

# Update on National School of Occupational Health



Issue 7 | December 2016

Welcome to the December  
2016 Edition of the National  
School of Occupational Health  
(NSOH) Newsletter.

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## For your calendar

- NSOH School Conference 'What Works for Wellbeing' | 26th January 2017 at Holborn Bars, 136-142 Holborn, London, EC1N 2NQ
- Next Trainee, Supervisor and NSOH Board meeting Friday 28th April 2017 within the North West, location to be confirmed. Further details will be sent out in the new year.
- National recruitment details for Occupational Medicine will be available here once released: [www.oriel.nhs.uk](http://www.oriel.nhs.uk)

## NSOH Updates

In October, the NSOH Board held their meeting in Kegworth, Derbyshire. The Board met with Trainees and Trainers in the morning, building on the meeting held in Birmingham in February of this year. It was great to meet Trainees and Supervisors from the local area and hear what they had to say about Occupational Medicine (OM) training. Our next meeting with Trainees and Supervisors will be in the North West on 28th April 2017, and we hope as many OM Trainees and Trainers as possible are able to join us on this date.

On 29th November, we met with OH Nursing Practice Teachers, and held the first national Focus Group for Practice Teachers. The event brought together Practice Teachers from across the country and the discussions and insights from the day will inform a future quality management strategy for educating the OH professionals of today and tomorrow.

The next NSOH conference will be on 26th January 2017, at Holborn Bars, Central London. 'What Works for Wellbeing' will give participants the opportunity to hear from a wide range of Occupational Health leaders who are actively involved in building the evidence base and delivering the interventions that work. This is a multidisciplinary conference open to all Trainees, Trainers and Practitioners working in Occupational Health. We have had an amazing response to the conference and are running a waiting list already. If you would like to be added to the waiting list, please click [here](#) to register.

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## Lets not make a drama out of crisis...

There is a crisis in the Occupational Medicine workforce, according to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Safety and Health.

They don't hold back: In their report published last month, they remind us that the UK loses 27 million working days every year through work-related accidents and illness, and that our (more enlightened?) European neighbours Holland have fifteen times as many OM specialists per head of population than we do. To rub salt into the wound, they have noticed that the number of OM trainees in the UK has fallen by two-thirds since 2003, and that nearly two-thirds of the current OM workforce is aged over 50 and therefore likely to be considering retirement in the next 10 years. So our problem is not that we are in the mire, but that the depth is so great we can't climb out without substantial changes in the way the profession is organised and

trained. To reach the numbers of occupational health practitioners recommended in the report, we will need to increase the number of trainees by a factor of three or four, which will be a difficult ask for all of us.

The Board of the National School of Occupational Health is developing a plan in response to the training challenges that face us, and we are confident that the OH community will be able to respond positively to the challenge. At our 'What works for Wellbeing' conference in January, we will be able to update you on the latest progress.

So let's not make a drama out of this crisis, let's just get on and sort it out.

**Jeremy Webster**

Chair of National School of Occupational Health Board



Well, I've been in post since 1st April 2016 to support and develop mutually beneficial positive working relationships and communication with physicians involved in training (Clinical Supervisors, Educational Supervisors, Regional Specialty Advisers and Training Programme

Directors) for both the industrial/NHS training environments within England.

I have had the opportunity to meet and share positive ideas with the Defence Deanery and I look forward to collaborating with the devolved counties, i.e. Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, sharing best practice in order to support trainees. The future accredited specialists of tomorrow should be assisted in developing the necessary skills, to respond to the changing needs of the workplace, whilst working as part of multi-professional Occupational Health services with a shared common purpose for supporting the workforce and the world of business.

What I bring is 21 years of full-time occupational health experience having previously worked as a GP in the East Midlands. In the last 10 years I have been an Educational Supervisor, Training Programme Director (TPD), FOM appointed External Assessor of Training Posts, MFOM examiner and a member of a higher specialist training committee working with TPD's from other medical specialities. I have significant experience of working with trainees in difficulty both within our speciality and all branches of medicine. My current post is part of a four Consultant Occupational Health Team within the NHS in Leicester and I have experience in both chairing and delivering service and educational initiatives.

Ensuring that we have workable quality governance training standards across the different training environments for both the Trainer and Trainee is one of my priorities. It is important that we as a National School continue to foster the excellent local intelligence, educational opportunities and expertise available to us within local HEE teams moving forward, as well as exploring what Trainees and Trainers feel would assist in their professional development and future on-going education. This will need to be balanced against both the Health Education England and GMC quality standards.

I look forward to working with you.

**Dr Harj Kaul** | National Training Programme Director

## Update from our Deputy Head of School

It's been a busy six months here at the National School as we make real progress with a number of key projects. I have been out and about meeting different professional groups and hearing about the variety of educational programmes in Occupational Health. I have been honoured to be asked to present at different meetings, including the NHS Health at Work Network conference in September and MoHaWK Regional Workshop in December.

We're delighted to have appointed Liz Preece as our Educational Fellow, to lead a review of current governance systems in OH training. We have been contacting all the universities who run training courses for Occupational Health Nurses (OHNs) and fact finding on a variety of areas including the types of courses they run, how they maintain quality for their courses and their future aspirations. We've had a fantastic response to our project with lots of great ideas and contributions from everyone we spoke to on the future of OHN education. We are currently pulling together our data and will be publishing a report on our findings in early 2017.

Another highlight for the National School was our focus group event for OH Nursing Practice Teachers. The event was the first national event for Practice Teachers and enabled sharing of best practice, ideas for improvements and has been a valuable networking opportunity for all who attended. I was struck by the highest level of professionalism and engagement, and their passion for developing the OH practitioners of the future is to be admired.

I was asked recently to tell you about the emerging themes from my work so far. Whilst I can easily provide you with a long list, in reality it all boils down to this .... Our time is now! Yes, you'll have heard this term used many times before in Occupational Health but it feels so obvious now, particularly with the number of high profile publications recently, probably most

*continued overleaf*

notably the latest green paper [Improving lives: work, health and disability](#). We have to grab this opportunity with both hands. Every professional group I have met over the last 8 months want the same thing – to drive up quality in OH education systems. We all want our OH professionals of the future to be the best they can be and a governance framework to assure we maintain high quality in OH practice. Everyone is eager for change and wants to make it better. Right now, we have the world's attention and with that, real power to make sustainable improvements so that our OH professionals of the future have the capabilities and capacity to support the nation's workforce. No stakeholder can do this alone and no, it's not someone else's job to do. We have to stand together as a united multi-professional workforce to make this happen for real. I ask every one of you to pull up a seat at the table and let's make a real and lasting difference to the future of Occupational Health. **Mandy Murphy** | Deputy Head of School

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## Occupational Medicine Training: An Industry Trainee Perspective

**Dr Sahira Spurlock** | ST5 Occupational Medicine Trainee and Industry Trainee Representative

Training in Occupational Medicine is unusual by virtue of the fact that it can be in the NHS or industry, unlike other specialties. Recruitment into industry operates slightly differently to the NSOH national recruitment process for NHS posts. Vacancies are usually advertised via BMJ careers or the Society of Occupational Medicine website when they become available. Interviews are held locally by the recruiting company; however appointments are now required to be benchmarked by the NSOH. The training, as for non-industry posts, is 4 years with yearly ARCPs now managed by the NSOH.

Industry trainees are funded by the company rather than HEE, and are generally paid more than in the NHS. This can be an advantage as the drop in income can be an issue for many trainees. On the whole industry trainees tend to do slightly more service provision than in the NHS, but this varies depending on the employing company. There is usually a more generous study budget, and funding of the Advanced Diploma in Occupational Medicine. Some companies even pay for the MFOM exams. In most posts you would be expected to do a fair amount of travelling, which can be a good chance to get out to different workplaces, but can

also eat into your personal time. The advantage of training in industry is the more varied exposure and access to different workplaces than training in the NHS alone.

I'm currently half way through my training and work for a privately-owned OH provider based in the North-West. Our contracts include everything from large public sector organisations like the NHS, fire service and police through to construction, manufacturing, and the food sector to name but a few. As well as case management we are involved in a variety of other activities, such as appointed doctor work, medicals such as offshore and rail, and MRO work. There is also the opportunity to be involved in activities such as planning and setting up health surveillance programmes; for example we recently set up biological monitoring for nickel in a glass manufacturer. There is also the opportunity to learn about the running an OH business, including pitching and managing contracts.

Overall, training in industry has been a positive experience and has given me the chance to get exposure to different workplaces, which can be an issue in some posts. Hopefully going forward there will be more opportunity for trainees to spend time in industry, as this is an invaluable experience in preparation for a career in Occupational Medicine.

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We welcome your feedback and any questions you may have, including those regarding any of the topics in this edition. Please contact us via [NationalSchoolOccHealth@nwl.hee.nhs.uk](mailto:NationalSchoolOccHealth@nwl.hee.nhs.uk). For more detailed information about the School and its work, please visit our website at [www.lpmde.ac.uk/training-programme/specialty-schools/occupational-medicine](http://www.lpmde.ac.uk/training-programme/specialty-schools/occupational-medicine)