

Ireland INMO OHN section

Occupational health is an integral part of the organisation both in the public and private sector. The foundation of what we do is to promote, maintain and facilitate a holistic integrated approach to employee health, safety, and wellbeing in the workplace.

Throughout the pandemic, occupational health nurses (OHN's) have played a critical key role in the protection of our employees. This has been achieved by educating, supporting, and providing independent and impartial advice to employers and employees.

We have achieved this by making informed decisions based on a Covid-19 risk assessment process and effective case management. Occupational health played a critical role in the development of policies and procedures and the implementation of controls for the prevention and mitigation of transmission of Covid 19 in the workplace.

Such as the reliance on occupational health services during the pandemic, it was essential for us to react rapidly and change the way we work, to the increased demand of our services with limited resources. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has had an adverse effect on the physical and psychological health and wellbeing of the employee population. OHN's have worked with their employees to assess individual vulnerability to serious illness or death from Covid-19, in relation to all known risk factors including age, sex, ethnicity, body mass index and underlying medical conditions.

With the support of the INMO, a national OHN WhatsApp group with now over 115 OHN's was established. This facilitates a support system enabling benchmarking, sharing of information in an ever-evolving fluid situation to OHN's where many work alone within an organisation.

With the emergence of a new way of remote and hybrid working, and as people return to the workplace, this brings new health and wellbeing challenges for organisations. Going forward occupational health will be a key stakeholder in facilitating, promoting and working with senior management to improve employee morale, ensure business continuity and create a positive brand image.

To achieve this, it requires governments and organisations investing in occupational health to positively influence the health and wellbeing of the working population as an integral part of the organisation through improving access to occupational health services, and consequently improve the prosperity of the nation.

Una Feeney – National Chairperson

Mary Forde – Secretary

Margaret Morrissey – INMO FOHNEU Representative