



Annual General Meeting

7 May 2013

Chair's report, Council for Work and Health 2012/2013

1. The Council has achieved greater recognition during the year, and is now regarded as a significant organisation in the occupational health world.

The Chair was consulted by the Department of Health about its long-term conditions strategy, and attended a two day conference in London, which was mainly about care. When she raised the issue of work a further meeting was arranged at which the Council was represented by Andrew Frank.

The Chair gave a presentation about the Council to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Health and Safety in November 2012.

She was involved with consultations at the Department for Work and Pensions concerning revised guidance about the GP fit note.

She attended a meeting of POOSH and shared with them information about Council projects and matters of common interest.

The Council was involved in negotiations between the Faculty of Occupational Medicine and the Society of Occupational Medicine about creating a common voice and was represented by Christina Butterworth in those discussions.

2. The Council met on three occasions, 3 May 2012, 25 September 2012, and 6 February 2013.

Professor Diana Kloss was in the Chair on all three occasions, and Ms Anna McNeil acted as Secretary.

3. Changes in representation

The Council was delighted to welcome Clare McLaughlin as representative of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy.

Dr Andrew Frank stood down as representative of the Vocational Rehabilitation Association, and indicated that his place would be taken by Chris Parker, Chair of the Professional Development Committee of the VRA.



Nattasha Freeman returned to the Council as IOSH representative, taking over from Richard Jones.

Dr Mike Goldsmith was nominated by COHPA as a representative.

The TUC and the CBI were invited to send representatives, and the TUC indicated that Hugh Robertson would attend as TUC representative. No reply has yet been received from the CBI.

4. The Council heard presentations from the following invited outside speakers: Jeremy Greaves, Marketing Manager, Health for Work Advice Line, and Sir Graeme Catto, President, College of Medicine.
5. A sub-committee set up under the chairmanship of Christina Butterworth prepared a business plan.
6. The Council was created as a company limited by guarantee, under an agreed Constitution. The company will be administered by a Board of Directors elected by members of the Council, chaired by an independent Chair appointed by the directors.
7. In elections in March 2013 the following were elected:
Christina Butterworth, AOHP, Deputy Chair,
Olivia Carlton, FOM
Hilary Todd, SOM,

directors (for a period of three years), and

Natalie Beswetherick, CSP,
Nattasha Freeman, IOSH,
directors (for a period of two years).

8. Diana Kloss was appointed Chair for a period of three years.
9. Council projects
 - (a) Guidance for employers on communication with general practitioners. The Council created letters to be sent to the GP by the employer, and liaised with Dr Rob Hampton of the Leicestershire Fitness for Work Service, who set up a research project with financial input from IOSH. The Government's announcement of the creation of an independent assessment and advisory service, taking over the assessment of fitness for work from GPs after 4 weeks' sickness absence, obviously had an important impact on this work.
 - (b) Helen Kirk, as lead of a Council sub-committee, did research on training and qualifications of occupational health nurses which was published in Occupational Medicine September 2012. Serious shortcomings have been identified in the present



Nursing and Midwifery Council arrangements which do not appropriately distinguish the skills that employers require.

- (c) A sub-group of the Council developed a report on the need for approved training and qualifications for members of Allied Health Professions who specialise in rehabilitation in the workplace.
- (d) The Council responded to Government initiatives to establish an independent assessment and advisory service, and welcomed tax breaks for employers providing rehabilitation.
- (e) A sub-committee under the chairmanship of Olivia Carlton was set up to consider the development of a College or Academy of Occupational Health.
- (f) A working group was set up under the chairmanship of Dr John Harrison, initially funded by NHS Plus, to scope and develop a plan and strategy for the UK occupational health workforce for the next decade. The first report was presented to the Council on 7 May 2013.

10. Finance

The Council is grateful to COHPA, IOSH and NHS Plus for financial support, and also to member organisations which provide premises and refreshments for meetings.

Funds are currently held by the Faculty of Occupational Medicine, but it will be necessary to appoint an independent accountant.

- 11. The Chair wishes to express her thanks in particular to Anna McNeil for her efficient support of the work of the Council, and to Christina Butterworth who has borne the brunt of the work needed to create a business plan and to establish the Council as a corporate body.