Date

To send to MPs/ MSPs as follows:

The Society of Occupational Medicine is the UK professional body for occupational health.Occupational health (OH) helps people of working age access and stay in appropriate work and live full and healthy working lives despite underlying disabilities or health conditions. Occupational clinicians help employers reduce sickness absence and increase productivity by providing advice on best practice. They advise on fitness for work, return to work programmes, workplace adjustments to enable people with health conditions to return to/remain at work, suitable alternative work, and early retirement on ill health grounds. The need for robust and increasing OH services in many sectors has been highlighted during the COVID-19 crisis. The need for advice from OH on all aspects of business policy and how to protect workers has never been greater.

Last month, the President of the SOM, wrote to the DHSC and DWP Secretaries of State and the Chancellor supporting DHSC/DWP work, and health unit bids related to the response as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR).

The DHSC/DWP published “Health is everyone’s business” consultation response in July – it showed a clear return on investment for occupational health (OH), and we believe all CSR investment requests to meet the commitments in the response should be funded. This should cover investment in the OH workforce. This will help support the UK workforce return to work safely and be prepared for any future Covid waves/pandemics. The independent Academic Forum for Health and Work was also pleased to see plans for a new Collaborative Centre for Work and Health Research in the response. The Centre has the potential to facilitate evidence that will help improve health over the working age life course and will bring expert advice, data, and evidence together with policy development and implementation to ensure action on improving workplace health is better informed, more effective, and more joined-up.

I hope you might be able to write to the DWP to offer your support to this investment, following the comprehensive review. Related to this, we would welcome contact with the Scottish CMO to encourage investment in the occupational health (OH) workforce, as is occurring in NHS England in their *“Growing OH”* programme.

Finally, we would welcome facilitating a visit for you to an occupational health team in the NHS, the military, or businesses across Scotland.

Yours sincerely