



# Principles and standards

The OH service adopted by NHS organisations should adhere to a robust set of principles, these are:

- a high-quality, clinically-led, evidence-based service
- an equitable and accessible service
- impartial, approachable and receptive to both clients and employer
- contributes to improved organisational productivity
- works in partnership with NHS organisations and with organisations in the community
- underpinned by innovation
- offers diversity and depth of specialisation and training opportunities.

The national standards for occupational health (SEQOHS), which all providers of OH support to any organisation must meet, have recently been updated and will come into effect in November 2023. These standards place expectations around six domains, listed below.

## The six domains applicable to all OH services

1. Governance and finance
2. Resources and processes
3. Outputs and outcomes

4. Information and communication
5. Quality assurance and improvement
6. Sector specific standards (optional)

## Additional standards for OH in the NHS

OH providers delivering services to the NHS must have SEQOHS accreditation or be working towards it.

They are also required to meet additional standards relating to their ability to deliver six 'core services', detailed below.

### Prevention

The prevention of ill health caused or exacerbated by work.

### Timely intervention

Early treatment of the main causes of absence in the NHS.

### Rehabilitation

A process to help staff stay in or return to work after illness.

### Health assessments for work

Supporting organisations to manage attendance and retirement.

### Promotion of health and wellbeing

Using the workplace to promote improved health and wellbeing.

### Teaching and training

Promoting the health and wellbeing approach amongst all staff and ensuring the availability of future OH staff.

Staff employed directly by the organisation's OH services will not necessarily provide all OH services. Organisations are responsible for ensuring a full range of services are available to staff and there is clarity about which elements of this the OH team is responsible for.

It is the responsibility of commissioning teams to make sure all these services are available for NHS staff.

The NHS Health at Work Network represents in-house NHS OH services in England, and is a useful source of help, support and advice.



## Key questions

- Does the OH service have, or is it working towards, SEQOHS accreditation?
- Does the OH service provider meet the minimum principles and standards?