

We can provide independent professional advice on all aspects of the effects of work on health and health on work. Work and health can interact at any point in working life, beginning at the recruitment process, throughout a career, until leaving work due to ill health, retirement or redundancy.

### *Pre-employment health assessment, why bother?*

Recruitment and retention of staff can be a costly exercise. Most employers wish to establish the fitness of recruits and that they have the potential to provide regular and effective service to the organisation. This will contribute to minimising staff turnover, reduce sickness absence and prevent work-related accident or injury.

Employers will wish to ensure that potential recruits are fit for the tasks they will be expected to carry out and that any pre-existing health condition is not exacerbated by the work activities to be undertaken. Pre-employment screening by competent occupational health professionals provides an assessment of fitness for a particular job and recommendations on any "reasonable adjustments" that may need to be considered by management to accommodate the recruit at work. This also enables employers to comply with the requirements of the [Disability Discrimination Act 1995](#).

Pre-employment health assessment can be carried out by:

- Screening of pre-employment health questionnaires.
- Health and fitness assessment carried out by an occupational health nurse.
- Medical examination by an occupational health physician.

The format of the assessment depends on the nature of the work to be undertaken and any pre-existing health conditions stated on the pre-employment health questionnaire. Some employment requires rigorous medical examination to determine fitness for duty such as driving duties, working offshore or at sea, working with some chemicals or lead.

### *Why OH and not managers or personnel?*

Assessment by occupational health professionals ensures medical confidentiality, with contact with the recruits GP or Hospital Specialist where appropriate. This ensures all aspects of health are taken into account when medical suitability for a post is being determined.

Line managers and Human Resource/Personnel Officers are not qualified to interpret medical details supplied by a recruit and this type of information should be handled in the strictest medical confidence.



### **REPORTS**

When reporting on fitness for employment, OH advice will be provided within the bounds of medical confidentiality. Usually, the report to management falls into one of three categories:

1. Fit for work.
2. Unfit for work.
3. Fit with restricted or modified duties, or other reasonable adjustments.

### **DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), defines "disabled" as:

"A person has a disability if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities".

To avoid discrimination, employers are required to consider all reasonable adjustments in relation to recruitment, induction, training, promotion and retention of disabled employees.

The definition of disability is on daily living activities and not work capability, therefore, recommendations of "reasonable adjustments" requires knowledge of the medical condition, the workplace and the processes.

### **ILL-HEALTH RETIREMENT**

When an individual's health condition makes it difficult to continue at work, it is essential for employers to obtain independent medical advice, particularly, in relation to eligibility for a company scheme and retirement on grounds of ill-health.

WellWork Limited can provide occupational health physician opinion relating to:

Fitness for current role - fitness for alternate or modified role, including "reasonable adjustments". Prompt referral to independent treatment specialist, if necessary. Management advice re - fitness for continued employment. Independent advice of pension scheme trustees. Opinion on eligibility for ill-health retirement within the scope of company pension scheme.