



## **Briefing from meeting on 25 September 2012**

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

- **Health for Work Advice Line**

An update on the Health for Work Advice Line, launched in England in December 2009, was given by Jeremy Greaves.

It had been agreed to centralise the telephone support from seven centres down to two and to develop a multi-channel approach with a strong focus on web-based marketing. A new multi-channel health for work advice line was subsequently launched on 1 November 2011 and since then 16,732 small businesses have registered to receive information. 50% of the requests received are on mental health issues. Social media have played a huge role in growing the numbers. Average monthly interactions are up 1,167% from the pilot phase and growing at approximately 24% per month. JG anticipated there would be 20,000 registrations by December 2012 and that 35,000 unique occupational health sessions will be delivered by March 2013.

The geographical spread indicated that 20% accessed the service in London and that the remaining 80% were spread across the country.

The Council members were very impressed with the way the Advice Line was developing.

- **Update on Council projects**

**Guidance for employers on communication with general practitioners**

It was noted that roll out of the electronic fit note had started. Even though the forms will be completed on the computer, the fit note is printed by the GP and given to the patient to give to their employer.

DWP had prepared a draft document on guidance to be offered to GPs. A total of four advisory documents are being prepared by the DWP and it was agreed Council would give feedback to DWP.

Council were informed that the Leicestershire Fit for Work Team had trialled letters prepared by the Council GP sub-committee, with funding from IOSH. These letters would be put on the Council website with a brief explanation of their purpose.

- **Advanced practitioner in occupational health for professions allied to medicine**

The final report of this project was presented and it was noted that work on the creation of a framework had begun. The framework structure was as follows:

- Values

- Knowledge and understanding
- Practice skills
- Generic behaviours – interacting
- Generic behaviours – problem solving

The aim was to set up a recognised pathway for individuals seeking to develop a career in occupational health.

Council members found the multi-disciplinary approach attractive.

- **To consider a College for Work and Health**

Council were asked to consider the creation of a possible College for Work and Health. The following potential benefits were discussed:

- Informing key stakeholders from a combined body of knowledge
- Developing evidence-based, cross-disciplinary policy and position statements on workplace issues of importance, controversy or public concern
- Providing a common voice on current developments and a common focus for developing the future research base
- Informing the multi-disciplinary professional cadre of key developments, academic, regulatory or governmental, that influence their ability to deliver good practice

As there was more than one model to be considered, the following should be done:

- Agree the membership of a working party to take this forward
- Agree what the working party could reasonably achieve without funding
- Develop terms of reference for the working party
- Explore where funding might be available for a formal extensive feasibility study

It was agreed that the working party would be set up under the chairmanship of Dr Olivia Carlton to develop terms of reference and consider future sponsorship.

- **Constitutional arrangements**

A draft paper had been circulated to Council for consideration. It was agreed that a Board of Directors would be set up with an elected deputy Chair and 5 other elected board members. A Chair would be appointed by the Board, and would preferably be someone from outside the healthcare professions to maintain objectivity.

**The next Council meeting was scheduled for 6 February 2013.**