

# Hanging on the Telephone?

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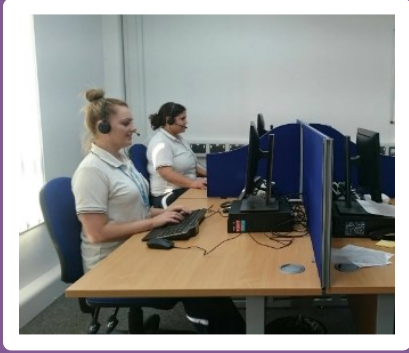
# Background

- From Alexander Bell to Social Media
- Telephone remains a controversial medium (T Males 2007)
- Subject to the same fundamental clinical assessment principles (Ferguson 2008)
- Varying functions
- Skills and Training remain central to telephonic assessments

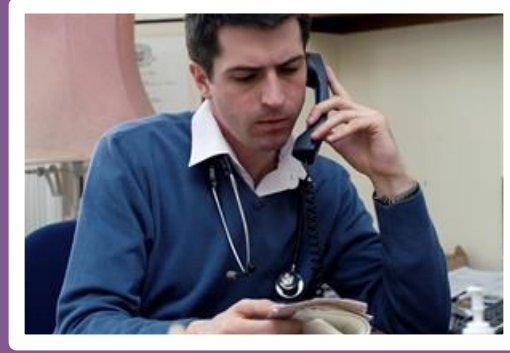


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# Success with Telephone Assessments



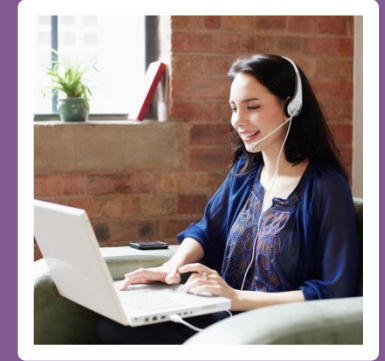
Physiotherapy  
call centres



GP Services



Emergency 111  
Services



Occupational  
Health

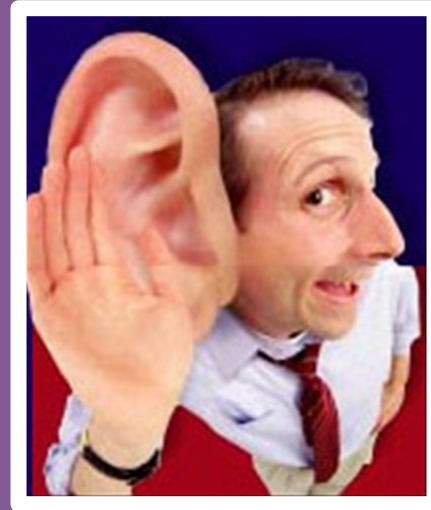


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# Using your senses...



Does removing your sight impair your ability to make a sound clinical judgement?



Or are your other senses heightened?



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Patient perception  
vs. reality of  
function

Use of evidence based  
tools (PHQ9 / GAD7)

# Assessment Skills

Functional  
assessment (in  
relation to everyday  
activities

Evidence based  
recovery guidelines

Open / Closed  
questioning



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# Commercial/Company Expectations

## Advantages

More cost effective

Builds OH practitioner's communication and questioning skills

Consistent standard of assessment

Faster turnaround of delivering reports

Higher 'attendance' rate

## Disadvantages

Communication difficulties

Cannot carry out a visual assessment / physical examination of client



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# Practitioner Reactions

## Advantages

Greater convenience /  
flexibility

Ease of administration side  
of the role

## Disadvantages

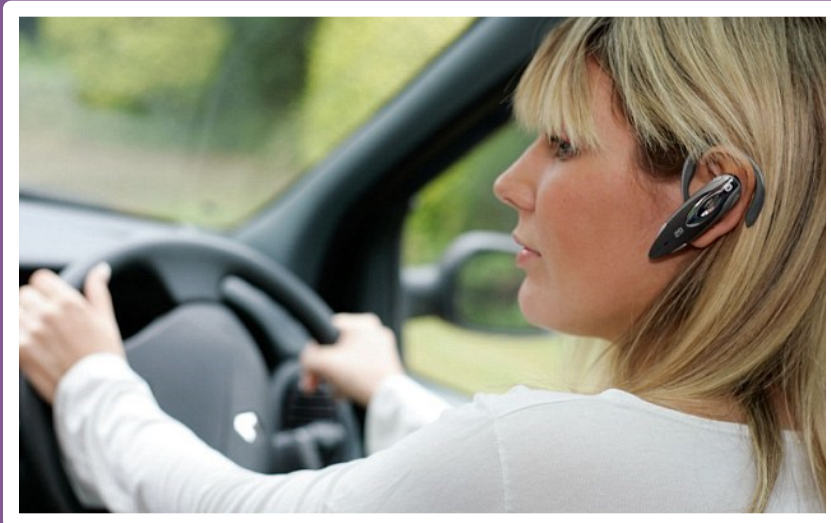
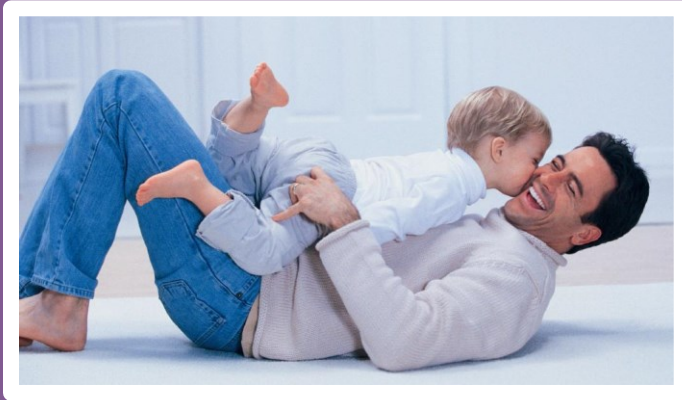
Lonely / Isolating

Concerns over how to extract  
enough information to make a  
decision



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# Successful Telephone Assessments



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# The Educational Preparation of OHN's

# Standards & Guidance for Course Content

**NMC (2004)**

**MUST** comply with Standards of proficiency for Specialist Community Public Health Nurses

**Public Health England (2016)**

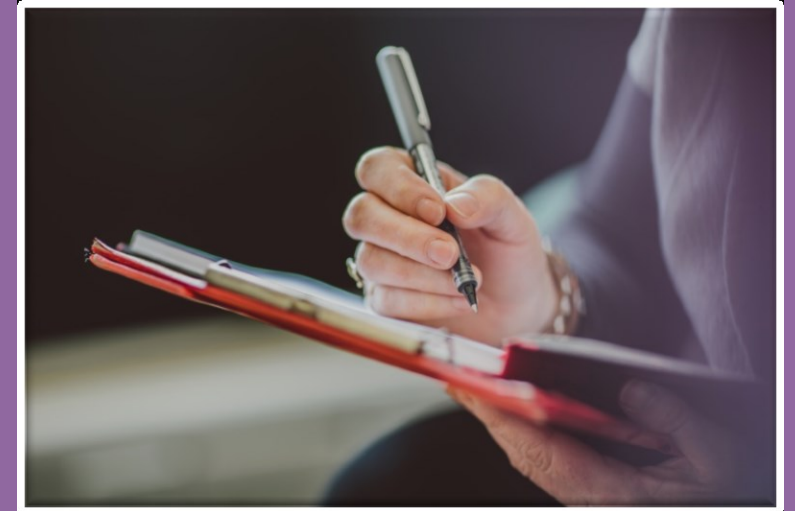
**GOOD PRACTICE** to comply with educating Occupational Health Nurses

# Standards

Standards of proficiency for Specialist  
Community Public Health Nursing (NMC, 2004)

- Preparation: fitness for practice
- Service: fitness for purpose
- Recognition: fitness for award
- Responsibility: fitness for professional standing

The NMC standards for course inclusion are broad, resulting in significant differences in course content across HEIs



**NMC** Nursing &  
Midwifery  
Council

# Public Health England Document

**Guidance only**

Stamp of approval by  
RCN, AOHN, FOHN

Case management is included within this document – not specific as to how this is undertaken. Telephonic consultation not explicit.

Developed by very experienced OH nurses including educators

# Preparing Students LSBU

Case management module – includes:

- Attendance management
- Taking an (OH) health history
- The principles of both telephonic and face-to-face health assessment

Developed teaching and learning activities on telephonic assessment

Contemporary Issues – includes professional and ethical considerations relating to OH interventions

Practice component – currently 119 days in practice – students are encouraged to observe telephonic assessments within this element

# Programmes Preparing OHN's

## **MUST incorporate:**

NMC Standards for Specialist Community Public Health Nursing

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards/nmc-standards-of-proficiency-for-specialist-community-public-health-nurses.pdf>

## **SHOULD incorporate:**

Public Health England document Educating Occupational Health Nurses:

<https://vivbennett.blog.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/90/2016/11/Educating-OHNs-final-Oct-2016-FinalNB071116-1.pdf>

Approaches to health assessment are implied but not specified. Telephonic assessments are an increasingly common development in practice.



Many nurses move into OH from NHS Direct

Awareness of the research findings - “distractibility” - need to mitigate against this

Overlap of skills: for face to face/telephonic consultations

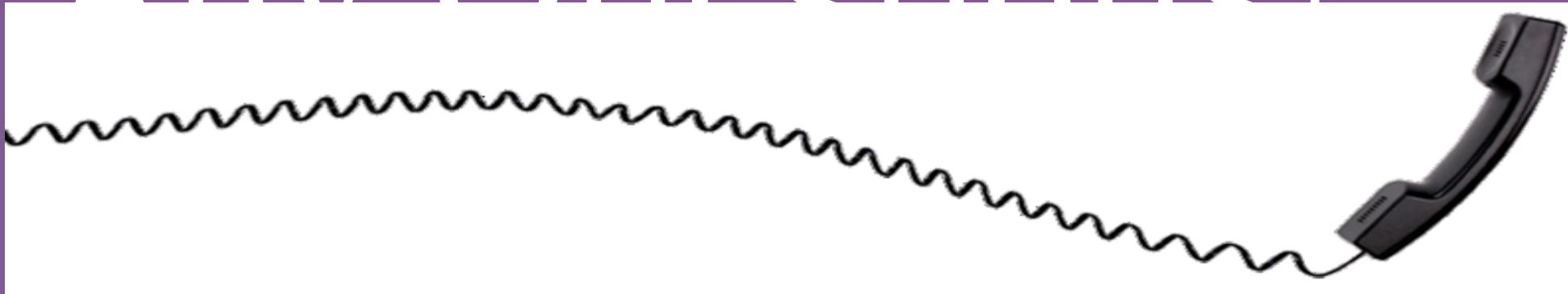
- Sound clinical knowledge
- Excellent communication skills: finely honed skills of questioning and listening
- Being able to “read between the lines”
- Accurate documentation

## Developing the Skill Set

Algorithms and guidelines

Cognisance of flags for both physical mental health

# Any Questions?



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