Standard operating procedure (SOP) for primary care support services

Standard operating procedure for occupational health clearance to join the medical, dental and ophthalmic performers list
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NHS England / David Geddes, Head of Primary Care Commissioning

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CCG Clinical Leads, Medical Directors, NHS England Regional Directors, NHS England Area Directors, All NHS England Employees

Standard operating procedure for occupational health clearance to join the medical, dental and ophthalmic performers list

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Standard operating procedure (SOP) for primary care support services

Standard operating procedure for occupational health clearance to join the medical, dental and ophthalmic performers list

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Quick Reference Flowchart Guide

Area Team (on behalf of responsible officer/medical director to provide applicant with performer list health questionnaire (PLHQ))

Applicant to complete section A-D and send to occupational health (OH) unit for clearance

OH Unit to undertake paper screen in line with job hazard identified form (Appendix A)

Applicant passes assessment & meets immunisation clearance?

OH unit contact applicant for clarification / advise immunisation screening requirements

OH unit to arrange with applicant to undertake any screening required / obtain from previous OH provider

Applicant passes assessment and meets immunisation

Indicate on declaration certificate that further assessment required with OH specialist

NHS England to arrange enhanced assessment

OH service to sign OH clearance declaration certificate
1 Introduction

Medical, dental and ophthalmic performers are required to be named on the relevant NHS England’s national performers lists as set out in the National Health Service (Performers Lists) (England) Regulations 2013. The performers lists framework provides NHS England with powers over inclusion, suspension and removal from its lists and responsibility for the movement of performers between area teams and the maintenance of the performers lists.

As part of the application process, general medical practitioners, general dental practitioners and ophthalmic medical practitioners must submit an ‘occupational health clearance declaration’ to join the national performers lists’ signed by an occupational health (OH) provider. It is the responsibility of the individual practitioner to secure this clearance. Optometrists are not required to submit a declaration to join the performers lists.

All OH assessments should be conducted by OH services, who have Safe Effective Quality Occupational Health Service (SEQOHS) accreditation or are working towards this. Details of NHS OH services can be found using the postcode locator: [http://www.nhshealthatwork.co.uk/find-providers.asp](http://www.nhshealthatwork.co.uk/find-providers.asp). If an OH provider cannot issue a clearance certificate on the basis of questionnaire screening, a further assessment by a consultant occupational physician should be carried out in a SEQOHS accredited NHS OH service arranged though NHS England.

The work health assessment will be undertaken taking into account the services that performers shall provide or could reasonably be expected to provide and the potential hazards of the role. This document sets out the expectations of the screening required for each applicant in compliance with the NHS employment check standards (NHS Employers July 2013), the Equality Act (October 2010), Health Clearance for tuberculosis, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV: new healthcare workers (Department of Health, 2007) and the Management of HIV infected Healthcare Workers who perform exposure prone procedures: updated guidance, (Public Health England, 2014). The OH provider will also ensure that screening procedures are carried out in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1988.
2 Purpose of screening

The purpose of the occupational health screening is to:

- ensure that the applicant is fit from a health point of view to undertake the services that they shall provide or could be reasonably expected to provide as a performer

- (for dental practitioners and medical practitioners only) to assess whether they are able to undertake exposure prone procedures and that they do not pose a risk to patients

3 Procedure

3.1 The area team will provide the medical, dental or ophthalmic medical practitioner applicant with a confidential performers list health questionnaire (PLHQ) and should inform the practitioner of the nearest OH unit that can provide the necessary screening.

3.2 The performer applicant will need to complete sections A-C of the PLHQ and submit this to the OH unit undertaking the clearance along with any documentary evidence of immunisation protection/blood tests.

3.3 The OH unit will commence by undertaking a paper based screen by an occupational health adviser, screening in accordance with the details of appendix 1, performers job hazard identification form. The questionnaire should be assessed to exclude evidence of any ongoing or chronic health issue, which could affect the fitness to perform the full range of duties in practice.

3.4 In addition to the clinical history declared on the PLHQ, the immunisation history of the performer will also be assessed as well as exposure prone procedures (EPP) clearance (if required).

3.5 Trainees who received OH screening at the start of their training and have been working under the supervision of a postgraduate dean without any break in service may seek their OH clearance certificate from the OH service who conducted their previous screening.

4 Immunisation requirements


4.1 Standard health clearance

Applicants must have had appropriate screening and received advice relating to protection against potential work related infections as below:
a) Tuberculosis
   • Mantoux screening and subsequent administration of BCG vaccination.

   OR

   • Documentary evidence of BCG scar check by OH professional

   Note - If the applicant is a new entrant to the UK from a country where there is a high incidence of TB, they will require IGRA (Quantiferon or T spot) and subsequent action in line with the NICE guidance 117 (March 2011).

b) Varicella
   • History of disease (if not originating from a tropical country)

   OR

   • A blood test can be taken to identify levels of immunity

   OR

   • For those who have no immunity two doses of vaccination

c) Measles, Mumps, Rubella
   • two doses of vaccination unless

   OR

   • Documentary evidence of immunity can be provided against rubella and measles

d) Hepatitis B
   • Three doses primary course

   • Post-immunisation blood test for seroconversion

   • Boosters for low level responders and appropriate recall

If the performer applicant has previously had immunisation assessments undertaken (e.g. in their training / placements / previous employer) then immunisation and blood test results can be obtained from their previous OH provider. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide this information. Re-vaccination or further blood testing is very unlikely if the results from the previous provider are transferred to the service undertaking this screening. Previous OH provider responding to the applicant’s request should ensure that identified validated sample (IVS) sample results or documentary evidence of vaccine administration is provided.
If immunisations are required, then these will be administered in accordance with the local OH procedure and the immunisation schedules will be given in accordance with the current Department of Health publication “Immunisation against Infectious Diseases Guidance” https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book. The costs of any blood tests and vaccinations will be borne either by the applicant or the employer – OH assessors should note that all three groups of practitioners on joining the performers lists are independent contractors and therefore not directly employed by NHS England.

4.2 Additional health clearance - exposure prone procedure screening required for general dental and general medical performers only

General dental practitioner applicants will need ‘additional health clearance’ to the standard required for performance of EPP because these form part of their everyday work.

General medical practitioner applicants also need ‘additional health clearance’ to the standard required for performance of EPPs, because they may perform these in the course of their duties.

All staff who are required to perform these procedures will either be required to provide IVS results or be tested in accordance with Department of Health guidelines.

- Hepatitis B surface antigen
- Hepatitis B surface antibody
- Hepatitis C antibody
- HIV 1 & 2 antigen/antibody

NB: The OH unit will be responsible for informing the area team if the EPP clearance is subject to any requirement for on-going monitoring (e.g. viral loads) to ensure the performer is able to continue in these procedures. Such situations will be rare and will require review by a specialist i.e. consultant occupational physician who will liaise, in confidence, with the medical director of the area team, having discussed the need to do this with the applicant.

4.3 Once all the necessary screening processes have been undertaken if there are no concerns regarding the performer’s health, the ‘occupational health clearance declaration to join the national performers lists’ can be signed. A copy of this declaration should be sent to the responsible officer/medical director for the area team and a copy also given to the applicant.
4.4 If an OH provider cannot issue an occupational health clearance declaration for an individual, then a further OH assessment by an NHS occupational health service needs to be arranged through the relevant area team. This assessment will be funded by NHS England.

4.5 There is no requirement for revalidation of this health clearance unless indicated on the occupational health clearance declaration (e.g. if EPP clearance needs revalidating).

5 Equality impact assessment

The OH services recognise the diversity of the local communities that they serve. The aim is to provide a safe environment free from discrimination and treat all individuals fairly with dignity and appropriately according to their needs. As part of its development, this standing operating procedure and its impact on equality have been reviewed and no detriment was identified.

6 References

- Framework for managing performer concerns
- Work Health assessments, NHS Employers, July 2013 http://www.nhsemployers.org/Aboutus/Publications/Pages/work-health-assessments.aspx
### Dental Practitioners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard</th>
<th>OH screening</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct patient contact</td>
<td>General immunisation - TB/VZV/MMR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential exposure to blood / body fluids</td>
<td>Hepatitis B protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure prone procedures</td>
<td>IVS sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hep B surface antigen</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hep B antibody</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hep C antibody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HIV antibody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent hand washing and wearing gloves</td>
<td>Skin assessment via PLHQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone Working/shift work/on call</td>
<td>Via general health condition/disability section on PLHQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bending/stooping/reaching</td>
<td>Musculoskeletal assessment via PLHQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine dexterity</td>
<td>Musculoskeletal assessment via PLHQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording information - paper/electronic records</td>
<td>Via general health condition/disability section on PLHQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High work demands</td>
<td>Psychological assessment via PLHQ</td>
</tr>
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### General Practitioners

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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td><em>They should be screened against these as they may perform these in the course of their duties</em></td>
<td>Hep B surface antigen</td>
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<td>Psychological assessment via PLHQ</td>
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<td>DSE work</td>
<td>Musculoskeletal assessment via PLHQ</td>
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**Ophthalmic Medical Practitioners**

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<td>General immunisation- TB/VZV/MMR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential exposure to blood / body fluids from</td>
<td>Tears - Hepatitis B protection may be offered (see information in section 3.5 (d) )</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential exposure prone procedures</td>
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<td>Frequent hand washing</td>
<td>Skin assessment via PLHQ</td>
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<td>Recording information - paper/electronic records</td>
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