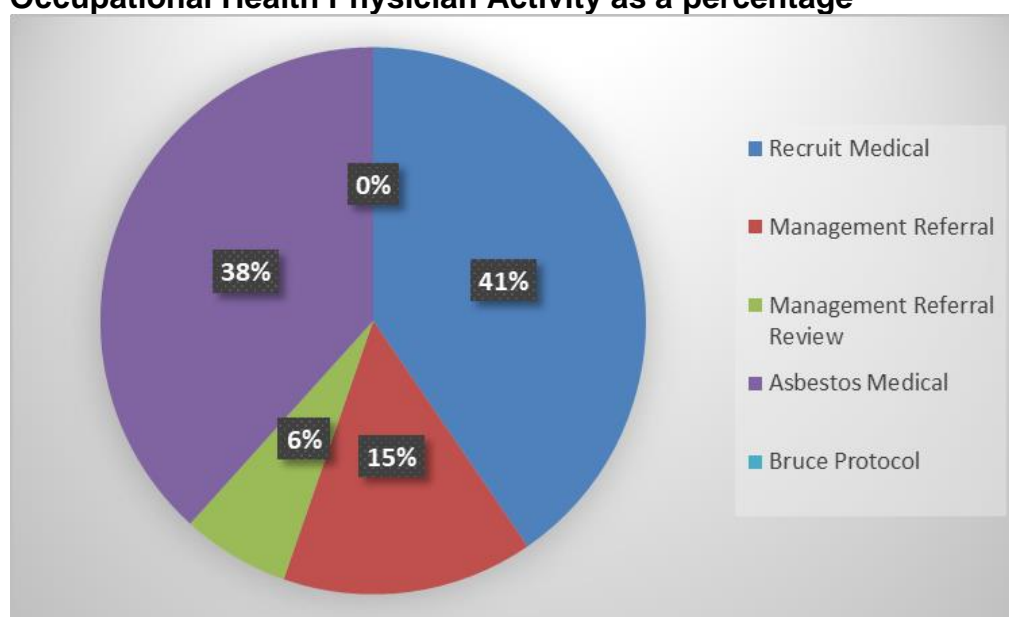
Mental ill health is increasingly prevalent as a cause of both short- and long-term absence. Along with musculoskeletal injuries and acute medical conditions, it remains most commonly responsible for long-term absence. (CIPD Health and Wellbeing at Work report 2019)

For the contract to work efficiently timely assessment and effective two-way communication regarding long term sickness cases is necessary and the Occupational Health Service has built up a good working relationship with the Human Resources team to ensure that this is the case.

OH Physician Activity

OH Physician Appointments	Number Attended Apr – Jun 2021	Did Not Attend Apr – Jun 2021	Number attended April – Sept 2022	Did Not Attend April – Sept 2022
Recruit Medical	20	0	19	2
Management Referrals	10	0	7	0
Management Referral Reviews	0	0	3	2
Asbestos Medical	7	0	18	16
Bruce Protocol Assessment	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	37	0	46	20

Occupational Health Physician Activity as a percentage



The DNA rate for OH Physician appointments for this six-month period has increased to 30%, mainly due to the high DNA rate for asbestos medicals. Individuals are being contacted by OH prior to their appointment and the OH Service is working closely with HR to look at ways of improving attendance.

Reasons for Seeing OH Physician

Reason	Number Seen Apr to Sept 2020	Number Seen Oct 2020 to Mar 2021	Number Seen Apr to Jun 2021	Number Seen Apr to Sept 2022
Mental Health	8	8	8	5
Musculoskeletal	0	4	1	2
General Surgery	0	0	1	0
General Medical	2	2	0	0
Pregnancy		1	0	0
Covid		1	0	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 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.