

About the SOM



Occupational Health: The Value Proposition

Dr Paul J Nicholson OBE

March 2022

*Occupational health services enhance
employee health, workforce productivity,
business performance and the economy*

SOM Journal of Occupational Medicine



Follow us on Twitter @OccupMed_Journal

Occupational
Medicine
JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY OF OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE

1000 Research Square Community
FOR ALL THE RESEARCH AND THE WORLD TO SEE

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Increased Influence & Impact
2021 Impact Factor™
5.629

Source: Journal Impact Factor™ from Clarivate, 2022

Revisit highly cited articles

SOM Special Interest Groups

Construction -
Chair: Libby
Moore

Long COVID -
Chair: Professor
Ewan Macdonald

Pensions - Chair:
Dr Simon Sheard

Leadership -
Chair: Dr Kevin
Bailey

Nuclear Industry
Ionising Radiation
- Chair: Dr Sarah
Jackson

Occupational
Psychology -
Chair: Professor
Gail Kinman

Noise Induced
Hearing Loss -
Chair: Claire
Forshaw

HAVS - Chair: Dr
Ian Lawson

Also: AHPs, Docc Meds, OH
Technicians, Skin, Mental Health and
Drug and Alcohol etc

Wider network meetings

MSK at Work

Academic Forum - Chair: Professor Ewan Macdonald

OH Commercial Providers Group – Chair: Dr Mike Goldsmith



Supporting occupational health
and wellbeing professionals

SOM Special Interest Groups activities:

- Guidance e.g. Construction worker health assessment
- Podcasts e.g. on a career in OH nursing; GP fit note completion
- Occupational Health Technicians - agreed a [scope of practice of Occupational Health Technicians](#) and [Career Path of OH Technicians](#). Invited to self-assess against a matrix [here](#). Also agreed a [code of conduct](#) and [Escalation Criteria](#)
- Presentations e.g. on VR [available here](#)
- [Knowledge framework for OHPs working in the radiation medicine sector](#)
- Testimonies e.g. Functional Assessment [here](#)

Occupational Health Nurses Careers Morning

Wednesday 27th September, 10.30am - 12.30pm



Find out about a career in occupational medicine with talks from our expert speakers including...

Professor Anne Harriss

*Leading Emeritus Professor of Occupational Health
Former SOM President*

Chris Rhodes

Chief Nursing Officer at Health Partners

Janet O'Neill

Deputy Head of the NSOH

200 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 9TA

Register here: <https://www.som.org.uk/events>

For queries, email natasha.sethna@som.org.uk

Budget recognition of Occupational Health

SOM and FOM welcome the 2023 Budget – a good first step

Great to hear the Chancellor recognise the importance of occupational health during his budget speech.

Important to recognise OH as evidence based intervention, as opposed to wellbeing.

SOM statement at <https://www.som.org.uk/budget-health-measures-first-step-towards-tackling-workforce-drop-outs>

Background

- [20% of the workforce](#) is economically inactive
- Mainly driven by people moving into economic activity due to long term ill health (300 000 more in this category in past two years)
- Aging population... almost 20% of population 65 years or older in 2021 census

What was in the budget? - 1

£25m for a subsidy pilot for SME's to access occupational health to examine the impact on uptake of OH and build an evidence base for a national roll out of the subsidy. Likely 80% subsidy for first assessment

Two new consultations:

- One concerning opportunities to incentivise uptake of OH for employers through taxation
- The second will explore increasing employer engagement with OH by regulation or other levers.

will also consider “a process to assure quality of OH services”. Likely to be SEQOHS.

What was in the budget? – 2

A new service called “WorkWell” – a three-year pilot to provide funding for Integrated care systems (ICSs) to provide lower level biopsychosocial support from clinical and non-clinical services to encourage people to return to work. Exact service decided at local level by the ICSs, but may include access to OH.

SOM points

Services without OH expertise may not be able to advise on work/health interface e.g. underuse of the fit note by GP teams

What was in the budget? – 3

MSK and Mental health online tools - £400m

Concerns

- Digital solutions may offer scalable prevention/ monitoring/ early therapeutic approaches but there are accessibility issues
- Need OH support handoffs

What was in the budget? – 4

- Health and disability white paper
- Abolish work capability assessment- health component of universal credit to be allocated via PIP- claimants will receive workcoach support
- More funding for work coaches
- Universal Support programme to match individuals with vacancies, providing training and support

Other activity

- NIHR work and health research grants
- £1m OH and SME innovation grants
- SOM activity – OH census; video on benefit of OH; Accenture review of ill health

Clarity needed on..

- Role of fit note and improving practice e.g. via AHPs signing off. The fit note is an important backstop for the majority of workers that do not have access to OH
- Data and data sharing e.g. “Occupation” needs to be in overarching data sets.
- Moving from individual to strategic workplace interventions e.g. by OH/workplace co-ordinators
- Evaluation

How did we get there?

- Problem the Government wanted to solve of worklessness due to ill health
- OH offered a solution – value proposition and House of Lords Lunch/ webinar
 - Support of Patrons
 - Lobbying others e.g. FSB
- Engagement with Government e.g. work and health unit, Treasury and CMO

SOM - next steps

- OH census - with NSOH etc
- Careers day – 27th September for doctors and nurses
- Advocating for Universal Access to OH



Supporting occupational health
and wellbeing professionals

Questions?



Supporting occupational health
and wellbeing professionals