



Briefing from Council meeting held on 8 October 2015

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

Presentation by John Pilkington, Chair VRA Getting back to work: the role of vocational rehabilitation

John Pilkington (JP) reminded the Council of the work carried out by Dame Carol Black in highlighting the importance of work. Namely that work gives identity and purpose, status and financial benefit, provides structure and social contact and is a key health outcome. The principles of vocational rehabilitation (VR) are to keep people in work and to work with multi-disciplinary teams to facilitate return to work. Early intervention with the patient being central to the process is crucial.

The differences between occupational health (OH) and VR were considered and the following definitions noted: VR practitioners get people fit for work, OH professionals support them in work, but frequently both provide services in both areas.

Case management plays a pivotal role in the VR process and case managers come from many different backgrounds. Case management is a collaborative process using communication and available resources to promote quality, cost-effective and safe outcomes.

Early specialist rehabilitation was highlighted and it was stressed that it must be:

- Patient-centred
- Clinician-led
- Co-ordinated multi-disciplinary approach
- Evidence based (reference was made to the Gatchell & Mayer study in 2014 that highlighted a cost saving of \$170,000 between 'early' and 'delayed' rehabilitation.)

In conclusion it was noted that both OH and VR have unique skills, however there is growing evidence of a merging of OH and VR skills. In the field of job retention, both groups share many attributes. As OH expands, in light of the Dame Carol Black review, it is likely that OH departments will further enhance their teams with rehabilitation professionals.

The Chair thanked JP for his very informative presentation.

IOSH – Nattasha Freeman - No time to lose cancer campaign

At a previous meeting Nattasha Freeman (NF) had presented information on the IOSH – Return to Work Campaign, which she had spearheaded during her year as IOSH President. It was reported that IOSH have produced several free publications and toolkits that focussed on health and the workplace. (Available on the IOSH website).

NF's presentation focussed on the IOSH 'No time to lose' cancer campaign. It was noted that the HSE were also running a similar campaign. NF stressed that the key point to note was the message about risks that IOSH were sending out to inform employers, employees and health and safety practitioners. By informing the latter there was more chance of achieving an early diagnosis.

DK thanked NF for a very informative update on IOSH campaigns.



Request from EAPA to join the Council for Work and Health

A letter had been received from Andrew Kinder, Chair EAPA, asking to join the Council for Work and Health. The Council members were unanimous that EAPA should be invited to join the Council.

Council strategy and business plan

A revised strategy and business plan had been circulated. The history section had been refreshed and in the 'who we are' section the Chair asked all members to provide a brief paragraph, or to review what was currently on the website.

Communications update

It was noted that the FOM and SOM were currently recruiting a communications adviser / manager and it may be possible that the person appointed could give an hour or two a week to help with the Council's communications.

Health and Work Conference, March 2016, Birmingham

It was reported that Sterling Events (who were organising the Birmingham Conference) were keen to promote the Council for Work and Health at the conference and had offered to put the Council's logo on promotional material. A series of lectures would be given by Council members and it was noted that the Council would be well represented.

Website

The website statistics (hits) were noted as follows:

May 2015 - 705, June 2015 - 567, July 2015 - 478, August 2015 - 421, September 2015 - 453.

Website blogs

It was suggested that a section for guest blogs be created on the website, on topical subjects with a maximum of 500 words. A draft blog had been circulated to the Council, titled "Why do people not do more to protect their own health?"

2016 Elections and appointment of a new Chair

It was noted that there would be two Director positions and one Deputy Chair position to be elected in 2016.

Appointment of new Chair in 2016

The appointment of a Chair for the Council after Diana Kloss's retirement, having led the Council for six years, was discussed. The new Chair would be appointed by the Board, after the elections due to take place prior to the next AGM.

The next meeting of the Council will take place on 3 February 2016.