



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

# Sheffield Occupational Health Advisory Service

# Annual Report

# 2022/2023

## 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 help you 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. Over the last year, we have provided job retention services for people with mental and physical health issues as well as working carers and cancer patients.

**If you are worried about going back to work or struggling because of workplace ill health we can help you. Either contact your GP and ask to be referred to a SOHAS Adviser, contact us on our website using the "make a referral to an adviser" tab or ring us on 0114 2755760.**

**The world of work has changed with people making different choices about what work means to them. We have found that many businesses have failed to adapt to changes in work culture, resulting in more people developing diverse workplace health issues.**

We have listened to what people say they want from their employer and carried out research based on the issues they have raised and begun to support people in different and more effective ways. We have developed new partnerships with voluntary and health sectors and now take referrals from over 15 different organisations as well as GP's, who know the value of our work.

## What are the outcomes of our work?

- **We lower workplace stress**
- **We reduce visits to GP's**
- **We improve people's working conditions**
- **We reduce presenteeism, leaveism and sickness absence at work**
- **People who we give advice to pass on the information to their colleagues**
- **The advice we give leads to improved communication with their manager**
- **Our advice to people enables them to work more effectively**

### Case study

Alex\* works for a call centre and is suffering with menopause symptoms; she is struggling with hot flushes which make her feel faint and feel extremely uncomfortable and stressed with the temperature of the office. Alex had requested a reasonable adjustment so she could have a small fan on desk to help cool her down. This has been refused as she was told that it would affect the aesthetics of the office.

Alex contact a SOHAS adviser for advice on what she can do to make her feel more comfortable at work. The adviser told her that she had the right to ask for reasonable adjustments if her health was being impacted by the temperature of the office.

The adviser said that she could request a risk assessment and contact the organisation's HR department for advice and guidance. 2 weeks later, the adviser contacted Alex to see if the situation had changed.

Alex said that she had followed the adviser's advice and she had been given a desk fan and she felt much more comfortable in the office and that she could work normally. \* Not their real name.

## New Work

We have started work on a project in partnership with Heeley Trust that aims to support women on wellbeing and reproductive health issues. Our part of the project is to help and support people who believe that their work is having an impact on their wellbeing and reproductive health. The help and support covers a wide range of health issues including:

- Menopause
- Endometriosis
- Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)
- Infertility issues such as IVF

The project provides one to one advice sessions to provide help and support to keep people at work.

We are also able to offer help and support to SME's on how they can put in place health and support for their employees, implement relevant policies and gain skills that are related to wellbeing and reproductive health issues.

In the first year of the project we are concentrating on providing events and workshops on menopause, including demystifying menopause and preparing for the menopause.

## Blog Posts

We have been busy writing a number of blog posts including:

- Inflammatory Bowel Disease Wellness Action Plan. Developed with patients and clinicians, this is the first time a wellness action plan has been written to help patients return to work effectively.
- Statutory Sick Pay and why it's most likely driving Presenteeism in the UK. In this post, we explore how the low rate of statutory sick pay means that for some people that they will continue to come into work when they are unwell.
- ADHD and Workplace Adjustments. A practical guide for employers on how to support employees who have been diagnosed with ADHD.
- A New Wellness Action Plan. Wellness action plans have been in use since 2009. In this time the world of work has changed dramatically. We have developed a new version that allows employees to give more information on their mental health and employment to their employer to keep them in work.
- Technostress – How can we manage it's impact? AI, digitisation and automation is being increasingly used in employees job role. In this blog we explore the impact of poorly designed jobs that can make employees stress at work by new technology.
- Menopause Support Plan. This is an easy-to-use support plan that anyone can use to articulate what kind of support employees need to manage their health at work.

You can see all our blog posts at <https://sohasworkplacehealth.com>

“Our practice has referred patients to SOHAS for a long time. We have found that they provide a comprehensive service that gives our patients practical advice and support to stay in employment. We are seeing that patients are coming to the surgery with more complex workplace health needs and they tell us that the SOHAS adviser is knowledgeable and has a high level of expertise to meet their needs.”

*GP quote*

**If we use the CIPD figures for the cost of recruiting new employees, we will have saved businesses approximately**  
**£2,300,50,000**

**over the last year**

**81%**

of patients said that the advice they received reduce the number of visits to their GP

**“The inflammatory bowel disease wellness action plan that you devised will be revolutionary for patients”**

*Clinician quote*

“I wasn’t expecting a lot when I was referred to a SOHAS Adviser as I thought that my issues were too complex. How wrong I was! The adviser went above and beyond in their help and support they gave me.

The advice they gave me enabled me to talk to my employer with confidence with the knowledge that I could go back to them at any time. They enabled me to stay in employment.

*Patient quote*

**80%**

of GPs said that their patients’ sickness absence reduced after being given advice by SOHAS

The top 3 outcomes that patients say happens after being given advice by a SOHAS Adviser

- Enabled them to work more effectively
- Improved their health
- Improved their conditions at work

**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

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We've made it easier to contact us online go to [www.sohas.co.uk](http://www.sohas.co.uk) and use the "Make a referral to an adviser" tab to tell us what sort of help you need.

You can get advice from a SOHAS adviser on the telephone, by Teams or Zoom. Go to our website to check whether you have an advice present at your surgery.



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## Funders

SOHAS received funding from the following organisations:



Heeley  
Trust



COMMUNITY

FUND



Sheffield IAPT  
working together to improve your wellbeing