Welcome to the latest issue of the School’s e-bulletin.

The National School of Occupational Health and Culture is pleased to bring you a special edition of the e-bulletin written by our new Lead Dean, Dr Julia Whiteman.

Dr Julia Whiteman
Postgraduate Dean and Director of the National School of Occupational Health, North West London

The practice of Occupational Health Nurses (OHNs) has moved on from those days when it was the job of a single OHN to model the role for all our sister disciplines. There is no longer a one-size-fits-all approach to managing the health of the workplace.

The title Occupational Health Nurse, unlike that of Medical Doctor, is still not protected in law. There is nothing to stop any registered nurse employed in workplaces across the UK using the title Occupational Health Nurse, irrespective of the breadth of their role and professional qualifications.

As Lead Dean, I am delighted to have the opportunity to take up the role of Lead Dean for Occupational Medicine. The vacancy has arisen through the retirement of Dr Deborah Sun, who has held the role for several years and who was instrumental in supporting the set-up and launch of the National School of Occupational Health, has moved to a new role of Dean and Director of Education at Quality Health and Social Care.

The role of Lead Dean is to provide advice to the Specialty Advisory Committee on the general aspects of training including recruitment, curriculum development and assessment. Each specialty and sub-specialty has a Lead Dean and therefore there are many more than there are Postgraduate Deans, we all cover a range of speciality areas. I am also Lead Dean for Clinical Radiology, Nuclear Medicine, Audiology, Speech Therapy and the emerging speciality of Space and Aviation Medicine.

I have been involved in healthcare education since the mid-1990s when, as a GP working in a deprived inner city area, I became interested in influencing the factors that impact on health and well-being. This brought me into the arena of community development – my MA is in Inter-professional Medicine. I became interested in influencing the factors that impact on health and well-being. This brought me into the arena of community development – my MA is in Inter-professional Medicine. I became interested in influencing the factors that impact on health and well-being. This brought me into the arena of community development – my MA is in Inter-professional Medicine.

There are two recent initiatives that aim to provide OHNs with appropriate professional recognition: the establishment of a Faculty of Occupational Health Nursing. The NMC regulates the nursing profession in the UK and is responsible for ensuring that there is no confusion between the roles of an OHN and a nurse. It is important that OHNs are protected in law so that they can provide quality care.

At one workshop the speakers were so interested in the work of the School that they wanted to be “Cinderella specialties”, often misunderstood by others when working with their patients. I manage the Speciality Advisory Committee on the general aspects of training and have been working with health professionals in this area for the past few years and have been able to influence the way in which health professionals work with others to improve health and well-being.

I am delighted to take up the role of Lead Dean for Occupational Medicine. The vacancy has arisen through the retirement of Dr Deborah Sun, who has held the role for several years and who was instrumental in supporting the set-up and launch of the National School of Occupational Health. The School role, please follow this link. The National School is currently putting the finishing touches to its 2015/16 plan for the upcoming 2016/17 academic year and is looking forward to working with all the OHNs in the country.

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