

## **Musculoskeletal Injury Rehabilitation Service**

### **It's a pain in the workplace**

Approximately 20% of working days are lost as a result of Norfolk County Council employees sustaining musculoskeletal injuries. Whether it's a "bad back", a pulled muscle, or a twisted knee, the injury can have a profound effect on an individual's work and everyday life.

Sometimes the injury will clear up with rest and the use of pain relief tablets. However, an injury will often benefit from treatment by a physiotherapist, osteopath or chiropractor. Anyone who has ever tried to access such treatment through their GP will be aware that there is often a long waiting list to see an NHS physiotherapist and the majority of GP's do not offer osteopathy or chiropractic treatment on the NHS. By the time the appointment comes around, the injury has either got better by itself or become 'chronic', meaning it will always have an effect on an individual's daily life.

### **Helping employees and employers**

To try to help employees, and deal more effectively with musculoskeletal sickness absences, Norfolk County Council has set-up a contract with a company called IPRS to provide a musculoskeletal injury rehabilitation service. IPRS employs medical professionals with expertise in musculoskeletal injuries and conditions, including physiotherapists, osteopaths, chiropractors and podiatrists.

This service is being offered to schools in association with the Sickness Insurance Scheme and is free for staff that are covered by the Sickness Insurance Scheme. Schools whose staff are not covered by the sickness insurance scheme can access this service for a one-off annual fee. Further details are available from your school's Personnel Consultant or Personnel Officer

Musculoskeletal injuries / conditions are those which effect bones, muscles, ligaments, tendons, etc. They include:

- Tennis elbow
- Lower back pain
- Dislocations
- Ligament damage
- Slipped disc
- Whiplash injuries

The service will provide fast-track treatment for employees who have suffered a musculoskeletal injury that has been caused by work, is made worse by work, or that prevents them from doing their work.

For the employee the service is fast, effective and delivered locally. For the organisation the service is financially self-supporting. A pilot performed over 3 months in 2003 indicated a return of £2.37 for every £1 spent on treatment.

### **How it works**

Norfolk Schools who wish to use the service should contact their school's Personnel Consultant or Personnel Officer who will make the referral to IPRS.

Once a referral has been made, the employee will receive a telephone call within 24 hours (excluding weekends and bank holidays) from a physiotherapist who will ask the employee a number of questions to determine whether the service can help.

If the service is appropriate, the majority of cases will be given an appointment with a physiotherapist, osteopath or chiropractor within 3 working days.

At the first appointment a thorough assessment will be made to establish the cause of the injury, give a clear diagnosis, and specify how many treatments (maximum of 4) will be required.

### **Practical Advice**

Because the employer is paying for the service, reports are sent to the referrer following the first appointment and when treatment has been completed. The reports are not full of complicated medical terminology, but will provide clear advice to the employee and manager as to the effect of the injury on work, what can be done regarding returning to their normal duties, and when the injury should resolve.

### **Who to contact**

Please contact your school's Personnel Consultant or Personnel Officer if you wish to make a referral. If you want further information about the service go to [www.iprs.uk.com/referrals/ncc](http://www.iprs.uk.com/referrals/ncc) or contact your School's Personnel Consultant.