



Annual General Meeting

14 May 2014

Chair's Report, Council for Work and Health 2013/2014

1. The Council met on three occasions, 7 May 2013, 24 September 2013 and 5 February 2014. Professor Diana Kloss was in the chair on all three occasions.
2. This was the first year of operations as a company limited by guarantee with an elected Board of Directors, and I am pleased to report that we worked well together as a Board. Christina Butterworth, the Deputy Chair, took the lead on the Council business plan, and the other directors assumed responsibility for various other activities. Anna McNeil, whose hours were increased, assumed the role of Company Secretary, which she performed very efficiently. An accountant was appointed to prepare and submit the company's accounts, as required by law.
3. The Council continued to gain recognition and respect in the occupational health world, and with government and other official bodies. The Chair and members of the Council were consulted by the Department for Work and Pensions at a number of meetings about the creation of a Health and Work Service staffed by qualified OH professionals to provide advice and assessments to employees, employers and general practitioners. We were also consulted about up-dated advice relating to the GP fit note. Dr Bill Gunnyeon, Chief Medical Officer, DWP, gave a presentation about the proposed Health and Work Service at the September meeting.
4. The Chair represented the Council at a number of meetings and seminars. She spoke about the Council at the NHS Network conference in Nottingham in September 2013 and took part in a seminar organised by NHS Employers in May 2014 about the health and wellbeing of NHS employees. She also participated in the review of SEQOHS, the scheme for accrediting OH providers. She is a member of a NICE Public Health committee preparing recommendations for the involvement of line managers in protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of employees at work.
5. Significant developments during the year were the ongoing discussions between the Faculty of Occupational Medicine and the Society of Occupational Medicine about the creation of a single organisation to represent all OH practitioners. Christina Butterworth, deputy Chair, and Olivia Carlton and Hilary Todd, directors, are members of the Working Group for this project. It is envisaged that a single organisation might provide the foundation for a multi-disciplinary College of Occupational Health. Voting is planned to take place in the summer of 2014. Dr Richard Heron, President-Elect, Faculty of Occupational Medicine, gave a presentation on the topic at the September meeting.



6. Members of the Council continued to be active in a number of fields. The most wide-ranging project this year has been the Working Group chaired by Professor John Harrison to scope and develop a plan and strategy for the UK occupational health workforce for the next decade. The first report from the group is available on the Council's website. Leonie Dawson has been appointed a research Fellow to the project, funded by Health Education England. A national school of Occupational Medicine has been created, headed by John Harrison, and for the future may be the basis for developing multi-disciplinary training in occupational health. A conference is being held by the National School in October 2014. The Chair is planning a seminar for those involved in occupational health education to be held in Manchester in January 2015.
7. I wish to emphasise one of the great strengths of the Council, which is that it brings together those involved primarily in the prevention of work-related ill-health and also those involved in assessment and treatment. Roger Alesbury from the British Occupational Hygiene Society gave an informative presentation at the September meeting, and we have benefited from input, both personal and financial, from IOSH. Nattasha Freeman from IOSH is one of the elected directors. My view is that prevention must continue to go hand in hand with occupational health provision.
8. The Council has an important role in the dissemination of information. We have benefited from a number of presentations during the year, including, in addition to those already mentioned, an account of SEQOHS by Dr Sally Coomber and Dr Anne de Bono telling us of recent developments in the NHS OH Network.
9. One problem that has not yet found a satisfactory solution is finance. Although we have received generous contributions from some members, and outside funding for projects, we need a regular source of income for core costs, including the Secretariat, the website, an accountant, and Chair's expenses. Some organisations have been helpful in providing a venue and refreshments for meetings and we are most grateful for that. Some organisations are wealthier than others. This item has been placed on the Agenda for the May meeting. If the Council is to survive it is necessary to secure basic funding, and we hope that member organisations will look favourably at our request to commit a regular amount.
10. Finally, I am grateful to those who have supported me throughout the year, especially Anna McNeil, and fellow directors. I look forward to another year of growth and exciting new initiatives.

Professor Diana Kloss
Chair

