

Management of work-related musculoskeletal diseases

Definitions

What is work-related musculoskeletal disease?

- A work-related musculoskeletal disease condition is one caused or made worse by a person's work.
- They are very specific work related conditions that must be reported to the HSE (see panel).
- Reasonable adjustments might be required to help rehabilitate or enable a person to continue with their work.

What are "reasonable adjustments"?

- Reasonable adjustments are those workplace adaptations which could be considered "reasonable" for a manager to take in order to address issues presented by a work related health condition **or** disability in the workplace.

What managers need to do

- If you receive a "Fit Note" from a member of staff which indicates a work related cause of absence, or you become concerned, or are notified that a member of staff has a musculoskeletal disease condition which may be work related, a referral should be made to Occupational Health. Any recommendations from their report should be implemented.
- If the condition is likely to affect their ability to continue with their work, a referral should also be made to the Disability Support Office (DSO). The DSO can assist by giving advice on any workplace adaptations which need to be made.
- Occupational Health will inform Safety Services, if they believe that the condition may be work-related and Safety Services will report the case under RIDDOR, on behalf of the University, if required.
- Where there has been an instance of work related ill health, you should carry out an investigation, with advice from your Local Safety Advisor if required.
- Relevant risk assessments should be reviewed and revised where necessary, to prevent any further injury.
- Where an individual has developed a condition which may affect their ability to safely do their job you should produce an individual risk assessment, in conjunction with the individual.
- Above all- **Act promptly and decisively**- before the effects become irreversible.

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), requires the University to notify the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) of any diagnosis of work related:

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: *where the person's work involves regular use of percussive or vibrating tools*

Cramp of the hand or forearm: *where the person's work involves prolonged periods of repetitive movement of the fingers, hand or arm*

Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome: *where the person's work involves regular use of percussive or vibrating tools, or holding materials subject to percussive processes, or processes causing vibration*

Tendonitis or tenosynovitis: *in the hand or forearm, where the person's work is physically demanding and involves frequent, repetitive movements*