

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). In cases of Disability or for long term medical conditions, DSO can assist by giving advice on any workplace adaptations.
- 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*