

Caerphilly County Borough Council

Occupational Health Department

Annual Report 2005 – 2006

1. INTRODUCTION

This annual report is the first since the occupational health function was brought 'in house' in 2004. Prior to this occupational health was provided externally by Glan Hafren NHS Trust.

The report is intended to provide a summary of the development of the Occupational Health Department, arrangements, key achievements and performance for the year July 2005 – June 2006.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Caerphilly County Borough Council employees are a valuable asset and Occupational Health is an integral part of supporting employees during their working lives

The Occupational Health department provides Caerphilly County Borough Council with advice and guidance on all health related matters involving employees. It plays a strategic role in the development of health related policies and procedures including: Pressure and Stress Management Policy, Occupational Health Policy and Immunisation for Employee Guidelines.

The department supports managers in implementing the Managing Attendance Policy, ensures that appropriate pre-employment health screening is undertaken, and appropriate adjustments advised on in order to protect the individual from harm and assist the Council in its statutory duties.

In addition to this health surveillance is undertaken to support local policies this includes lone/home workers, asbestos medicals, screening for latex allergies and night workers. Currently the Council are buying in additional screening for hand arm vibration and audiometric tests.

Occupational Health is not a treatment service, or a replacement for a GP visit. Staff deal with all aspects of work related health issues and will be available to provide advice and support to all employees at all levels with regard to their health and its relationship to their work.

All accidents however continue to be dealt with by the first aiders.

Limited space and administrative support currently restricts the ability to increase the response to demands from the service areas.

2 DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE

The Occupational Health Department is currently based on the Ystrad Fawr site and employs four fulltime members of staff and two qualified occupational health physicians:

- Hazel Hortop – Occupational Health Manager (full time)
- Ceri Hadley - Screening Nurse (full time)

- Paul Roberts - Back Care Advisor (full time)
- Margaret Church – Administrative support (full time)
- Dr D Williams – Occupational Health Physician (Five sessions per fortnight)
- Dr J Lever- Occupational Health Physician (sessional every 4-6weeks)

Clinics and Support available:

Chiropractic Clinic Monday/Wednesday/Friday 09:00 –12:00
Paul Roberts

Chiropractic Treatment Strategy provided by the Back Care Advisor.

Treatment for all musculoskeletal related disorders for CCBC staff whether they are in work or absent due to ill health and may be either rehabilitative or supportive depending on the needs of the individual.

Treatment is aimed at facilitating an early return to work for those who are absent or assisting those members of staff in work who are experiencing pain and discomfort of musculoskeletal origin.

The Back Care Advisor provides a supportive role providing a neuro-orthopaedic screening for the Occupational Health Physician and Occupational Health Nurse.

Pre-employment/lone worker screening is undertaken for prospective employees who have identified previous or current musculoskeletal problems(e.g. low back pain, sciatic pain syndromes, neck and upper limb pain, knee pain)

The BCA may visit employees at their place of work and offer practical advice on work place ergonomics and courses of exercise.

Referral Clinic Monday/Friday 12:30 -14:00
 Alternate Tuesday 11:30 -13:00

Dr Dennis Williams

Medical referrals under managing attendance policy, employees usually referred after four weeks (long-term) absence, or after frequent short term absences. Occasionally OH1 forms are received when a manager has concerns about an employee currently in work. All forms must be fully completed and signed by the individual, line manager and checked by personnel before an appointment is allocated.

Information reported back to managers is dependant on the individual forms.

Pension Clinic As required 4-6 weeks

Dr Jo Lever

Pension requirements dictate that if the OHP has seen a patient on more than one occasion, that physician cannot sign the ill health retirement form for release of pension. Dr Lever will see the patient and make a decision.

(if she does not agree then a third and independent Dr is asked to see the patient, this is currently undertaken by The Vale Clinic)

Occasionally Dr lever will see pre-employment referrals.

Screening Clinic	Tuesday	09:00 –16:00
	Thursday	09:00 –16:00

Ceri Hadley

Pre-employment health screening as required, base line hearing tests, lung function etc. Advice sent to personnel with regard to fitness to work, risk assessments and workplace adjustments etc that may be needed.

OH1 referrals dependant on the reason for referral, usually associated with short term absences.

External Employee Assistance Programme

External and confidential counselling service, based in Cardiff. Home visits are not undertaken, telephone and face to face counselling.

Referrals taken from line manager/personnel with the individuals consent, occupational health, or by the individual themselves

Health and Safety

Support Occupational Health by providing information on workplace accidents and subsequent investigation, and carrying out workplace assessments as requested.

3 DEVELOPMENT

In order to maintain the holistic and integrated approach to the health and well being of employees it is essential to address more than sickness absence, balancing the reactive with the proactive and provide preventative services, health awareness and screening and support mechanisms for psychological and physical problems. Development within the last twelve months include:

- Dr Paul Roberts was employed in June 2005 as Back care advisor. Occupational Health is now able to offer rehabilitative and preventative treatment for employees suffering from musculo-skeletal disorders that are having an impact on the individuals ability to work effectively.
- Effective pre-employment screening has been developed to help ensure good job matching, preventing future difficulties for employer and employee alike. In order to

meet the demand an Occupational Health Screening Nurse, Ceri Hadley, was employed June 2006

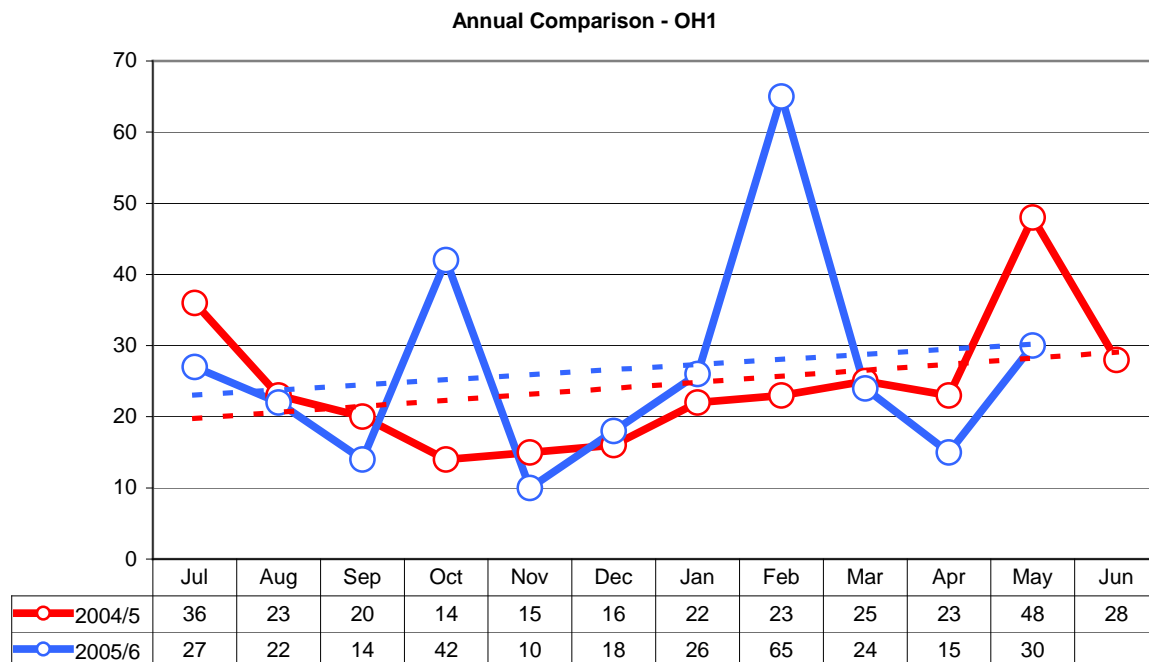
- Revision and amendment of the Stress policy which has become the Pressure and Stress management policy.
- Working closely with Health and Safety appropriate health surveillance programmes have been established for lone and night workers.

4 STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Currently all statistical data is collected manually because of delay in purchasing occupational health software.

Statistics on the number of pre-employment forms and management referrals are produced monthly and fed back to personnel managers. Figures on the numbers of appointments allocated to nurse, back care advisor and occupational health physicians are also kept.

The graph below shows the annual comparison 2004/5 to 2005/6 of management referrals, the dotted line indicating the overall trend.

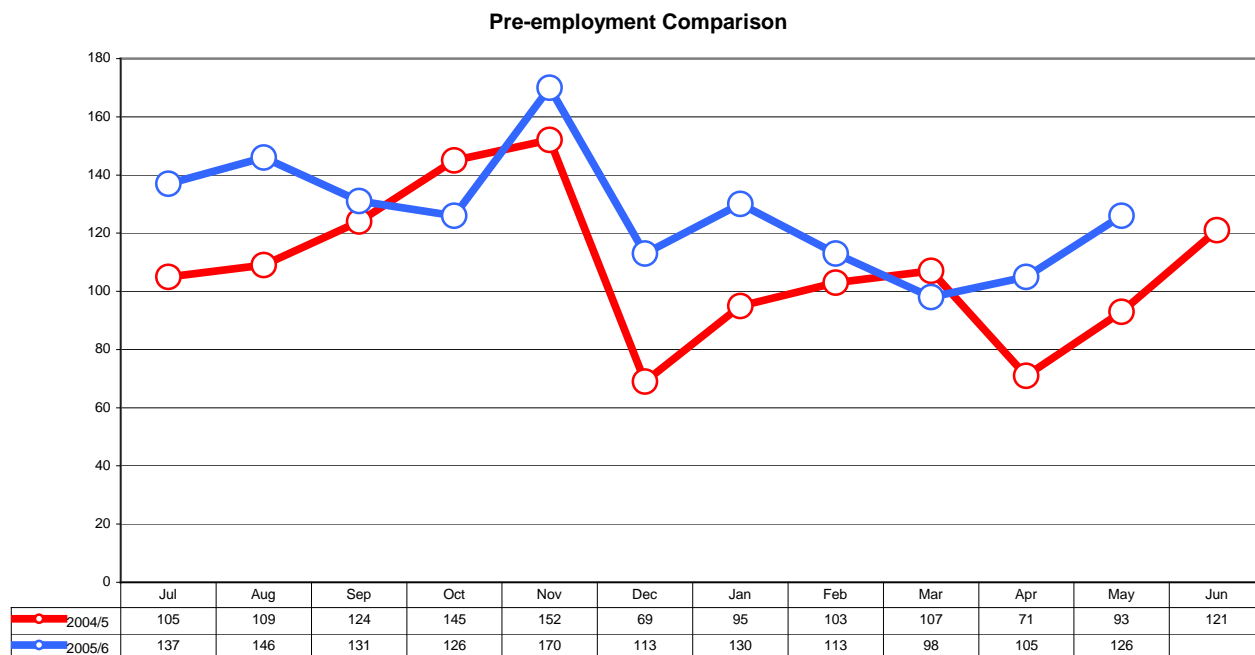


Total number of management referrals for 2004/5 =293. Eleven months to May 2006 = 293.

It is anticipated that, with the introduction of managing attendance teams in the directorates of chief executives, environment and education/leisure, there will be an increase in the number of management referrals over the next few months.

During June 2005 to May 2006, 233 employees were given appointments with the occupational health physician.

The graph below show the number of pre-employment screening forms received by occupational health, currently 47% of all forms received need to be given an appointment for further assessment with either the occupational health nurse or back care advisor.



Counselling Service

Statistics received from the CCBC counselling service indicate that since the service was established in April 2003, 654 employees have accessed the service. 315 employees attended for face to face counselling. 339 used the telephone line only. The statistics for 2005 show stress at work to be the most common reason for accessing the service, followed by stress at home and bereavement. Two employees accessed the service as they felt they were subject to workplace bullying.

5. JOINT CONSULTATION

Consultation is an integral part of the occupational health function and the promotion of a positive health and work culture. Consultation on health issues is achieved through the following mechanisms: -

- Health Alliance –Occupational health consults and works with the health alliance in organising specific initiatives and health events.
- WLGA – Occupational Health Forum. Chaired by CCBC occupational health manager, this group meets twice per year to discuss occupational health provision, documentation, protocols and best practice. The group consists of representatives from all local authorities in Wales.
- All Wales Smoking Cessation Service – working together to provide in house cessation services and sign posting to local groups for employees requiring support and information about stopping smoking.
- The Corporate Healthy Workplace Group – this group is chaired by Councillor Gwyn Price and consists of representatives of all levels from each directorate. The function of the group is facilitated by the Occupational Health manager and assists

in the development strategies to promote health in the workplace, giving employees opportunity to make informed choices regarding their health. CCBC was awarded the Silver Corporate Health Standard in May 2003. The standard has been revised and re-assessment is expected to take place before the end of 2006.

- The Health and Safety Professionals group - this group consists of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit, Directorate Health and Safety Officers, the Occupational Health Manager, Occupational Health Nurse and the Back care Adviser. This group allows discussion on health issues, the development of health related posters and messages, cross-directorate procedures and the sharing of best practise across the Authority.

6 CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Significant developments have taken place over the past year in developing referral procedures, instigating rehabilitation treatments for musculo-skeletal disorders and formulating policies that reflect current legislation, standards and best practise. Additional clinical staff have been employed.

Over the next twelve months it is hoped to build on this progress ensuring the authority has a robust framework to secure the health and wellbeing of all employees. The Occupational Health Department will be installing a comprehensive software system to manage the increase in clinics from 7 to 18 per week, and track trends in type and reason for referral. In order to service this increase it is anticipated additional administrative support will be required.

2006/2007 will see the development of a robust business plan to meet the needs of managers, personnel and employees alike.

Policies on Pressure and Stress management and Occupational Health will be implemented. This will include re-launch of the counselling service which is currently in the final stage of the tendering process and briefing sessions to managers.

Immunisations for employees will be brought in house with the implementation of new Immunisation Guidelines, expected October 2006.

Hazel Hortop MSc RGN
Occupational Health Manager
June 2006