



## **Briefing from Council meeting held on 23 September 2014**

The meeting was chaired by Diana Kloss and the following items discussed:

### **Presentation on the human-centred approach to an organisation**

Tom Stewart stated that he, together with Tomas Berns (Joint Project Editor), was working on the creation of a new international standard for the principles which should be adopted for an organisation to be human-centred, and informed the Council that the British Standards Institution (BSI) Applied Ergonomics Committee was leading this international project.

It was noted that human-centred design was the best way to develop products, systems and services. The process starts with research to ascertain clear and explicit understanding of the requirements of the different users. The next stage is to create design solutions, evaluate them, and then iron out the bugs to ensure acceptance by the prospective users. Following the success of this standard, work was now underway to apply the human-centred approach to the whole organisation, not just the design process.

The general principles of the new work item ISO NWI 27500 – human-centred organisation are:

- To turn individual differences into organisational strength
- Make usability and accessibility strategic business objectives
- Adopt a systems approach
- Ensure that health, safety and wellbeing are business priorities
- Value employees and create a meaningful work environment
- Openness
- Social responsibility

The important first step is that an organisation acknowledges that people differ in their abilities and needs and that organisations use ergonomic data on the nature and extent of these differences, and recognise them as a strength rather than a problem, taking this into account in all areas of its business.

TS added that it is crucial that an organisation recognises that people are part of the wider system, which may include many other elements including equipment, workspace, and the physical, social and organisational environment in which they work and live. It is also important for an organisation to take the necessary steps to protect individuals (both inside and outside the organisation) from health, safety and wellbeing risks. Adopting the human-centred approach to workplace health goes beyond the minimum required by legislation.

Organisations are also encouraged to acknowledge the contributions made by employees, both with financial rewards and through other forms of recognition. This would help to ensure that employees at all levels share the vision of the organisation and feel encouraged to contribute at a level appropriate to the individual and the team.

Social responsibility is also a key part of the human-centred approach to an organisation. The organisation should behave ethically and instil pride and confidence in its employees, customers and the local community; this would be achieved by following the seven principles in ISO 26000 – Social Responsibility.

The next steps for ISO 27500 will be a formal vote on the committee draft document (scheduled for October 2014), followed by a draft to be circulated for public comment in mid-2015.

The Chair thanked TS for a very informative presentation.



### **Update on the FOM / SOM negotiations**

It was noted that members of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine and the Society of Occupational Medicine had been asked to vote on whether both organisations should cease to exist and each should transfer its assets to a new organisation. Constitutional requirements of the FOM were that more than 51% of members had to vote in favour (59% voted in favour of the single organisation, which was a turnout of 58% of the membership). The SOM's constitutional requirements were that two-thirds of the vote had to be in favour of the single organisation, therefore a vote of 67% was required. A total of 60.7% voted in favour, on a turnout of 58.2% of the membership, but this was insufficient for the measure to pass.

Based on the above figures, a single organisation would not come into being at this time.. However, it was noted that there was evidence that there was a substantial majority in favour of change. Currently both organisations were reflecting on how to move forward.

### **Council membership:**

The Chair informed the Council that Public Health England (PHE) had been invited to become a member of the Council for Work and Health and to nominate a representative. PHE had nominated Justin Varney.

### **Council strategy and business plan**

The business plan had been circulated and would now be uploaded to the website. The business plan would be updated to reflect the changes in the way DWP deal with work and health issues.

### **Financial report**

A financial report (to 15.09.2014) had been circulated and it was noted that at that date there was £7,111.73 in general funds and £17,707.04 in restricted funds.

### **Request for regular financial contributions for organisations represented on the Council**

It was noted that a letter was being prepared for circulation to the members of the Council to request a three-year commitment to funding the Council's core activities.

### **Update on Council projects**

#### **Occupational Health Workforce Planning Group**

The Council were informed that software was being used to poll users and were encouraged to participate as soon as possible.

Council members were asked to submit responses to the following question:

- a. Since the forecast of the future workforce is dependent on knowledge of current numbers and the current estimated shortfall in relation to demographics, could they notify the working group of statistics of membership of their professions, and an educated estimate of actual numbers required to meet current need.



- b. The working group, on receipt of all these figures, will then undertake the calculations to forecast numbers required to support the estimated future workforce..

### **Educational Meeting / Workshop**

The Chair informed the Council that Professor Raymond Agius, University of Manchester, had formed a group together with researchers from Durham University and University College London to set up a UK research network on 'work, health and well-being'. An interdisciplinary meeting, funded by PHE, was scheduled to take place on Monday 10 November 2014 in Manchester. The aim of the workshop was to bring together academics to discuss how they dealt with some of the barriers in their research on the topics of workplace health, the health of the working population and the health of the unemployed. Information regarding attendance at the workshop had been circulated to the Council members.

The Chair informed the Council that she was in communication with Professor John Harrison regarding holding a meeting on teaching in occupational health. It was hoped that the meeting could take place under the auspices of the National School of Occupational Health, one aim being to discuss a core curriculum. The meeting was scheduled to take place in early Spring 2015.. The Council had received an anonymous donation of £1000 towards the cost of the meeting. Further details would be circulated in due course.

### **Communications update**

Nattasha Freeman reported that the Board had met in August 2014 and were revising the vision / mission statements. The revised statements would be presented to the next Council meeting. It was noted that the business plan was the vehicle by which Council members were able to see what the Council was doing. The Board had agreed to reconsider the structure of the business plan and also to review the strategy. It was agreed that both the revised business plan and strategy would be presented to the next Council meeting.

NF also reported that the Council for Work and Health had been approached about possibly running a stream at the forthcoming Birmingham Health and Work Conference 2015 and this would be an ideal opportunity for the Council to raise its profile.

### **Website**

The website statistics were noted as follows: from 1 May to 5 August 2014 there were 3102 hits on the Council's website.

### **SEQOHS Pilot and update**

Mark Armour reported that the assessments of five out of the six pilot sites were scheduled to be completed by the end of September 2014. The assessors had commenced recommending examples of good practice in preparation for the FOM Board's decision on enabling physiotherapy-led OH services to register with the scheme. A report on the outcome of the pilots will be submitted to the FOM Board in October 2014 to assist in their consideration of the revised SEQOHS standards.

The Council were informed that the SEQOHS Board had recently met and had extended SEQOHS membership to physiotherapists. It was hoped that the standards could be extended to other allied health professionals in due course. It was noted that the standards would be published when the FOM board had approved them. It was also noted that there would be a FOM review of the standards at a later stage and any omissions would be considered at that time.



**IOSH Occupational skin cancers**

The Council members were informed that IOSH were launching their occupational skin cancer campaign in November 2014 and members were asked to endorse the project.

**The next meeting of the Council will take place on Wednesday 4 February 2015**