



## **Briefing from meeting on 6 February 2013**

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

- **The College of Medicine**

Council thanked Sir Graeme Catto for coming to discuss the College of Medicine's experience of becoming a College.

The College was born out of Lord Walton's Enquiry into Complementary and Alternative Medicine in the late 1990s. The GMC Training Committee noted that guidance was needed for patients on self-medication.

Sir Graeme was appointed to lead the College, representing managers and patients as well as health professionals. Patient representatives sit on the Council, together with a wide selection of healthcare professionals and managers. The College is a multi-professional organisation.

Sir Graeme concluded by saying that, as the Council for Work and Health and the College of Medicine were working along similar lines, he would wish to keep in touch and possibly work together with the Council.

It was reported that the College was, initially, a Company Limited by Guarantee and within four months had become a charity. The Charity had a Council, an Advisory Group, and Trustees (who held the finances and ensured credibility).

Membership criteria were discussed and it was stated that the College did not require a qualification for membership. However, the College did ask prospective members which groups they intended to join and work with.

Additional information on the College of Medicine can be found at:

<http://www.collegeofmedicine.org.uk/>

- **Government response to the Frost / Black Report**

It was noted that the Government response to the Frost / Black report had now been published, and the Government planned to set up a state-funded advisory and assessment service staffed by occupational health professionals. General Practitioners would cease to certify sickness absence after the patient had been off work for more than four weeks. The patient would then be referred to the state-funded service.

It was reported that the Government may in the next budget consider offering tax relief to employers who offer rehabilitation services to employees.

Council members welcomed the new initiative, and hoped to be consulted about its structure.

The Chair agreed to write to the Secretary of State in those terms.

### **Update on Council projects**

- **Guidance for employers on communication with general practitioners**  
Council were informed that there had been no further developments since the last meeting. The relationship between the employer and GP would obviously be affected by the creation of a state-funded advisory and assessment service to be introduced in 2014.
- **Training and qualifications for occupational health nurses**  
The work on the project was complete and a paper had been published by Helen Kirk in Occupational Medicine.
- **Advanced practitioner in occupational health**
- Two years' work had gone into the Allied Health Professions' Advisory Fitness for Work Report and a presentation had been circulated to Council members giving a summary of the pilot and survey. It was noted that the report would be amended and launched in Birmingham at the Health and Wellbeing at Work conference on 5-6 March 2013.

It was noted that a request for a report from a physiotherapist, occupational therapist or other allied health professional may come from the GP, employer or employee. Whoever commissions the report will get a copy and the GP will also be sent a copy. The Fitness for Work Report was felt to be a very helpful tool, certainly in the first four weeks' sickness absence period.

Council were informed that the Allied Health Professionals' competencies (presented to Council in September 2012) were being adopted through ACPOHE and COT and had been very well received.

- **Occupational Health Workforce Planning Group**  
Professor John Harrison, Chair of the Working Group, gave a presentation to Council. The working group had made considerable input into the project. A couple of workshops were held in 2012. Subsequently, the following actions had been taken:
  - Members of the working group have met
  - A workshop was held in January 2013
  - A literature review has been carried out

The working age was defined as over 16 and up to 70 and the description of workers to be highlighted was considered. Types of health conditions and markets were identified and case studies produced. It was noted there would be three main driving forces for change in the next 20 years: finance, demographics (e.g. the ageing workforce and migrants) and long-term conditions.

Stakeholder mapping was considered and it was agreed that more work was required in this area. Council was happy in principle with the progress the working group were making and asked the group to continue their work. It was agreed that John Harrison would continue to chair the working group.

Professor Harrison undertook to report to the next meeting..

- **Constitutional arrangements**

- The revised constitution had been circulated to Council on 12 October 2012 and final approval for the constitution was sought.

Following discussion it was agreed that 3 elected Directors should have a 3-year term of office and 2 Directors a 2-year term of office in order to maintain continuity. It was agreed to remove 'London' as the exclusive venue for meetings and that Directors should be eligible for re-election for a maximum term of six years. The constitution was revised accordingly.

Self-nominations from Council members were sought by 28 February 2013, initially for the position of Deputy Chair and subsequently for the position of Director. Ballot papers would then be circulated to Council members, with clear instructions on the voting process, which must be in accordance with the constitution. Voting should be completed by the end of March 2013 and it was hoped the new Board of Directors would be able to meet prior to the next Council meeting.

**The next Council meeting was scheduled for 7 May 2013.**