



## **Occupational Health Management Referral Process**

### **1. Introduction:**

- a) Cognus Limited recognises the need to recruit, retain and motivate the best staff to foster a climate of innovation and excellence. It also recognises the need to ensure that staff feel secure and are appropriately supported throughout their employment.
- b) Cognus Limited values the diversity of its staff and is committed to promoting equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination. Therefore all parties will ensure that this procedure is applied and operated fairly and in doing so ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, disability, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, or gender reassignment.
- c) Cognus Limited has a duty of care for its employees' health and wellbeing. We expect our employees to attend work and perform their duties to the best of their abilities.
- d) It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that this process is carefully followed within their area of responsibility. Where an area of the process allows for the delegation of responsibility to another party, the arrangements must be confirmed in writing to all members of the team. Where a role or individual is subject to a joint appointment it is the responsibility of the manager to ensure that the other manager(s) are informed, and where appropriate, agree to the course of action proposed.

### **2. Purpose:**

- a) Employee attendance is essential for the successful delivery of Cognus Limited's aims and ambitions; we are therefore committed to our workforce health and wellbeing. There will be occasions when an employee is absent as a result of illness or injury, however, absence may also result in an adverse effect on the quality of services provided by Cognus Limited.
- b) Cognus Limited aims to provide any support which is reasonably practicable to help an employee who is affected by illness or injury to recuperate and if absent from work, to return once they are able to do so.

- c) Regrettably, there may be occasions when health or wellbeing issues impact on an employee's ability to perform their job well and/or, an employee's health and wellbeing may be at risk due to a work activity they undertake routinely. In such circumstances, Cognus Limited may decide to approach Occupational Health (OH) to assist in exploring any underlying health issues and to provide advice and guidance to managers via Human Resources (HR) of any actions that may be considered to help support the employee's recovery and return to work.
- d) The Occupational Health service may if appropriate, also consult the employee's general practitioner (GP) or treating hospital consultant. The employee may also provide any relevant additional medical information produced by a medical expert. No information will be obtained or shared without the employee's prior consent.
- e) If a manager has any concerns about the effects of work on an employee's health or the effects of a health problem on an employee's performance or attendance at work; a referral to the Occupational Health service may be considered. Further advice can be sought from Human Resources Team.

### **3. The Process:**

- a) Referrals must be made with the full knowledge of the individual concerned, encouraging open exchanges of information in a confidential one-to-one meeting.
- a) The individual will be given a copy of the referral form and verbal guidance to help them understand why they are being referred. The individual will be asked to give consent to the referral and to any additional medical evidence that may be required.
- b) It is important that the Occupational Health Team is made aware of all relevant facts about a case to ensure that objective advice is given based on a full understanding of the issues. The Occupational Health Referral Form is designed to ensure sufficient information is provided and to clarify what advice is required.
- c) The referral form will be completed by the line manager in collaboration with a member of the human resources team who will forward the form securely to Occupational Health for processing. This may include any other relevant documentation such as a Job Description, medical certificates and/or fit notes or self-certificates of absence.
- d) On receipt of a referral from HR, the Occupational Health Team will determine the most appropriate assessment option. This may include any of the following:

- i. Consultation via telephone and/or face-to-face with the Occupational Health Nurse.
  - ii. Face-to-face consultation with the Occupational Health Consultant Doctor.
  - iii. Request to the individual's treating Hospital Consultant and/or, GP for a medical report.
  - iv. A follow up meeting with the Occupational Health Consultant Doctor upon receipt of medical report from the individual's treating Hospital Consultant and/or GP.
- e) Following consultation, Occupational Health will produce a management report which will be sent securely to HR to discuss with the referring manager. Depending on the nature of the referral, the report may contain some or all of the following information:
- i. Opinion on the individual's fitness for work.
  - ii. Nature of health condition, injury or illness.
  - iii. Expected time frame for recovery and/or return to work.
  - iv. Potential modified duties and/or workplace adjustments.
  - v. Return to work plan including phased return recommendations where applicable.
  - vi. Recommendations to address any identified issues/barriers.
  - vii. Practical guidance on health and wellbeing.
  - viii. Opinion on applicability of Equality Act 2010 provisions.
  - ix. The potential for an individual to maintain a good attendance record, and if appropriate, suitability for redeployment or, Ill health retirement where necessary.
  - x. Proposals for case management or rehabilitation program where appropriate.
- f) For avoidance of doubt, managers need to be mindful that an individual's medical data such as Occupational Health report contains 'sensitive data' as defined in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018. As a result, the Occupational Health report, its content and an individual's health/medical history must be treated in strictest confidence. In light of this, the process requires HR to be the recipient and custodian of any such information to ensure compliance and to promote equality of opportunities for everyone. In light of this, the OH report will be sent to HR only. The HR team after careful consideration, will discuss the findings of the report with the referring manager and offer tailor-made advice and support.