

How to Find and Choose an Occupational Health Provider



What Is OH & How Can It Help?

OH is the field of medicine that studies the effects of work on health and health on work and is proven to reduce the levels of staff absence due to illness by focusing on employee performance, suitability, fitness, wellbeing and safety issues. OH providers can tailor a service that will match the requirements of your organisation. OH should bring added value to your business, directly and indirectly via:



- Overall reduction of absence costs.
- Reduction of claims against permanent health insurance, private medical insurance, employers liability insurance and pension funds.
- Reduction of litigation risks associated with non-compliance of health & safety litigation.
- Increased staff retention and improved productivity.
- Overall increased profitability.
- Recognition of Corporate and Social Responsibilities.

To reap the most benefit from OH determine your requirements & expectations. This will enable you to select a provider who will work closely with your organisation to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Consider the Practicalities

Before searching for an Occupational Health provider it 's essential to consider your organisations basic requirements, such as:

- What size of provider do you require?
- How many employees do you have and is there a shift pattern to cover?
- Who will be making most contact with the provider?
- Do you require an onsite service and if so, can you accommodate this?

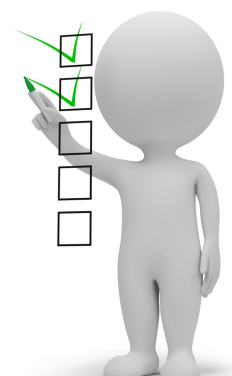
Even basic practicalities are important. Some small providers might not be able to resource large contracts, while some SMEs can find that large providers are too impersonal, and regardless of size, not all providers do 'ad-hoc' referrals. Also consider that if you have various line managers needing to use the service a call-centre may be appropriate. However, if there will only be one contact within your organisation, you may prefer a dedicated representative.

Talk to more than one provider. To save you time, COHPA offer a free service to help you compile a shortlist of providers who meet your basic requirements.

Know What You Want

Identify your top three requirements and check these match with the core services of the provider e.g.:

- Do they provide web based options such as online pre employment screening?
- What other departments will they need to liaise with? (Health & safety, HR, legal...)
- What sort of management information and feedback will you receive?
- What services do they provide to smooth handovers from existing providers?



Source A Provider

Finding an OH provider can be difficult as they are not easily categorised. COHPA offers a free information service that will help you to identify suitable providers and can offer advice on what should be included in a tender.

Alternatively, personal recommendations are always a good start, as are HR resources such as CIPD media and forums.



All COHPA members subscribe to COHPA Business Standards Regulations, conveying their pledge to offer an efficient, customer led service.

The Selection Process

The range of OH provision is wide but falls into 3 main categories: commercial providers, in-house services and NHS/public sector*. (*OH services in NHS are not free of charge)



Talk to more than one provider, ask for written comments regarding your requirements, and background information such as fee schedules.

Meet with your short listed providers at least once, this will enable you to identify the best provider for your requirements.

Make sure you receive full details of the service you are buying.

Talk to all departments who will use the service, they will all have specific expectations.

Fees

Fees can vary depending on the service provision, but with a diverse market there is a service to suit every budget.

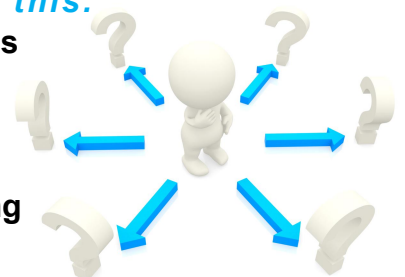
Before requesting fee structures you will need to determine accurate information on numbers, locations and past usage. You may also find it helpful to breakdown general services into service components e.g. pre-employment screening can be broken down into questionnaires, medicals and health screening.

Make sure you request costings for all extras such as administration charges on disbursements. Using standardised information will enable you to compare quotes easily.

Remember: you get what you pay for and nothing is for free!

In Summary

- Identify your main requirements and key criteria
- Source potential providers - *COHPA can assist with this.*
- Review initial proposals or pre-qualification submissions
- Shortlist between 3 - 4 providers, then undertake the selection process
- Clarify, your requirements before you sign off
- Invest in establishing the relationship from the beginning



Testimonials for COHPA assistance

“COHPA provided a very useful service. Without which, we would have had a more difficult search.”

Jane Peers, Senior HR Manager, RSPCA

“COHPA have been really helpful, professional and competent – and the service was free! I couldn’t recommend them enough.”

Jennie Cobb, HR Officer, Bourne Salads



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