



Life as an occupational physician

One of a series of profiles of doctors working in occupational medicine



Dr Olivia Carlton

I head up the occupational health team and am Chief Medical Adviser for Transport for London.

Members of the multidisciplinary occupational health team work together to, for example, assess whether London Underground staff are fit for safety critical work, provide early interventions such as physiotherapy and counselling to achieve early recovery after illness and injury and support those who have asked for help with alcohol addiction. We also find enjoyable ways of educating employees about their general health-related behaviours and how to improve them. In order to do our job properly, we all need to understand the working conditions of employees, which means that we are privileged to visit the workplace and see behind the scenes in all sorts of fascinating places.

My job includes influencing the development of company policies which have a health impact. I present information about employee health to several board committees. I am also asked to advise on issues relating to the health of the travelling public; tunnel dust is a favourite topic and I was able to commission some world class research which has shown that it is highly unlikely to be harmful to health.

Although London Underground has the highest profile, we also provide services to all the other parts of Transport for London, which include the management of all London bus stops and garages, the river boats and the senior management who include the brains behind such schemes as congestion charging and the new bike scheme.

*It's a fantastic job; I work with fabulous people to support one of the vital functions of London – moving people around.
What could be better?*