



Sheffield Occupational Health Advisory Service (SOHAS)
Working to Prevent and Alleviate the Effects of Work on Health

Sheffield Occupational Health Advisory Service Annual Report 2019/2020

if you are worried about going back to work, we can help you. Either contact your GP and ask to be referred to a SOHAS Adviser, or contact us via phone on 0114 275 5760, via our website, or email us directly at sohas@sohas.co.uk

What we do

We provide Sheffield's job retention services; If you believe that your work is affecting your health, we can provide you with advice to stay at work or return to work after a period of sickness absence.

We are a preventative service. **65% of people we give advice to are at work, not off sick.** We target people who live and work in the most deprived areas of Sheffield who are vulnerable to the loss of their job. In this year, we provided job retention services for people with mental and physical health issues as well as working carers and cancer patients.

Headline figures

We provided advice
2460
times during the year, via face-to-face, telephone and email

65%
of people who we gave advice to, said that they would have lost their job without our support

Every GP surgery referred at least one patient to our services, although we only have advisers in
32%
of GP surgeries

We signposted over
300
people to other support organisations

What are the outcomes of our work?

- **We lower people's stress at work**
- **We reduce people's visits to their GPs**
- **We help improve people's conditions at work**
- **We reduce presenteeism, leaveism and sickness absence at work**

Case study

Andrew works as a web developer. He suffers from generalised anxiety, depression and ME which his employers were aware. His anxiety and depression had been made worse by COVID (fear of getting ill and passing it on to others but also inability to meet with friends and family). Had been shielding and working from home since March but able to perform his role fully as were his colleagues. His employer was in regular contact with all staff and additional equipment was provided as needed.

Intervention

Andrew was managing his health conditions relatively well until around July when his employer notified staff that they planned to recall all staff to the office as soon as the Government permitted it. At this point he spoke to his GP as his anxiety and depression had worsened and he was signposted to SOHAS as his work had started to be affected. Andrew had raised concerns about his ME and the risks of travelling to and from work but his employer had insisted he must return to office-based working.

Outcome

The SOHAS adviser provided guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and the employers duty to make reasonable adjustments and agreed to write to the employer asking them to arrange an occupational health referral. Following the receipt of the letter a meeting was arranged which took place over zoom and an agreement was reached to allow Andrew to continue working from home until and the occupational health report had been received. The report recommended the continuation of home working for 3 months with regular reviews. The employer also completed a Wellness Action Plan and a COVID specific personalised risk assessment with LP.

We gave master classes on health and employment to IAPT and Sheffield Carers Centre

"Over the years, I have received **fantastic help from SOHAS in helping patients return to work after a sickness absence**. The advice they give is practical and helpful to patients, the SOHAS adviser in my surgery has a **high level of expertise on workplace health issues** and they provide good feedback to me on the types of advice they have given and what the outcome of their intervention was."

GP quote

96%
of people who
used our services,
would recommend
us to their work
colleagues

"SOHAS have been **invaluable in providing a supportive service** to our clients who have sustained a brain injury. Our staff members have liaised with SOHAS employees via email, over the phone and in person; and have always found their advice and recommendations to be **timely and helpful**. Their expertise in the employment sector and knowledge around the intricacies of employment rights and law have been **beneficial to our clients**, especially those who require advocacy. Their input has enabled a number of brain injury survivors to **map out a realistic return to work and to retain their jobs**. We could not **recommend their service highly enough!**"

Clinician quote

"I would just like to say that due to my advisers support, I have **been able to negotiate my hours and the most suitable place of work**. This has meant that I been able to **return to work**. The adviser has helped me throughout the process and continued to support me with this issue, throughout the lockdown."

Patient quote

80%
of GPs said that their
patients sickness absence
reduced after being given
advice by a SOHAS adviser

Andrea sent this email after a SOHAS adviser helped her to return to work after a period of sickness absence:

"Many thanks for writing my occupational health assessment up so **very quickly**, I feel you've **captured what I said very accurately** and I **really am very grateful** for that. I'd really like to thank you for your **kind manner** on the phone, my condition can be tricky to talk about sometimes but you **made me feel very much at ease**."

Occupational Health Assessment quote

Employers: We carry out non medical Occupational Health assessments that give you practical advice on how to return someone to work after sickness absence, ring us for more information.

How we are run

SOHAS is a charity, No. 1085464. The Board of Trustees are responsible for managing the business of the organisation, safeguarding the charity's assets and managing its funds.

The Board is made up of people who bring a range of experience and skills to help the organisation achieve its objectives. The Trustees, who are volunteers, are elected at the Annual General Meeting.

We would like to thank our staff, Trustees, GPs, stakeholders and funders who helped us to give work and health advice.

Contact details

SOHAS, 4th Floor Exchange Brewery, 2 Bridge Street, Sheffield, S3 8NS



0114 275 5760



sohas@sohas.co.uk

If you want to get online advice, go to our website www.sohas.co.uk and use the ask the expert form to tell us what sort of help you need.



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search 'SOHAS'**



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@SOHASHealth**

Funders

SOHAS received funding from the following organisations:

Sheffield
City Council



**COMMUNITY
FUND**

Sheffield IAPT
working together to improve your wellbeing