My vision for the future of occupational health

Dr Richard Heron
President, Faculty of Occupational Medicine
Occupational health needs to adapt to changing workforce and workplaces

- Ageing UK workforce
- More people at work with long term conditions
- Changing and new emerging industries
- More workers who are part-time, working from home or on a temporary contract

Occupational Health requires collaboration between a wide range of professional groups to meet the emerging needs of the workforce.
Occupational health workforce – at a tipping point

Age of Society membership

- Ageing OH Workforce – both doctors and nurses
- Falling membership of both SOM and FOM
- OH nurses seeking formal quality assurance, training programmes and revalidation processes
- Funding for trainees and research under threat
- Shrinking academic base
- Difficulty in attracting high quality doctor, nurse and AHP trainees
Demand for OH is increasing

- DWP Health and Work Service
- Requirement for integrated care in the NHS - including consideration of work and workplace
- Workplace – ideal environment to address health issues and health promotion
- Recognition of the potential for OH to support those who are currently out of work
- Importance of quality as a key criterion for commissioning, as well as cost effectiveness
The need for change

- No single voice
- Confused messaging
- No clear purpose/direction for specialty
- Duplication of effort
- Misunderstanding about what we do and the benefits we bring
- Dilution of influence with Government, commissioners, employers
Part of the solution:

A new efficient and effective organisation for all health professionals engaged in work and health
Organisational Structure
Our draft vision

Healthy work, healthy workers and a healthy working world
Our draft mission

To protect the health and wellbeing of people throughout working life by supporting occupational health professionals, promoting awareness of health and work and advocating the best conditions for working health
Our draft values

Inclusive, ethical, striving for excellence, authoritative, professional, and making a difference
Turning the vision into reality - what will success look like?
Success – real influence with Government and key stakeholders

“I strongly support a single organisation for occupational healthcare professionals – it’s crucial for the future of occupational health - only by working together, will the profession have a clear and consistent voice to Government and other key stakeholders”

Dame Carol Black, Department of Health
Success – close association with other key professional bodies

“The Royal College of Physicians is in principle delighted that the Faculty and Society of Occupational Medicine are planning a merger and I can reassure you that we will be delighted to welcome the new organisation......”

Sir Richard Thompson, President of the RCP
Success - alignment with the public health agenda

- Occupational Health doctors contributing to Health and Wellbeing Boards needs assessments
- Close liaison with Public Health England
- Workplace routinely used as an environment for health promotion and prevention – for example tackling obesity
- Long-term health conditions supported in workplace
- Quality OH services routinely commissioned by CCGs and NHS England
Success – for OH physicians

An effective organisation that provides all the services doctors need -

• Excellent CPD that can be accessed in multiple ways - nationally, regionally, online and through innovative uses of technology

• Excellent updates, journals and guidelines

• Regional network

• Relevant appraisal and seamless revalidation

• Research strategy leading to better evidence to support practice
Success – for nurses

“I hope the new organisation will provide a standardised single system of professional post graduate education.....and a “one stop shop” for everything we need - clinical practice guidelines, SEQOHS support, legal advice, cheap professional indemnity insurance, online support forum etc.”

Tim Ellis, RN, SPCHN (OH)
OH Advisor, Loughborough University

“Occupational health nursing needs a home – the NMC and the RCN don’t fully understand what we do or provide for our needs. Joint learning with other occupational health practitioners has the potential to be more relevant than joint classroom learning with HV students”

Anne Harris, OH  Nurse practitioner,
Course Director, London South Bank University
"My view is that a new single organisation will provide greater opportunities for us to promote what we do and the value occupational physiotherapy provides. We would welcome the ability to share education and CPD where appropriate, and would certainly benefit from a robust infrastructure within which we can work collaboratively to improve workplace health."

Mark Armour, Physiotherapist, Chair of ACPOHE

"A single organisation offering multi-professional peer support and resources can only serve to strengthen the profile and infrastructure of occupational health."

Leonie Dawson, Physiotherapist
Success – for workers

- Improved access to occupational health
- An understanding that ‘Good work is good for me’
- Safe and healthy workplaces
- Support when off sick
- Joined up pathways to support return to work
- Opportunities at work to improve my health
Success – for employers

• A real understanding of the value of occupational health

• Clear guidance about the type of occupational health services I need

• Easy ways to access occupational health services

• Support from OH professionals when I need it
Part of the solution: Workforce Planning Project

- Sponsored by Council for Work and Health
- Over 20 leading health organisations represented and engaged
- Project will devise a workforce plan to underpin the delivery of the vision
- Phase 1 completed
- Next stages will be to design service delivery models, define knowledge, skills and competence levels and future roles
- Dr Surinder Kumar sits on the project team on behalf of the NHS Health at Work Network
Part of the solution – a new National School of Occupational health

- Launch in August 2014
- Manage the quality of post-graduate training in occupational medicine in England
- Support consistency in the delivery of quality training across occupational health – starting with nursing and physiotherapy
- Engaging with Health Education England, the Faculty of Occupational Medicine, Postgraduate Deans, trainers and trainees
- Will link with new single organisation if it goes ahead
Next steps – single organisation

• The Faculty and Society will vote on the single organisation during August and September 2014
• Further consultation with nurses and AHPs
• Business planning and implementation
Success - Trainee doctors, nurses and AHPs see ‘work and health’ as a really exciting career.