

Chair's Report, Council for Work and Health 2016/2017

1. The Council met on three occasions. The Board of Directors met on four occasions in advance of those meetings. Professor Diana Kloss was in the chair on all occasions.
2. The Board of Directors elected in 2015 and 2016 worked well together. Diana Kloss continued in the Chair for the time being but was greatly assisted by Tom Stewart, the Deputy Chair, and the other directors. Anna McNeil continued as Company Secretary. During the year the political situation in the United Kingdom was in turmoil after the vote to leave the European Union. This inevitably had an effect on government activities in the field of health and wellbeing at work, though the duties of the employer to protect the workforce came to the forefront of public concern. Particular emphasis was placed on mental health. A Green Paper on halving the disability employment gap was published in the autumn of 2016 and the Chair and directors were asked to speak at a number of events. Robin Cordell co-ordinated the Council's reply to the consultation. The announcement of a General Election to take place on 8 June 2017 has delayed the proposed White Paper on the topic.
3. The Chair and the directors maintained a high profile and were regularly asked to speak at conferences. Several contributed to the annual Birmingham conference on Health at Work in March 2017. The Council is established as a well-respected player in the field.
4. The National School of Occupational Health was elected to membership of the Council and is represented by Mandy Murphy, the deputy director. The Chair continued to sit on the Board of the National School which held a very successful workshop in January 2017. Work was done during the year by a group of senior nurses to revise the curriculum for occupational health nursing. The proposed Faculty of Occupational Health Nursing, supported by the Council, was welcomed by a substantial majority of nurses who replied to an opinion poll and is on course to be officially launched in 2018.
5. At its September meeting Council members were asked how they saw the future of the organisation. A wide-ranging discussion was facilitated by Joanna Wilde. It was agreed that we needed to move forward to work on specific projects and a projects

committee was set up chaired by Robin Cordell with the assistance of Nick Pahl, CEO of the Society of Occupational Medicine. A bid for funds to support a Research Fellow was submitted to the joint DWP/DH Unit but decisions have been delayed by the election.

6. The second report of the Council Working Group on the occupational health workforce chaired by Professor John Harrison, published in March 2016, received wide publicity and was seen to be influential in, for example, the report of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Safety and Health, published in November 2016. The third phase of the project will be discussed at a seminar in London at the end of May 2017.
7. Although we are still not well endowed, the Council remains solvent. Members were generous with grants and the provision of premises and refreshments for meetings. IOSH continued to fund half the Secretary's post and contributions were received from the majority of organisations represented on the Council. We continue to rely on voluntary contributions which are not taxable.
8. I regret that I am unable to attend the meeting on 17 May as I am speaking at a conference on cancer survivorship in Milan on that date. The original timing of my session was changed only a few weeks ago. However, I have every confidence in Tom Stewart, the Deputy Chair, and the other directors, as well as Anna McNeil, and am sure that the meeting will run smoothly and be productive.

Professor Diana Kloss MBE