



Supporting occupational health
and wellbeing professionals



Careers for Occupational Health Technicians



What is an Occupational Health Technician?

Occupational health technicians (OHTs) are a key part of multidisciplinary occupational health teams and make a real difference to the health of workers. It is a rewarding and interesting career with excellent prospects, and there is a shortage of professionals in the field.

OHTs provide accurate written, electronic and verbal reports, observing confidentiality at all times. One of their core roles is health surveillance, but they may also carry out blood pressure monitoring, phlebotomy, and cholesterol and urine testing.

Being an OHT often involves **working on your own initiative** and undertaking site visits and considerable travel.

OHTs come from a **variety of backgrounds**. They may have worked as care workers or fitness instructors or been in the military or the emergency services.

They usually have **transferable skills**, such as communication skills, data analysis, measurement skills and record storage, and are able to work independently.

The 2023 Society of Occupational Medicine (SOM) survey shows 57% of OHTs earn **more than £25k** and 33% of Senior OHT salaries is in the £30–£35k range.

What kind of things does an OHT do?

OHTs should have appropriate training and competency assessment with qualified and competent supervisors who can provide sign-off and escalation. For example, an OH nurse or physician will remain accountable for interpreting results and determining fitness to work.

The Health and Safety Executive will aim to prosecute where individuals provide non-competent advice and work without qualified supervision. The SOM can provide OHT escalation criteria advice and a sample OHT job description.

Skill development may be based on customer need. Staff can learn the role via in-house training, short courses and university-based courses. For Drug and Alcohol Testing, for example, they can learn via shared content combined with nurse-supervised practice.

Future career pathways include:

- Wellbeing Advisor
- Senior OHT
- OHT Clinical Lead
- Contract Manager
- Health and Safety Officer
- Health and Wellbeing Officer / Manager
- Clinical skills development, e.g. through occupational hygiene, musculoskeletal, or ergonomics

The SOM has worked with the OH industry to develop an Open Awards qualification which covers the different aspects of OHT training. The competency standards (see next page) are based on these criteria.

Malpractice insurance can be provided to employers, and the SOM can also provide individual OHT insurance (via James Hallam).



OHT competency standards

OHTs should be trained and assessed as competent in:

Level 1

- Audiometry
- Skin assessment
- Lung function testing, including peak flow and spirometry
- Hand-arm vibration syndrome assessment to Levels 1 and 2
- Measuring blood pressure, pulse, height, and weight including BMI
- Urinalysis
- Drug and alcohol testing
- Infection control
- Occupational health hazards and risk management

OHTs should also be able to:

- Interpret new starter questionnaires
- Measure visual acuity to an occupational standard
- Measure colour vision to an occupational standard
- Assess mobility
- Keep records
- Use communication skills
- Use IT skills
- Use health and safety legislation
- Include concepts of health promotion and prevention of ill health
- Order stock
- Check and maintain screening equipment
- Understand the principles of quality and the organisation's SEQOHS/QMS requirements
- Understand the safeguarding arrangements and how and when to raise concerns
- Understand the limits and responsibilities of the role

Level 2

- Venepuncture
- ECG
- Food handler questionnaires
- Chester Step Test
- Vaccinations (subject to two-day course)

Level 3

- Display screen equipment (DSE) assessment
- Supervision
- Risk management

"After studying midwifery at university, I started working for HomeServe as a Health & Safety Support Officer. I did a couple of courses with the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) and became a Workplace Health Trainer offering 'Know Your Numbers' health checks to all our UK employees. The role then expanded, and I began to offer more than just health checks and trained with the NHS as a Stop Smoking Advisor.

"In 2017, HomeServe brought their Occupational Health & Wellbeing Service in-house, and I took on the role of an OH technician, following completion of my audiometry and spirometry exams. A few external courses later, I became an Occupational Health & Wellbeing Officer and I'm now training to be a Therapeutic Counsellor."

– Sally Beardsmore, Occupational Health Technician, Homeserve



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Charity Commission No: 1184142
Scottish Charity No: SC049793
VAT No: 927 0030 57