

Update on Occupational Health Provision

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 Purpose of Report

This report gives an update on the Occupational Health (OH) service supplied to Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) by the current providers, Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust, McClelland Centre (University of Worcester) and Shropshire Council (Occupational Health Physician).

2 Recommendations

The Committee is requested to note the report.

3 Background

Since November 2014 the OH contract has been divided into separate areas and awarded to three contractors:

- Occupational Health nursing and administration (OHN)
- Fitness.
- Occupational Health physician (OHP)

The contracts were initially awarded on a one year (+ 1) basis and are currently due to expire in February 2019. It is likely, given potential uncertainty over future structural changes that these contracts will be extended again for a further period short period.

4 Summary of Activity to Date

There is a nurse-led service with nurse provision for six days each month and access to an appropriately qualified doctor for one day each month. The nurse days are booked as required and other than surveillance and medicals are not on set days to allow flexibility for staff.

Due to Health & Safety legislation it has been necessary to introduce an asbestos medical linked to the three-yearly medical, and part of this must be carried out by a suitably qualified/registered physician. This has increased the OHP time to two days per month. Additional services are available if required including physiotherapy, general counselling and specialist counselling.

Fitness

All operational staff undergo a fitness test annually.

Commentary for SFRS Q3 2018 Fitness Assessments

The following data represents the cumulative booked assessment figures across the last 4 years between the 1st January and 30th September for comparison.

2015	321 booked assessments
2016	299 booked assessments
2017	374 booked assessments
2018	357 booked assessments

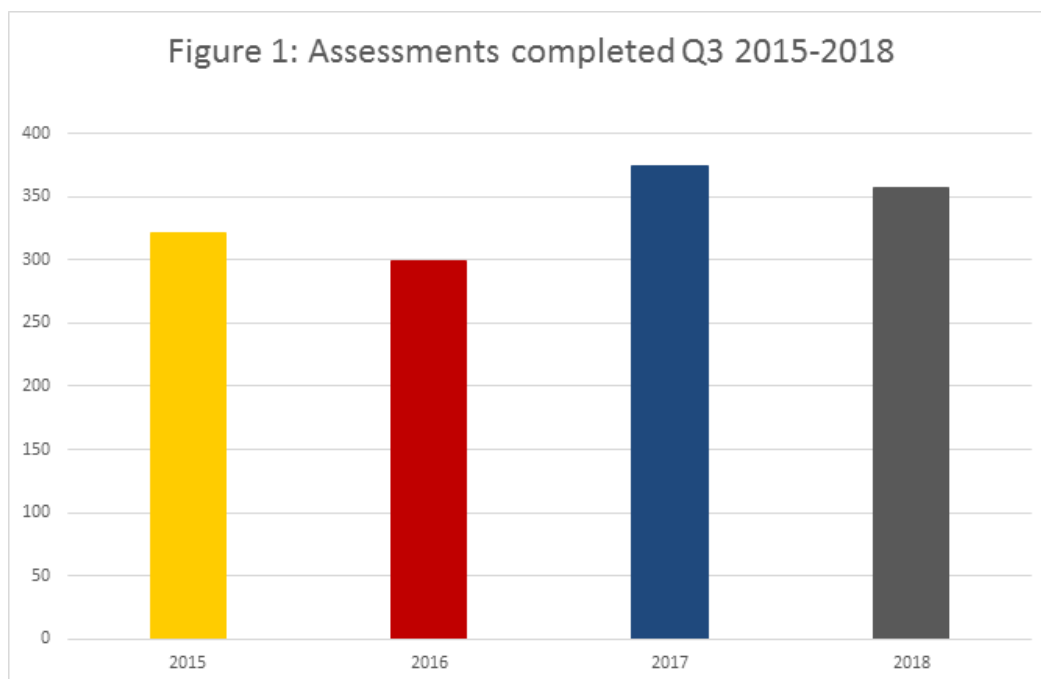


Figure 1: Assessments booked Q1 – Q3 2015-2018

From Figure 1, it can be seen that between Q1 and Q3 2018, 357 assessments were booked. The slight fall in number when compared to 2017 is likely to be due to the natural variance in the volume of appointments booked during each quarter and the crossover of the role of exercise physiologist. We would expect to see Q4 totals to rise to that closer in line with previous years, as the volume of booked appointments for the Q4 is higher than that in Q4 2017; 91 assessments are booked for Q4.

Completed Assessments Breakdown

Annual Fitness Assessments	Recruit Fitness Assessments	Annual Fitness Retest	Recruit Retests
316	31	0	0

Total: 347 Completed. 10 Did not attend (DNA)

10 appointments were booked but not attended. 8 appointments due to a call out, 1 of the DNAs were generated from a new recruit and 1 from a RDS fire fighter.

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 the individual is seen and telephone contact is made where necessary, e.g. 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, etc. and assists in keeping the Did Not Attend appointment (DNA) rate down.

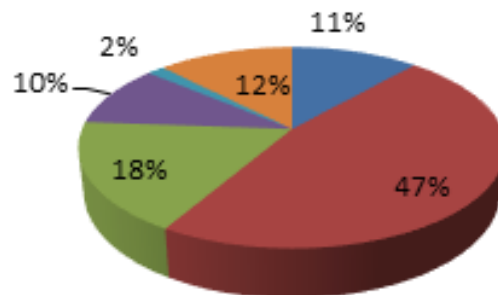
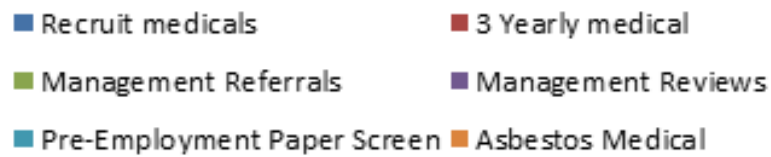
During the period that this report covers, Occupational Health attended all scheduled Sickness Absence and Health and Safety meetings.

The Occupational Health Service ran a health and wellbeing session at the Fire Service Headquarters on 17 September 2018. This was very well received by all who attended.

Occupational Health Adviser Activity – 1 May – 30 September 2018

OH Adviser Appointments	Number Attended Jan- Jun 2017	Numbers Attended Jul 2017 - Apr 2018	Did Not Attend (DNA) Jul 2017 – Apr 2018	Numbers Attended May - Sept 2018	Did Not Attend (DNA) Nov 2017 – Apr 2018
Recruit Medical	11	36	5	15	0
3 Yearly Medical	40	65	12	61	17
Management Referrals	41	38	15	23	9
Management Referral Reviews	30	24	1	13	0
Pre-Employment Paper Screen	3	12	0	2	0
Pre-Employment Health Interview	1	2	0	0	0
Asbestos Medical	33	36	12	16	8
TOTAL	159	214	45	130	34

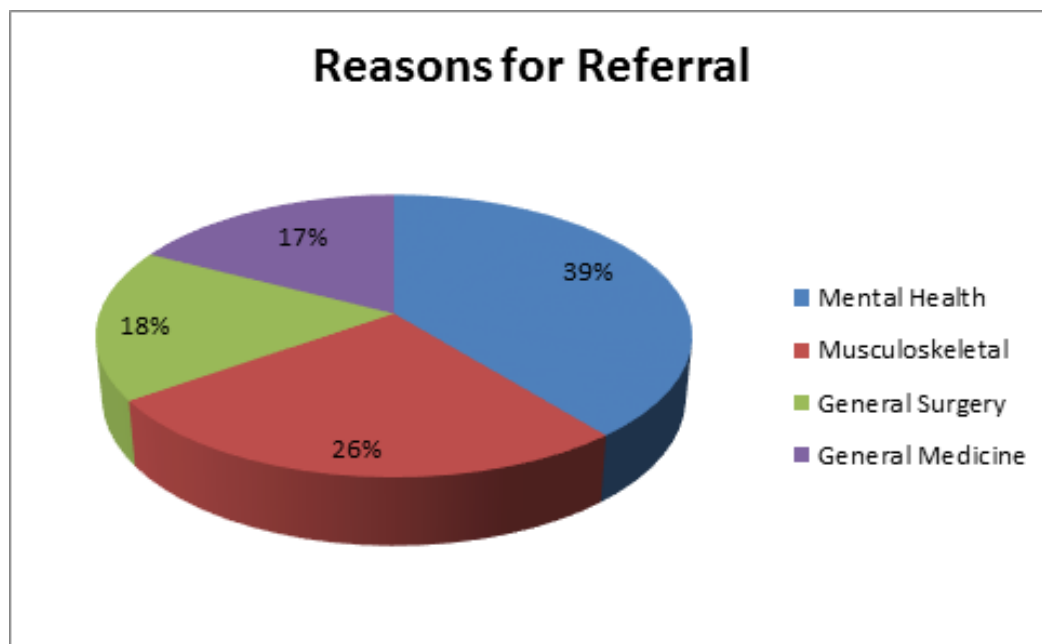
OH Adviser Activity



The current Did Not Attend (DNA) rate stands at 20% for this five month period. This rate has reduced slightly since the previous report. It has been noted that the majority of DNAs continue to be for three yearly medicals. Appointments for three yearly medicals are sent out via letter to the individuals, however, we have noticed of late that some of the addresses that are held on file by both parties are still yet to be updated. OH and HR are continuing to work together to try and rectify this situation. Fire Fighters are now actively encouraged to ensure that their personal details are kept up to date on their HR record system.

Reasons for Initial Management Referral Consultations to the OH Adviser

Reason	Number seen Jan-Jun 2017	Number seen Jul 2017 – Apr 2018	Number seen May – Sept 2018
Mental Health	15	13	9
Musculoskeletal	15	13	6
General Surgery	4	8	4
General Medicine	7	5	4



The information demonstrates that mental health has now superseded musculoskeletal issues for management referrals for this period. There has been a slight increase in referrals in relation to general medical health issues. Stress and musculoskeletal injuries continue to top the list of causes of absence within the public and private sector. (Department of Work & Pensions – Health at Work – An Independent Review of Sickness Absence)

The Service is currently rolling out the Mental Health First Aid course to upskill staff on mental health issues, this is one element of the Health and Well-being plan the Service has developed to support and educate staff.

Management Referral Outcomes

The following data shows the outcomes from manager referral cases seen between 1 May and 30 September 2018.

At Work No Absence

For employees who are at work and have been referred for advice regarding issues/health problems at work, that has not resulted in sickness absence.

Adapted Return to Work

For employees returning to work on adaptations/restrictions or modifications, following injury or illness resulting in sickness absence.

Referral to Physiotherapy or Counselling Service

For employees requiring support during their absence from work, with musculoskeletal problems or mental health issues.

Return to Work Without Restriction

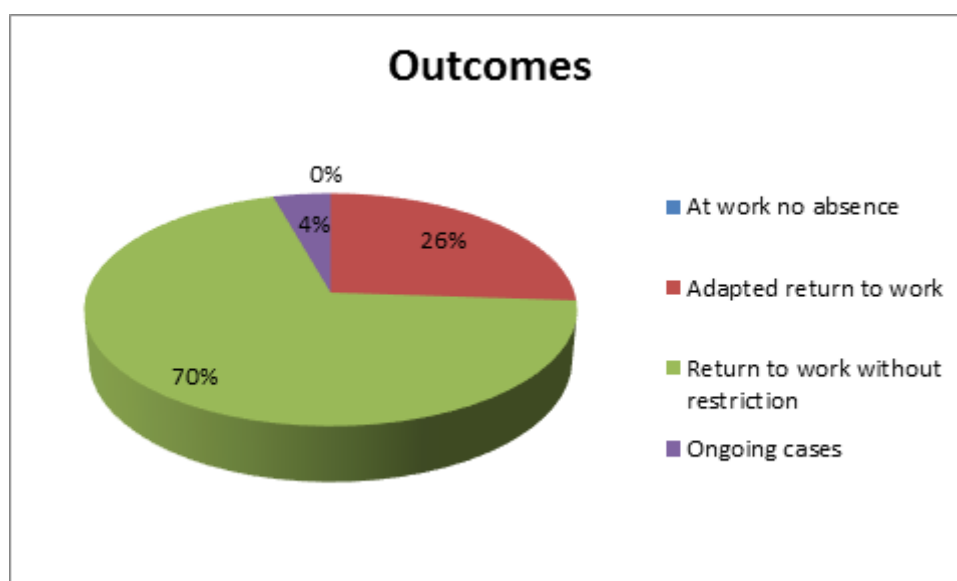
These will be for employees referred for uncomplicated issues not requiring restrictions or adaptations to work activity, and for employees who have been seen by Occupational Health for review following a period at work on modifications and are now returned to full operational duties.

On-Going Cases

This category is for cases on-going, and for employees who have not been able to return to work yet, or are requiring support while at work.

	Jan-Jun 2017	Jul 2017 – Apr 2018	May – Sept 2018
At work no absence	10	18	0
Adapted return to work	13	17	6
Referral to physiotherapy	6	9	7
Referral to counselling	6	7	6
Return to work without restriction	13	10	16
On-going cases	8	6	1

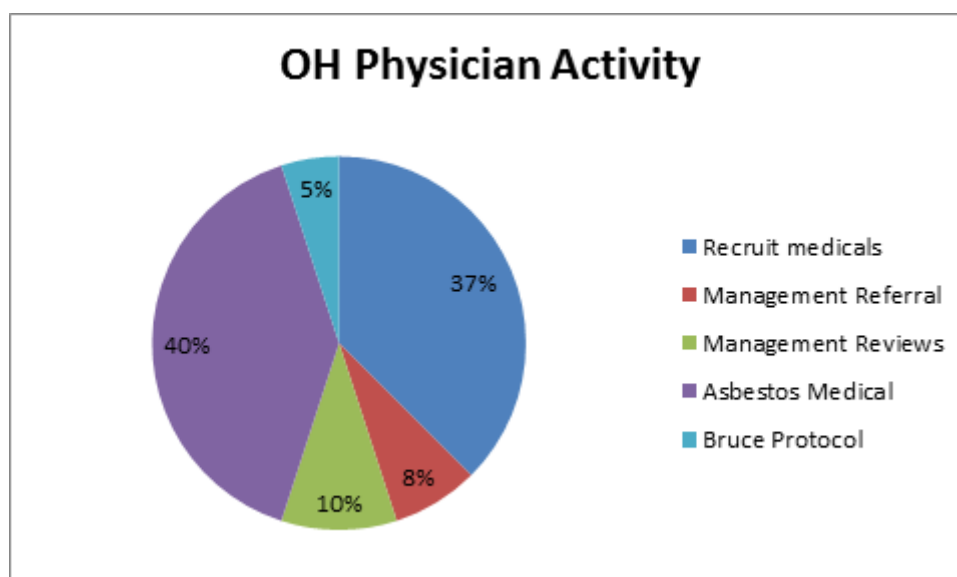
The above data highlights that out of the 23 individuals seen by Occupational Health in this period, only one case is on-going to be either reviewed by the OH Adviser or referred onto the OH Physician, with others having a supported, timely return to work and some staff remaining in work and continuing to do so with additional support. 16 members of staff were able to return to work without restrictions or modifications advised.



Occupational Health Physician Activity 1 May – 30 September 2018

OH Adviser Appointments	Number Attended Jan-Jun 2017	Number attended Jul 2017 – Apr 2018	Did Not Attend (DNA) Jul 2017 – Apr 2018	Number Attended May – Sept 2018	Did Not Attend. DNA May – Sept 2018
Recruit Medical	11	36	5	15	0
Management Referrals	5	15	1	3	0
Management Referral Reviews	9	9	1	4	0
Asbestos Medical	33	36	12	16	8
Bruce Protocol Assessment		0	0	2	0
TOTAL	58	96	19	40	8

The DNA rate for OH Physician appointments for this quarter is 17.7%.



Reasons for Initial Management Referral Consultations to the OH Physician

Reason	Number Seen May – September 2018
Mental Health	2
Musculoskeletal	1
General Surgery	0
General Medical	0

5 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7 Initial Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of historical data. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An Equality Impact Assessment 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.