



SPRING ONLINE MAGAZINE 2021



Welcome

Professor Anne Harriss, President SOM



When I was asked if I would be interested in standing for presidency of SOM two years ago, I considered it a great honour to be deemed an appropriate person to hold such a leadership role. Of note is that this multi-disciplinary and learned society had only recently opened its doors to non-physicians. I was determined to do my best to promote excellent multi-disciplinary occupational health practice. I also hoped that SOM could increase membership numbers across the professions. I am pleased to note that SOM membership has increased; we continue to welcome members from across a range of professions and disciplines, including medicine, physical therapies, nursing, psychology, and others specialising in vocational rehabilitation.

During the final quarter of the year, I was president elect when COVID-19 hit, impacting on everyone but particularly on health care professionals. The effects of COVID-19 have been a horrendous experience for many, including SOM members, who may have lost friends, relatives, and colleagues to this dreadful disease. However, a sentiment I frequently hear from colleagues is “never waste a crisis”. COVID-19 has definitely been an opportunity for occupational health professionals to demonstrate their value, and from the perspective of being president of SOM, for SOM to demonstrate its value to members and employers.

SOM members have stepped up to the plate during this pandemic. Many have willingly given their time and expertise to develop a wide range of evidence-based tools, summits and webinars which can be used by professionals and employers alike. This SOM Spring Magazine is testament to their work and includes hyperlinks to many of these resources. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all these people for their hard work and commitment. It is the members that make the SOM the organisation that it is.

Finally, I have been involved in supporting the NMC with its consultation on SCPHN. You are all invited to a SOM OH nurse consultation event on 25th May 2021 from 14:00-16:00. The Zoom link is [here](#).

The new draft standards can be viewed [here](#) and for educators [here](#).

I will soon be handing the baton on to Dr Jayne Moore. I hope that she has an equally fulfilling presidency.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'A Harriss', on a white background.

Join SOM today

We welcome all occupational health professionals as members.

Please go to [Become a Member](#) and fill in the online form.

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Long COVID

Read our blog *Perspectives on Long COVID and Work* [here](#).

New Return to work guidelines

Launched by SOM and The University of Glasgow, a clear guidance for workers, employers, and health practitioners. The guidelines also include an Appendix on worker rehabilitation and pragmatic occupational health advice for workers with Long COVID syndrome. Download the guidance [here](#).

COVID-19 return to work guide: For managers

This leaflet offers guidance from Occupational Health (OH) Professionals on how managers can support workers to get back to work with ongoing symptoms following COVID-19 infection and Long COVID. The guidance draws from the latest evidence and has been developed by experts working in OH, Human Resources, Psychology, Rehabilitation, and people with Long COVID. Download the guidance [here](#).

COVID-19 return to work guide: For recovering workers

This leaflet offers guidance for workers from Occupational Health Professionals on how to manage getting back to work after COVID-19 infection and Long COVID. Occupational Health Professionals specialise in health and work and have professional experience in helping people get back to work after illness. OH Professionals also help to prevent people being made sick by their work. This leaflet is relevant to those who are in a job already, and those of you who are looking for work or starting a new job. Download the guidance [here](#).

Watch recording of our *Perspectives on Long COVID and work summit* [here](#).

SOM Parliamentary Question

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that occupational health services are in place to support people with long-term effects from COVID-19 with adjustments and rehabilitation to facilitate their return to work. (HL13788) Tabled on: 2nd March 2021

Answer: Baroness Stedman-Scott, Department for Work and Pensions:

The Government recognise the important role that OH professionals play in supporting people with health conditions and their employers. In the Health is Everyone's Business consultation we asked for views on how to increase access to occupational health services that can support people with disabilities and long-term health conditions. We are considering the next steps considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and anticipate that a response will be available shortly. Access to Work offers substantial practical support to disabled people and people with health conditions, which include people affected by Long COVID. The scheme has rolled out several easements to ensure that those who are eligible for support can receive it. As research into the long-term health symptoms and impacts of COVID-19 is ongoing, we will continue to monitor and consider the Government's support provisions and approach as evidence emerges.

Leadership at SOM

Dr Jenny Napier, chair of SOM Leadership Group



Increasing leadership capacity & influencing skills of the OH workforce helps to:

1. Enhance service delivery. Clinicians with strong leadership skills are better able to optimise the health and wellbeing of the working population, through strategic planning and building alliances.
2. Strengthen the future of OH. A strong leadership culture can inspire and develop younger generations, ensuring that professional knowledge, skills, and ethos are transmitted and continue to adapt to new working contexts.
3. Build multidisciplinary networks to evolve good practice, harnessing the talents of individual clinicians to address workforce health concerns.

SOM is looking to strengthen the profession through a new leadership programme. Its purpose is to inspire OH practitioners towards compassionate, authentic, and principle-based leadership (and followership), to develop skills in team building and embracing diversity, to be agents of change with influencing ability, to hone active listening and conflict resolution skills, and to harness new technologies. Its vision is about skilling people to take up their roles as active shapers of organisations and engaged team members, whatever their role in the hierarchy. A new leadership group, that I chair, is taking this forward. Initial actions to help practitioners contribute even more effectively to cultures of high-quality health input into workplaces include:

1. Future Leaders webinars - free for SOM members, £25 for non-members. Webinars can be booked [here](#).
2. Curating a library of resources on the SOM website.
3. Conducting a gap/needs analysis to understand how best to tailor the programme. Should a focus be the transition stage during the first five years after completion of training, when you are a new consultant or nurse practitioner?
4. Exploring how a new SOM mentoring network may help and assessing options for facilitated peer learning leadership groups.

Do contact me and share your insights about OH leadership, or leadership development more broadly somfutureleaders@gmail.com

SOM Leadership webinar series



SOM Leadership Series 9: Leading amongst leaders - the Military Experience, Air Vice-Marshal Alastair Reid

Thursday 29th April 2021 3-4pm – register [here](#).

SOM Leadership Series 10: Long COVID: What do we know – and what do we need to know?, Professor Trish Greenhalgh

Wednesday 12th May 2021 12-1pm – register [here](#).

SOM Conference in partnership with the SOM Scottish Group, 30th June

Online conference. £25 to attend (£50 for non-members). Register [here](#). You will be emailed a Zoom link to join.

Call for posters

The SOM invites submissions for poster presentations at our 2021 one day conference. Whether it is your own work, or that of your organisation, we are keen to hear about and share good practice and research. Submissions should be in the form of an abstract of a maximum of 300 words and submitted by email to nick.llewellin@som.org.uk by 3pm on 11th May. You will be informed whether you have been accepted or not by end of May. If you are accepted, you will of course have a free **place** at the conference and an opportunity to present on the day. Instructions on the preparation of abstracts:

- The abstract should be between approximately 200 and 300 words and clearly describe the intervention/practice/project and the impact.
- Abstracts should be typed and in Word format using standard text, or text-only format. Hand-written abstracts will not be accepted.
- The title should appear at the top of your submission, followed by the full name(s) of the author and all co-authors, including titles (e.g. Dr) and their affiliations (e.g. University of Birmingham).
- The following information should also be included at the end of your abstract: name of main presenting author; email address; name of author's work organisation.
- Bibliographic references, tables and appendices are not to be included in the abstract.

Email your abstract as a Word document to nick.llewellin@som.org.uk with the subject reference 'POSTER' followed by your name. Enquiries also to Nick Llewellyn. Key dates: Deadline abstract submission: 11th May; Notification on abstract acceptance: end May; Deadline to submit your e-poster: 23rd June; SOM Conference 2021: 30th June.

Open letter from SOM to Chancellor Rishi Sunak

SOM wrote the following open letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak. A PDF of the letter with a list of co-signatories is [here](#).

3rd February 2021

Dear Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak,

Occupational health's role to facilitate employees back to work and keep safe and healthy.

There is a strong economic case for HM Government to support access to occupational health (OH) for all employers. OH promotes, protects, and restores workplace health.

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have not yet responded to the consultation "Health is everyone's business" from 2019; We urge HM Treasury to support DHSC and DWP so they can provide logistical, financial, and practical support to enable OH providers without delay to ensure that OH is available to everyone who might need it.

The immediate consequence of not acting are further workplace COVID-19 outbreaks. OH services are key in supporting employees with COVID-19 risks and keeping them in work safely during these challenging times. Long COVID is a current example of a new way OH can help.

Research shows that many returning to work during the COVID-19 crisis will return with depleted mental health. OH services have been proven to enable those on sick leave due to mental health problems to return to work successfully.

Longer term, there is an opportunity now to positively influence the health and wellbeing of the working population and the prosperity of the nation. By investing in OH, the government can support employers to safeguard their workforce and manage risks.

Another issue is the taxation of employees when an employer pays for private sector treatment for a condition that is preventing the employee from a rapid return to work (they arise commonly both in mental health and in orthopaedics and rheumatology specialties). The UK economy and the Exchequer will benefit from this investment to facilitate quicker return to work due to reduced sick pay, increased income tax and productivity. A tax in this area therefore would benefit from a cost/benefit analysis.

Overall, SOM would like to work with HM Treasury to act swiftly in the light of the COVID-19 crisis to ensure the UK population has comprehensive access to OH advice and assessment.

I look forward to hearing from your officials regarding a meeting to discuss these issues further.

Dr Mike Goldsmith
Chair - OH Commercial Providers Leadership Group



Dr Mike Goldsmith

By email

22 March 2021

Our reference: TO2021/04163

Dear Dr Goldsmith,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 3 February to the chancellor of the Exchequer. As it is not practical for Ministers to respond personally to all the correspondence they receive, I have been asked to reply.

Your concerns are about support for access to occupational health for all employers. Employers are already able to provide several health and wellbeing initiatives for their employees which are tax and National Insurance contributions (NIC) exempt and not treated as a taxable benefit in kind. This includes recommended medical treatment to help an employee return to work up to a value of £500. It also covers eye tests, annual health checks, and employers can provide their own in-house facilities, such as gyms, or provide free onsite meals for employees without incurring NICs or tax.

The Government does not believe that making the tax treatment of health and wellbeing initiatives more generous is the most effective lever to incentivise employers to take positive action for their employees' health and increase the provision of occupational health support. In part, this is because there are often many other barriers for employers in providing occupational health services, including the upfront costs. In addition, further tax relief would provide a greater benefit to those paying higher rates of tax and would not benefit individuals with income below the personal allowance.

However, in response to feedback provided through the Health is everyone's business consultation and to recognise the variations in welfare counselling available, changes were made in the March 2020 Budget to enable employers to provide non-taxable counselling services including any recommended related medical treatment such as cognitive behavioural therapy. The changes took effect from April 2020.

Thank you for taking the trouble to make us aware of these concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Correspondence and Information Rights Team HM Treasury

Support for SOM Members

Peer support

SOM members provide peer support to fellow members who request it. Peer support offers many benefits to both parties, for example: increased self-confidence in dealing with a specific situation, the value of helping others for those providing the peer support, and shared development of skills and knowledge including information and signposting. Peer support can occur virtually – it is for each party to decide together, mindful that no cost support is provided by SOM. Members are offering their time freely. The process is of a voluntary nature and can be stopped at any time by either party. Details in the SOM Members Area.

HAVS peer support

The SOM HAVS Special Interest Group offers support for SOM members who undertake HAVS assessments and require advice from a senior colleague with more experience in the subject. Note: this is not for advice related to L140 or other HSE documentation. Details in the SOM Members Area.

Need an Academic buddy?

Contact details agreed at the independent Academic Forum [here](#).

New to OH?

Contact Ann.Caluori@som.org.uk for shadowing, mentors, and work experience list.

OH Nurse?

Contact Nick.Pahl@som.org.uk for a list of OH nurses who can provide help and support.

Doing CESR?

Contact Ann.Caluori@som.org.uk for a list of doctors who can provide support.

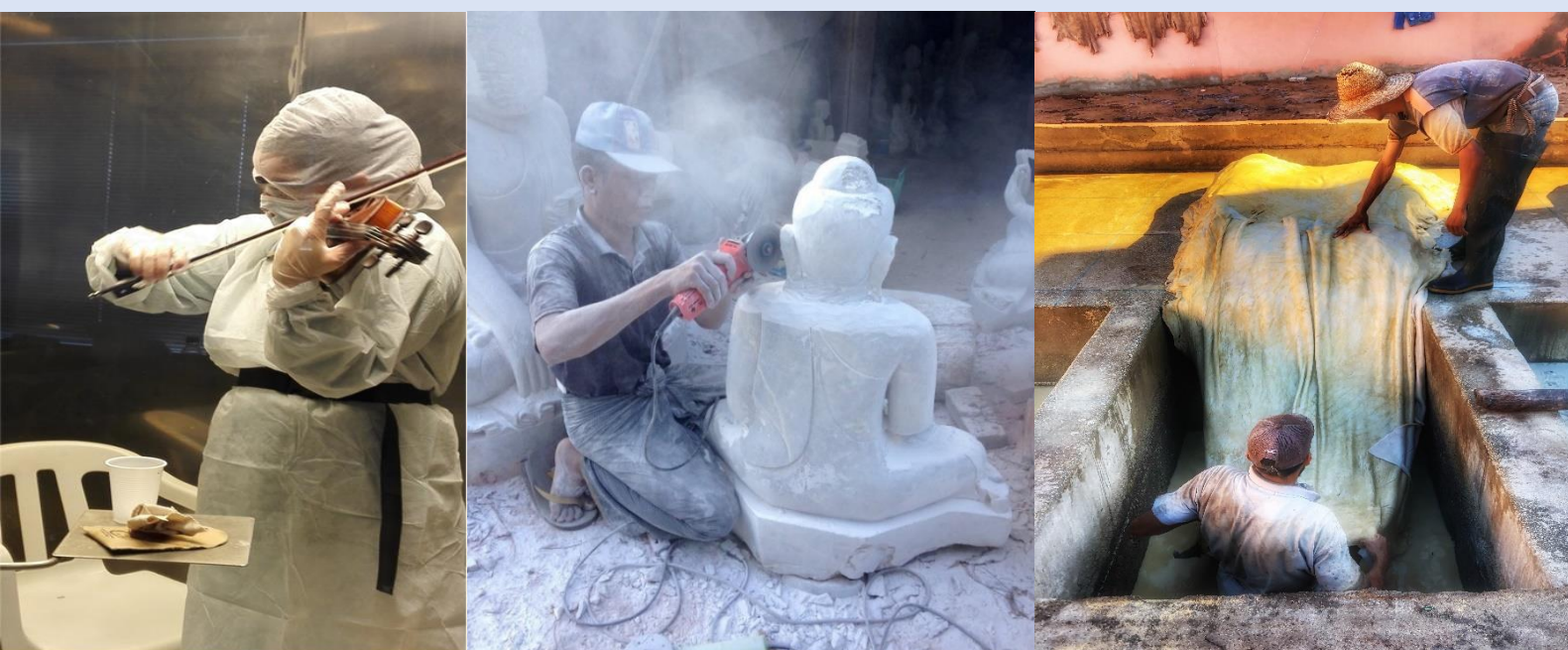


Photo credit (left-right): Violinist by Hille Soujalehto, Buddha Statue by Dr Kent Haworth, and Tannery by Dr Clare Fernandes.

SOM Statement of Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

The SOM is committed to actively and openly supporting and promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. Its values, agreed for its 2017-19 strategy, is it aims to be Democratic, Ethical, Inclusive, Approachable, Collaborative, Knowledgeable, Collegiate, Cost Effective, and Professional with a focus on Continuous Improvement.

SOM notes that members are professionals who are generally members of regulatory bodies with codes of ethics and conduct. Within our remit as an educational charity, SOM does not tolerate discriminatory behaviour included (but not limited to) all protected characteristics such as ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, ability etc. and:

- aims to be a diverse and inclusive professional learned society, both in terms of the people who lead and run the SOM and support the people who lead, deliver, and are involved in occupational health delivery
- will remain proactive in taking steps to ensure inclusion and engagement for all the people who work for and with us
- will continue to strive towards a culture that is diverse and inclusive that recognises and develops the potential of all members and staff.

Through its Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, SOM will endeavour to:

- understand the causes of any inequities and barriers to diversity in SOM training, research, and delivery, and understand the interventions that work to address these
- extend our reach to include communities where our work will make the biggest difference and involve a broad range of people at every step
- embed equality, diversity and inclusion in our culture and the way we work.

SOM relies on an impressive range of people to help us achieve our work. We strive to create the right environment so that our people are valued and supported to thrive and grow and that they are treated with respect. We also endeavour to be open and fair in providing opportunities that are responsive to our people's needs.

We are currently prioritising areas that we believe will have the greatest impact. SOM is working with Doctors in Unite, OH recruiters, the King's Fund, Business in the Community, and the Carnegie Foundation amongst others to achieve positive change.

March 2021 to be reviewed in 2023.



Q&A with Georgina Kennedy



What made you decide to join Lexxic?

As a neurodiverse individual living and working in a neurotypically minded world, it has been challenging. From having to be retaught my school subjects by my parents, being diagnosed with neurodiversity at University, to now being a 35-year-old married woman living independently in the world. There's not a day goes by where my neurodiverse condition does not impact my life in some way.

Prior to joining Lexxic I always worked within Sales. Why? Because it allowed me to play to my strengths; creative (always looking at new ways to sell and new markets to sell into); outgoing (love chatting to new people and developing relationships) and persistent and determined (I do not leave a stone unturned!). Lexxic is a specialist psychological consultancy, and we empower neurodiversity in the workplace. I joined Lexxic because I wanted to work in a company where I could be open about my own neurodiverse condition and no longer feel ashamed. Every day I am excited to be part of a team that makes the world a more inclusive place, as I believe all minds belong. With 1 in 7 considered to be neurodiverse, that's a large number of any workforce, so I love the fact I can combine my strengths, my story and my passion to make a difference to drive awareness around neurodiversity and help to change the lives of people like me.

Neurodiversity hero?

Mr Wiltshire was diagnosed with autism when he was 3, he is an incredible artist and is able to draw detailed cityscapes from memory after viewing them once. His work is amazing and super inspiring for my own art.

Dream dinner party guests?

Whoopi Goldberg – absolute legend and Sister Act is an all-time favourite, Chaka Khan – fav singer of all times, I hope she would stand up and belt out a tune, Sir David Attenborough – one his voice and two his care for the world and its wildlife really resonates with me, Stanton Warriors (DJs) – these guys are needed for the after dinner party.

Best neurodiversity book?

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon. I never sit still and read a book – this one captivated me and the visuals on the theatre production are incredible.

Tell us a joke...

Knock knock *Who's there?*

Annie! *Annie who?*

Annie thing you do I can do better!

Georgina Kennedy is Head of Client Development at Lexxic. Lexxic is a SOM Corporate Supporter - find out more about our Corporate Supporters here.

Upcoming SOM events

For more details, visit our [events page](#)

Date and Time	Title
28 th April 2021 12.00pm – 1.00pm Register here	SOM Webinar: How change can impact employee wellbeing
29 th April 2021 3.00pm – 4.00pm Register here	SOM Leadership Series 9: Leading amongst leaders - the Military Experience
6 th May 2021 12.00pm – 1.00pm Register here	SOM Webinar: Women's Health
7 th May 2021 11.00am – 12.30pm Register here	Travel health and vaccines webinar
11 th May 2021 10.00am – 11.00am Register here	Mental health and wellbeing - supporting you on your journey to go from good to great
12 th May 2021 9.00am – 4.10pm Register here	RSM and SOM: Health and work beyond COVID-19
12 th May 2021 12.00pm – 1.00pm Register here	SOM Leadership Series 10: Long COVID: What do we know – and what do we need to know?
30 th June 2021 9.15am - 5.00pm Register here	SOM Conference in partnership with the SOM Scottish group
14 th July 2021 9.00am – 10.30am Register here	Thinking Differently about Neurodiversity at Work webinar

Occupational Health Awareness Week 2021

SOM is delighted to announce Occupational Health Awareness Week 2021 linked to the international year of health and care workers. The week's activities will run from 28th June to 2nd July and we have some exciting plans for raising the profile of occupational health (OH) as a career.

The campaign will direct people to the SOM career area which will provide more information about SOM's careers day on 22nd September and how to become an OH professional. There will be several ways for SOM members to get involved in the campaign, including sharing their stories about why they chose the profession. We will also be asking members to reach out to local schools and communities.

Digital resources will be available to download in May (date tbc). Check the SOM website for updates.

Mental Health Consensus Statement with partners

[View here](#)

