

Health Surveillance guidance

What is health surveillance?

Health surveillance is a scheme of repeated health checks which are used to look for the early signs of ill health which could be caused or made worse by work. Health and safety law requires health surveillance when there is a valid test to look for the indications of exposure, or early signs of a disease which could have a work-related cause. This is effectively a final check to ensure that control measures are effective. Health risks which require health surveillance include noise, vibration, and substances hazardous to health.

Health surveillance is also put in place where a specific risk exists to yourself or others if you were to be taken ill. For example, when working at heights or driving.

Health surveillance is a mandatory requirement and at Loughborough University, our contracts of employment state at paragraph 16. Health & Safety “You have a statutory duty to observe all health & safety rules, policies and procedures, attend appropriate training courses and take all reasonable care to promote health and safety at work of yourself and your fellow employees’. If your role requires you to participate in health surveillance, non-attendance will be explored to address and alleviate employee concerns. If an employee continues to avoid and not attend, this will be managed through the discipline policies.

How do I know if I need health surveillance?

There are multiple triggers for instigating health surveillance these include:

- At the point of starting your role – your manager will indicate the risks that you are likely to be exposed to and the health surveillance measures required. This information is passed to Occupational Health via the university HR and OH Systems.
- If a new risk assessment is undertaken due to a change in work process or substance/equipment used and the hazard is identified as being harmful to health.
- Following a health and safety survey or audit which may indicate that control measures are not adequate.
- Changes in legislation.

Whilst health surveillance is a mandatory requirement, if you feel that your job role does not pose the risks identified – please speak with your manager and ask them to update Occupational Health directly.

How often will health surveillance appointments take place?

Each type of health surveillance has a different requirement for recall. Specific information can be found here in the [Health Surveillance Policy](#)

What happens in a health surveillance appointment?

You will be asked to attend the Occupational Health department for a consultation and may need to complete a questionnaire prior to attending to provide some general information regarding your health. During the appointment a series of medical checks will be taken. Which ones are dependent on the type of surveillance required. However common tests include blood pressure, vision tests, hearing tests, mobility assessment, lung function tests and occasionally a blood or urine sample may be required.

Drivers' medicals are conducted when driving on campus is a significant and mandatory part of the employee's role. The DVLA provides guidance for assessing fitness to drive with health conditions and it is this document that we use as the guidance for determining a suitable/deferred or unfit outcome when driving as part of their role. In this instance colleague's health is assessed against the DVLA guidelines. The same ones that apply on the public roads.

There are standards in relation to eyesight and blood pressure as significant deterioration in either of these can significantly increase the probability of a road traffic accident. Colleagues who do not meet the DVLA standards will be advised to seek medical advice and prohibited from driving on campus until the issue is under control. More information regarding specific DVLA guidance can be found [here - DVLA guidance](#)

Health surveillance outcomes

Once the consultation is complete there are 3 possible outcomes: Suitable, deferred, or unsuitable.

Suitable – means that your manager is informed that you are fit for the role and that your health parameters fall within acceptable levels.

Deferred – this means that we need further information. It could be a repeat test in 3 months' time to check results, or a request to record blood pressure over 2 weeks to check accuracy of the reading or asking you to see your GP and seek treatment (for blocked waxy ears or high blood pressure for example).

Unfit – means that your health parameters fall outside what is expected and the risk that you are exposed to needs to be removed. An example of this might be removing you from a noisy environment or stopping you driving on campus until you have been able to seek appropriate treatment.

Your manager will be issued with a fit slip indicating fitness for that aspect of your role.

If an employee has a fit slip stating deferred or unfit, the medical will be repeated at a suitable interval (to allow the employee to seek treatment or in line with the DVLA guidance). For this period of time OH will advise the employee and line manager about the required restrictions and how long these need to remain in place.

Where an employee is required to see their GP or other medical specialist, the employee must update OH about the advice and/or any medication so that a further

check can be completed and a decision made about fitness to do all aspects of the role.

If after repeated checks the employee remains unfit and that task/risk is a significant part of the role, the manager will need to assess whether the role can be permanently adjusted to avoid the risk. If not, it may be appropriate to look at redeployment options available. While every effort will be made to explore redeployment options, there may be cases where there is not possible in which case the matter would be likely dealt with through the capability procedure where the employment would be brought to an end.

Health surveillance can lead to early detection of otherwise silent ill health conditions and allow for appropriate treatment and follow up on conditions which may otherwise be life limiting.

For further information about the storage and retention of Health Surveillance information is available here [Privacy notice - occupational health](#)