



Society of Occupational Medicine **Occupational Health Awards 2023**

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Welcome to the SOM Occupational Health Awards 2023

Launched in 2019, the SOM Occupational Health Awards are a celebration of the superb work that occupational health professionals undertake every day.

The Awards showcase occupational health – demonstrating the value of occupational health to organisations and the wider community.

This year, we were once again overwhelmed by the number and quality of submissions. It was a pleasure to read through the entries and discover the innovative and important work that is being done at both an individual and organisational level.

When judging the Awards, we looked at innovative leadership e.g. influencing Boards for real health and business benefit; collaborative work – delivering and influencing as part of a multidisciplinary team; driving best practice and overcoming barriers beyond the traditional occupational health service model, and innovation e.g. on risk management and contribution to prevention.

This year we are proud to introduce two new categories: Outstanding Contribution to Occupational Health Research and the SOM Lifetime Achievement award.

Huge congratulations to the very deserving winners and thank you to everyone who took the time to enter this year.

A big thank you also to our generous sponsors: Cordell Health, Greys Specialist Recruitment and NEBOSH.



Professor Kaveh Asanati
Head Judge, SOM Occupational Health Awards 2023



Meet our generous sponsors



Greys Specialist Recruitment

Greys Specialist Recruitment is a specialist Occupational Health Consultancy. They provide clients and candidates with bespoke recruitment solutions to meet their needs. Greys Specialist Recruitment recruit Occupational Health Physicians, Technicians, Nurses, Advisors, Managers, Physiotherapists, and Senior Appointments throughout the UK on a permanent, contract, temp, sessional and ad-hoc basis. Their team has over 70 years' experience in recruiting occupational health professionals.



Cordell Health

Cordell Health Ltd is a social enterprise specialising in providing early intervention and expert support in the field of workplace health and wellbeing. It provides extensive services to its clients, protecting and supporting the health of their employees, to promote wellbeing and enrich their organisations. Cordell Health's vision is to change the focus in the workplace from disability to ability. Cordell Health aspires to provide a dynamic, sustainable and ethical way of delivering workplace health and wellbeing. Its focus is on providing services to assist an organisation in delivering against the seven principles which characterise a human-centred organisation (ISO 27500) with the aim of reducing sickness absence, improving productivity and increasing employee engagement.



NEBOSH

NEBOSH is a charity who have been developing relevant, recognised and respected health, safety, wellbeing, risk and environmental qualifications for over 40 years. Over half a million people from around the world have achieved a NEBOSH qualification, and use the knowledge and skills gained to keep colleagues safe and well in their workplace.



SOM Lifetime Achievement 2023

Dr Alan Scott is Senior Medical Director at Optima Health, with over 40 years' experience in occupational health.

Dr Scott qualified from St Mary's in London in 1969 with a medical degree and BSc in Human Biology. Following this, he became a registrar specialising in emergency medicine and trauma. Inspired by his father-in-law's work at the Employment Medical Advisory Service, Dr Scott became a senior registrar in the East Midlands Rotational Training Scheme for occupational medicine.

Following posts at the National Coal Board, Boots and Rolls Royce, as well as time spent as a lecturer at Manchester University, Dr Scott obtained his MFOM qualification in 1986. He was instrumental in developing 'life after the M', the first postgraduate CPD programme for OH, and was elected FFOM in 1993.

He joined the HSE in 1986, working in Policy in Liverpool where he was one of the architects of groundbreaking legislation such as COSHH and Management Regs. He was a UK representative in Europe. For the remainder of his 20-year career at the HSE, he worked as an Area Director and Senior Medical Inspector, before joining Optima Health (then Atos) in 2006. He is heavily involved in governance and mentoring doctors new to OH and is an examiner for the Faculty of Occupational Medicine.

Dr Scott has dedicated his entire career to the betterment of people's lives. He describes himself as a rebel, referencing Nelson Mandela: "It always seems impossible until it's done." His medical journey, work ethic, and compassion for others epitomises the essence of a lifetime achievement award.



Dr Alan Scott
Joint Winner



Dr Jalees Razavi has been contributing to the practice of Occupational Medicine in Canada and internationally in various prominent roles, including through his work for the Workers' Compensation Board of Alberta and the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada.

He has also performed impactful work as an Occupational Physician in industry, including for Imperial Oil and Saudi Aramco. He is a well-respected and knowledgeable colleague and leader in the field, known for his efforts towards protecting remote and precarious workers globally.

He recently worked with colleagues to bring the University of Alberta's Foundation Course in Occupational Medicine to the Middle East and to enable physicians from that region to not only participate in the course but also subsequently obtain membership by examination of the Canadian Board of Occupational Medicine.

These developments are truly transformational to the practice of Occupational Medicine in the Middle East and Jalees' role in being a champion of bringing them about has been pivotal. Jalees has also been a champion of diversity and of supporting women in the workplace.



Dr Jalees Razavi
Joint Winner





Outstanding Occupational Health Initiative 2023

Kirklees Council's Project SEARCH is an internship programme for young adults with learning difficulties and autism.

As interns were inducted into the Council, Employee Health Care (EHC) saw increases in management referrals for employees with a neurodiverse condition. The standard pathway where the nurse adviser prepares a report for the manager needed to change to meet the interns' needs. A new occupational health pathway was developed diverting management referrals to a wellbeing colleague with a holistic focus:

- Consideration of learning styles - assessment questions sent to an employee before a meeting, giving time to process information.
- Extra appointment time offered to support communication.
- Drafting a support plan to empower the employee and manager conversation around the condition, impact, performance and additional support required.
- Offering services such as counselling, CBT, mediation, restorative practice, mentoring/coaching, health coaching, digital upskilling, and specialist workplace assessment where work-based diagnosis is required.
- The wellbeing team provide practical support to managers on environmental and digital factors, learning needs, and signposting.

Employee networks:

- Encourage employees with lived experience to share stories and destigmatise.

Training:

- A suite of digital and face to face training was developed to upskill employees. This includes webinars, podcasts, and courses.
- Upskilling both employees and managers.
- Providing assistive technology and digital upskilling i.e., speech to text technology training, benefits of changing fonts/document layout/backgrounds.
- Developed short videos for managers to provide more detail of dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia etc.

Outcome:

- 90% of the interns found permanent employment. The pathway has now been rolled out to all council staff.



Catherine Oinonen, Kirklees Council
Winner





Outstanding Occupational Health Practitioner 2023

Dr Emma McCollum always seeks to drive best practice and overcome barriers, to include those which may not traditionally sit under the occupational health umbrella, but which significantly impact on the ability of staff to engage in an acute hospital environment.

At University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust, she has led a multi-disciplinary team whose members included the Autism Lead Nurse, Inclusion Co-ordinator, HR and staff support groups, to develop a Neurodiversity Toolkit to proactively support neurodiverse members of staff. She has presented this more widely, to enable use by others, such as at the South West GP Trainers Conference.

Dr McCollum has also responded to Departmental needs, reviewing the TB screening in the Trust, working collaboratively with respiratory and IT colleagues to ensure a robust process. She has worked with nursing colleagues to streamline the process for EPP clearance for workers with a blood borne virus and ensure good communication.

Dr McCollum is committed to teaching and training, supporting the Trust with Foundation Doctor educational supervision and is a Deputy RSA for the Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM), presenting at their CESR trainee days. She is also actively engaged in wider groups, as Secretary for ALAMA and acting as their representative for the FOM SEQOHS review.

Having completed the Mary Seacole Leadership Programme, Dr McCollum influences the Board through participation in Trust Senior Management Team meetings, which has helped the development of a Wellbeing Team to support hard to reach staff in the hospital. She has also contributed to research with a publication in *Occupational Medicine* in 2022.



Dr Emma McCollum
Winner





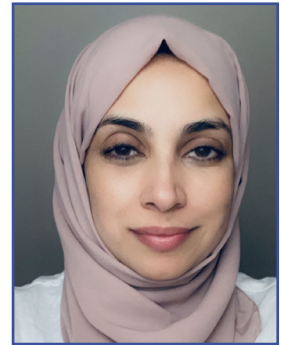
Outstanding Occupational Health Practitioner 2023

Dr Aaliya Goyal brings fresh energy, systems-thinking, and impact as an occupational health (OH) practitioner, exemplifying a new style of collaborative and inclusive leadership. She aligns the vision of organisations she works with, to highlight the importance of OH.

She advocates for OH in Primary Care as a Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Council member, influencing their strategic heart, events and campaigns, including Disability History Month. She had an abstract accepted for RCGP's 2023 Annual Conference, on "Improving recruitment and retention through Occupational Health support for Primary Care".

Dr Goyal's clinical, and wider, skillset was utilised as Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust Occupational Health department's Medical Education and Placements lead, designing successful placements for UK and International doctors, and medical students, to improve understanding of occupational medicine. She accelerated team development, through perspectives gained as a GP, Training Programme Director and System Lead in Health Inequalities and added value as the department's menopause and skin lead. She jointly presented the department's work at the 2023 Health and Wellbeing at Work Conference.

Dr Goyal has extended understanding of menopause at work, including through talks for the NHS Menopause Hub hosted by University Hospitals Derby and Burton, gaining recognition from the British Medical Journal, who published her opinion and invited her to speak alongside a representative from the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency. She creates unique opportunities to spotlight the specialty, widening reach through her established network.



Dr Aaliya Goyal
Highly Commended

Alex Price is a Physiotherapist at Optima Health. Alex recently demonstrated remarkable clinical expertise and judgement during a triage call with an employee.

The individual had undergone prior evaluations by a GP and another Physiotherapist, both of whom had expressed minimal concern with their symptoms and scheduled a specialist appointment 3-4 weeks away. However, Alex's meticulous assessment during the call revealed concealed symptoms that warranted urgent attention. He promptly recommended the employee to present themselves at A&E, substantiating this decision with a thoughtfully crafted letter.

The following day, Alex personally reached out to the employee, who experienced a lengthy wait in the emergency department. Nevertheless, this wait proved to be a life-saving delay as imaging uncovered a critical issue requiring immediate surgical intervention. The timely emergency surgery prevented life-altering consequences for the employee and averted further deterioration that could have had dire consequences.

This extraordinary case underscores Alex's exceptional commitment and skill, emphasising the profound impact he has had on an individual's life.



Alex Price
Highlight good practice



Outstanding Contribution to Diversity and Inclusion 2023

Dr Sheetal Chavda has been an excellent chair for the SOM Diversity and Inclusion Task Force's meetings, which have been taking place regularly since 2020.

The meetings have included a range of participants all of whom have contributed ideas on how equality, diversity and inclusion can be positively assimilated into occupational health and occupational medicine practice. Dr Chavda has "been professional, organised, demonstrates good time management, and demonstrates good leadership by way of delegation and support".

Dr Chavda has presented at conferences on behalf of the Task Force, bringing equality, diversity and inclusion into the agenda of different fora in occupational medicine, both from the employer, employee, and occupational health practitioner perspectives.



Dr Sheetal Chavda
Winner





Outstanding Contribution to the Development of Occupational Health Globally 2023

Dr Richard Heron has been the Co-Chair of The International Occupational Medicine Society Collaborative (IOMSC) since it was founded in 2013.

It has subsequently grown to a global collaboration of 52 national Occupational Medicine Society member associations of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM) professionals from 46 countries – representing more than 30,000 individual specialists. IOMSC aims to:

- Collaborate on issues of concern and opportunities in OEM;
- Advance the specialty of OEM, and
- Promote the provision of evidence-based OEM.

IOMSC's activities to date have been conducted based on Dr Heron's voluntary effort along with other volunteers from member associations and their participating experts. To coincide with its 10th anniversary in 2023, IOMSC formalised its legal status as a registered charity under UK law and is determined to accelerate its development, to mobilize and co-ordinate its member associations and expand activities in pursuit of a vision of improved worker health globally. With Dr Heron's leadership, IOMSC has strong relationships with key stakeholders, including WHO and ILO. It has a track record of important activities including a webinar series, a global member survey, a toolkit for the development of professional associations of occupational health practitioners, an advocacy toolkit, a review of global trends in occupational health, a series of international meetings and more.



Dr Richard Heron
Joint Winner



Dr Clare Rayner has played a pivotal leadership role to ensure best practice guidance has been available to stakeholders on supporting workers with Long COVID to return to work since 2020.

Through her involvement in the Society of Occupational Medicine Taskforce for Long COVID, she has co-authored leaflets for workers and employers which have been translated into several languages, and was instrumental in the development of the SOM position paper, 'Long COVID and Return to Work - What works?'

An author on the WHO Guidelines on Rehabilitation of Post-COVID Conditions, she is recognised internationally and was recently invited to present in Malaysia on return to work and Long COVID. She has been part of the Post-acute COVID Syndrome International Working Group with the Department of Rehabilitation Innovation at Icahn School of Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital in New York.

Dr Rayner's contributions have supported the preparedness of occupational health practitioners, clinicians in multidisciplinary vocational rehabilitation and line managers to have a better understanding of the impact of Long COVID on function and work ability. She has promoted the importance of early intervention as evidenced in her co-authored publications and role in the NHIR LOCOMOTION study. She is a Long COVID Support Charity Advisor and has been a proactive member of the multidisciplinary team of employment advocates. Many workers with Long COVID were unfamiliar with occupational health but have gained an understanding of its value within their peer support community through the sharing of the SOM Long COVID resources.



Dr Clare Rayner
Joint Winner





Outstanding Contribution by an Employer to Workplace Health and Wellbeing 2023

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has demonstrated an unyielding focus on the welfare of its workforce during an unprecedented period of change, as stated by their HR Director: "The Health and Wellbeing of our officers and staff is as paramount to the organisation as keeping London safe".

The MPS has launched over 20 new Occupational Health and Wellbeing services to provide more proactive and engaging support in the health and wellbeing of its employees. For example, they have:

- Introduced a musculoskeletal self-referral programme that allows employees to take proactive measures to manage and seek help for MSK issues. The programme has demonstrated a significant reduction in absence days, from 42,000 days per year to 14,000 days per year.
- A revamped mental wellbeing programme – including IAPT-style tiered counselling (supporting 720 employees concurrently), EMDR, CBT, trauma-focused CBT, and psychological monitoring (increasing from 2000 assessment to 7000 per annum in the last year). In addition, their Trauma Peer Support Programme is recognised by the College of Policing as the benchmark and is recommended to other policing services.
- Proactive Wellbeing Service – delivering 10,000 wellbeing assessments per annum and 3,000 motivational coaching sessions. A Weight management programme, in which participating employees lost an average of 3.5 kilograms over six weeks, also reported an average increased energy score of 33% and feedback included: "I have managed to get my diabetes in remission".

Employee satisfaction has increased from 45% to 92%, demonstrating the MPS's steadfast dedication to ensuring the vitality and resilience of its employees whilst providing effective policing services.



Metropolitan Police Service
Winner





Outstanding Occupational Health Team 2023

The Transport for London (TfL) Occupational Health (OH) team deserves recognition for their outstanding efforts in reshaping the approach to employee health and wellbeing.

Engaged in the Employee Health Innovation Fund, supported by Design Council and Impact on Urban Health, the team has undertaken a pioneering design-led initiative aimed at reaching marginalised employees.

Historically, OH practices were reactive rather than proactive, missing the opportunity to make every contact count (MECC) during medical appointments for safety-critical work. With Design Council's support, the TfL OH team identified a crucial challenge: a misunderstood perception of their department among colleagues.

Amidst an office move and a new IT system, the team commissioned design practitioners for two key projects to address their organisational perception. These projects are currently conducting extensive discovery research and interviews across multiple TfL locations in London, showcasing the team's commitment to engagement amidst organisational changes.

Led by insightful leadership, the TfL OH team has demonstrated an exemplary dedication to inclusivity, valuing the voices of the entire team in their progressive plans. Anticipating positive outcomes, these projects aim to enhance colleague engagement, instigate a cultural shift towards greater health awareness, and proactively identify and prevent health conditions. Their efforts will not only impact the health of over 19,000 employees but also set a precedent for a culture of care and innovation within TfL and beyond.



Transport for London
Winner





Outstanding Contribution to Occupational Health Research 2023

This mixed-methods sequential programme of research and impact led by Dr Jo Daniels and colleagues focussed on the wellbeing and retention of the Emergency Medicine workforce.

Building from a large-scale longitudinal quantitative study led by colleagues in the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM) which established the mental health of the Emergency Care workforce using a survey of over 5000 participants, Dr Daniels led the development of a model and pathway of psychology care for doctors, the Covid Clinicians Cohort (CoCCo) study. CoCCo, a large-scale qualitative study used in-depth individual interviews with the same cohort to develop an evidence-based approach to developing the model, which has been adopted in clinical services and cited by NHS Employers as a key resource. The CoCCo model offers a clear outline of a multi-level pathway, derived from the voices and expressed needs of healthcare professionals themselves.

Shifting focus to the link between wellbeing and retention, Dr Daniels led her team on the 'Psychologically Informed Practice and Policy' (PiPP) study, a multidisciplinary collaboration which developed empirically-grounded policymaker recommendations focussed on addressing retention. In collaboration with the RCEM and funded by UKRI, PiPP used focus group interviews to identify perceived barriers to workplace wellbeing and retention in the workplace, from this developing a set of four highly specified recommendations with multi-level policymaker targets. Dr Daniels focussed on extending impact to Government bodies and NHS policymakers through the development and delivery of an extensive policymaker engagement strategy that has sustained impact.



Dr Jo Daniels

Winner





Outstanding Contribution to Occupational Health Research 2023

In 2022, Priscilla Wong conducted research into OH pre-employment health screening (PEHS) of prison officers within His Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS) for her MSc thesis at Cardiff University.

The impetus for this research was critical staffing shortages, high sickness absence and high attrition rates posing serious risks to public protection, worker and prisoner safety. Findings revealed internal stakeholders' concerns that OH would readily pass new recruits as fit who were unsuitable for frontline roles, and that ambiguous workplace adjustment and risk assessment recommendations frustrated hiring managers and hampered recruitment. HMPS' delays or failure to conduct risk assessments/implement workplace adjustments can breach equality and health and safety legislation, disadvantage employees and cost the taxpayer from litigation claims. OH plays a vital role to mitigate such risks.

HMPS has adopted Priscilla's two research recommendations:

- Creation of a bespoke prison officer OH PEHS questionnaire with enhanced clinical questions, conveying a realistic picture of the role, enabling safe recruitment yet not deterring applicants.
- The 'OH Workplace Adjustment and Risk Assessment Guidance for Prisons' is now published and used by HR professionals, managers and OH clinicians, building their confidence and capability. A new line manager training course on the effective use of OH services, covers this guidance. Over 1200 managers registered within a week of advertising and over 300 attended the first session.

These actions aim to improve retention and absence rates and ensure that HMPS, as a government agency, is meeting its legal/health and safety obligations while also contributing to its overall aims.



Priscilla Wong

Highly Commended



Outstanding Contribution to Occupational Health Research 2023

The Wellcome-funded project 'Organisational interventions to support staff wellbeing: Case studies and learnings from the NHS', authored by Dr Kevin Teoh, recognises staff wellbeing and retention challenges in the NHS, and that there is a pressing need to foster better working environments.

Much of the research and practice in this area has focused on individual interventions or advocated the need to improve the working environment. However, there has been little guidance on how actually this can, and should, be done. In this project, Dr Teoh and colleagues bring together 13 case studies, emanating from interviews with NHS personnel, that document interventions designed and executed to make positive changes to work practice and work environment. Interviews, as well as organisational relevant documentation, reveal not only a range of activities but highlight factors for success and failure in each intervention. Activities across all interventions were mapped at the level of the Individual, Group, Leader, Organisation, and Overarching context. The project summarises six key recommendations to guide and inform others attempting such interventions. Through the case studies, the researchers note the possibility for changes that not only lead to better working experiences for NHS staff, but also documented improvements in staff wellbeing, patient outcomes, and financial savings. By showing that change is possible, the project inspires hope that things can be better.

The rigour and practicality of this project is reflected in both academic and practitioner interest in the work both in healthcare and beyond (e.g., NHS Employers, NHS Scotland, Microsoft).



Dr Kevin Teoh
Special recognition

