

Chair Elect Council for Work and Health

After recently passing the milestone of entering my thirtieth year working in occupational health, I am becoming choosy about using the adjective “excited”. But I confess I am genuinely excited and perhaps also a little nervous at becoming Chair Elect, due to succeed Diana Kloss as Chair of the Council for Work and Health early next year. I feel honoured to be taking on this position and as I learn more about the Council in the run up to Diana’s handover, I can see the enormous value of such an organisation.

The Council seeks to make good health and good work a priority in policy and practice in the UK, and is unique in bringing together the strength of multidisciplinary stakeholders and organisations with huge breadth of expertise and experience in managing working age population health.

The original reason for establishing the Council came from the challenge in Dame Carol Black’s work, identifying the need for “forward thinking professional leadership” to improve joint working between the many actors, exploring opportunity to coordinate training and competency and to develop evidence based guidelines.

Occupational health is often mistakenly narrowed to a medical clinical speciality. After many years of working with diverse specialists from the many other professional backgrounds, I recognise that no single group holds the magic bullets and under Diana’s expert independent leadership the Council has grown to represent and include the clinical and non-clinical stakeholders that are so vital to influence and inform strategy and approaches to contribute effectively to working age health improvement.

As I have worked with policy makers over the last decade or so, I have often felt sympathy for the confusing sea of “voices” that haven’t always aligned to make it easy to understand priorities for the future of occupational health and the Council provides a vital opportunity to coordinate joint working and avoid conflicting messages at such an important time.

I have written before about the unprecedented emerging awareness of the value occupational health can contribute to the economy, to business and to individuals and with the imminent release of a “roadmap” response to last year’s major consultation exercise, we have great opportunity to contribute to positive improvements to many of the systematic areas which reduce the potential for true health promoting workplaces.

I am really excited to be looking forward to working with respected expert colleagues at this time and will do my best to continue the work Diana and her fellow Directors have established.

Dr Steven Boorman CBE

Director Employee Health