



**Minutes of the
POOSH Committee Meeting
Held on 28 January 2013
The Institute of Risk Management
6 Lloyd's Avenue
London EC3N 3AX**

Present:

Ms Susanna Everton	AOHNP	SE
Ms Sharon Brunt	BOHS (Chair)	SB
Mr Reg Sell	IEHF	RS
Mr Subash Ludhra	IOSH	JH
Ms Carolyn Williams	IRM	CW
Ms Caroline Minshell	RCN	CM
Mr Harry Hopkins	SARS	HH
Ms Clare McNicholas	HSE	CMcN
Mr Roger Bibbings	RoSPA	RB

Invited Guest:

Professor Diana Kloss	CfWH	DK
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Secretariat:

Mrs Anna McNeil	Secretariat	AM
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1. Welcome and apologies

Sharon Brunt welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked Carolyn Williams and IRM for hosting the meeting and providing lunch.

Apologies had been received from:

Mr Barry Holt	IIRSM
Mr Paul Madgwick	RSPH
Ms Jenny Morris	CIEH

2. Welcome new members

SB welcomed SL to his first meeting of POOSH. SL is the immediate Past-President of IOSH and is replacing John Holden as the IOSH representative on POOSH.

It was noted that Jenny Morris would be representing CIEH and replaces David Kidney as the CIEH representative on POOSH.

**3. Invited Guest – Professor Diana Kloss
Chair, Council for Work and Health**

SB welcomed Professor Kloss and thanked her for coming to speak to the POOSH Group.

DK informed the group that the Council for Work and Health was an organisation set up to include all those involved in occupational health practice. DK had been appointed Chair as she was independent of all the organisations involved, yet still had extensive expertise as a barrister and employment lawyer. DK took this opportunity to thank IOSH for very kindly funding the Secretariat.

The Council had set up various projects and consideration of the GP Fit Notes was the first. Letters for the employers to send to the GP asking if the work proposed for the employee would be acceptable were currently being trialled in Leicestershire. While the RCGP was very supportive, there had been opposition from the BMA. The draft letters had also been placed on the Council's website.

DK stated that she had attended the DWP meeting in June 2012 to consider the Fit Notes. It was reported that the Fit Note was now electronic; the GP would complete the form on the computer, print a copy for the patient to take to the employer. It was noted that there was nothing on the Fit Note to indicate if the employee was totally fit – only unfit or fit with modifications.

The DWP have now included a box on the Fit Note saying “I do not need to see you again” (therefore the employee is fit or not) and the box must be ticked yes or no.

The DWP were also producing four sets of guidance in connection with the Fit Note and the Council would be responding to DWP in due course.

DW raised the point that GPs need to know about the benefits system and there was a considerable impact on Statutory Sick Pay if an employee presented for work for a very short amount of time on a given day rather than be absent for the whole day.

DK reported that the Government response to the Frost / Black report had now been published (CM8476). It was noted that an independent advisory and assessment service would be run by occupational health professionals from 2014. The DWP would be going out to tender for the service. Funding for the service would probably come from projected sick pay savings.

It was noted that NHS Plus would be folding at the end of March 2013 and Syngentis (a company limited by guarantee) would take over in April 2013. They have a very successful telephone advice line. DK added she was a non Executive Director on their Board and felt that Syngentis would probably bid for the DWP contract.

DK added that the Government is considering giving employers tax relief for offering employees physiotherapy, CBT etc. It was hoped this would be announced in the forthcoming budget.

SL asked who would be manning the new services and where would the expertise come from as there was currently a staffing shortage in the occupational health profession.

DK replied that this would be something to be considered at the next Council sub-committee meeting.

RB felt that there was a lack of understanding amongst GPs about what the employee's job entails. The majority of employees are from SMEs who do not have access to occupational health services.

DK agreed that occupational health professionals needed to know about the employee's work and asked how the Council could help HSE to communicate with employers regarding work issues. CMcN stated that the forthcoming occupational health workshop taking place at the British Library would gather information on existing and new occupational health issues that were facing industry.

Another project set up by the Council for Work and Health was to consider the formation of a College of Occupational Health. Council were currently looking at qualifications, especially nurse qualifications, but unfortunately the NMC had not been very helpful. However, professions allied to medicine had done considerable work in this area.

NHS Plus had given the Council a £10,000 grant to scope and develop a plan and strategy for a UK occupational health workforce for the next decade.

DK informed the group that the Society of Occupational Medicine (SOM) had opened its membership to non-medics. In addition consideration was being given to merging the SOM and Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM).

DK asked if any of the POOSH member organisations may be willing to fund a Council project that safety practitioners could benefit from, including information indicating what employers need.

SL stated that large employers did not really understand occupational health and therefore SMEs were even less likely to understand.

DK added that the Council for Work and Health has now been set up as a Company Limited by Guarantee. Elections for positions on the Board will take place shortly and it is hoped the Board will be set up by the AGM in May 2013. DK indicated she was very confident about the future of the Council for Work and Health.

DK then referred to the letter from IOSH asking the Council for Work and Health to sign a letter to the Employment Minister. (see also item 11). While DK was happy to sign the letter, she reported that some members of the Council were not happy with all the points in the letter. It was therefore agreed that the letter would not be signed.

DK thanked POOSH for inviting her to speak to them and it was agreed that the Council for Work and Health Strategy and Business Plan documents would be circulated to POOSH for their information.

Action: AM

4. Minutes of the POOSH committee meeting held on 8 October 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2012 were agreed as an accurate account.

5. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda

There were no matters arising not already covered by the agenda.

6. Reports from member organisations

It was noted that the following reports had been circulated prior to the meeting:

HSE, RoSPA, IOSH, BOHS, IEHF

CMcN stated that HSE was keen for members to respond to the consultation regarding the National Local Authority Enforcement Code by 1 March 2013.

The following report was tabled and a copy is attached to the minutes:

AOHNP

7. Future speakers – update

It was noted that Professor Richard Taylor, non Executive Director of HSE and Chair of the Institute of IIG, had agreed to attend the POOSH meeting on 14 May 2013. Full location details will be sent to Professor Taylor. RB suggested he should be asked to cover what has been done to progress the Lofstedt Report and risk literacy.

Action: AM

It was agreed that Adam Marshall, British Chamber of Commerce, and a representative from the Occupational Health Lawyers Association (Details from RB) should both be invited to the October meeting.

Action: AM to contact RB for contact details

Action: AM to prepare invitation letters

8. IIG Joint working with the HSE

HH reported that he and RS would be giving feedback to the IIG by sharing POOSH minutes (after approval). It was agreed that HH would obtain the IIG minutes for circulation to the POOSH group.

Action: HH and AM

It was noted that there were three work streams as follows:

1. Competence (Life long learning) - finalised
2. Business Case for H&S – close to being finalised
3. Risk Communication - finalised

HH added that another thread the IIG was trying to improve was the teaching of risk to undergraduates, however this was mainly via electronic methods as it was difficult to get additional material into the curricula.

It was noted that the next meeting of the IIG would be in June 2013 and HH would report developments to POOSH at the October meeting.

HH asked members to send him any comments on the Life long learning document.

Action: All

9. Consultants' Register - update

SL reported that a meeting had taken place earlier in January to promote OSHCR. There were currently 2202 members on the register (with 2700 members at the highest point over an eighteen-month period). The reasons given for not renewing membership were that the consultants were either no longer in the business, or they had not got any work from being on the register.

RB stressed that promoting the register was important and felt there should have been baseline research to see how many organisations use consultants.

It was noted that the OSHCR website was used more by consultants than employers. Discussion was ongoing regarding the complaints procedure.

SL stated that the people who needed to know about OSHCR were the SME and it was difficult to get the message and information to them. Those who know about OSHCR tended to be professionals.

10. Health and Safety Legislation - Lofstedt Report

CMcN reported the following developments (for links see the HSE report previously circulated):

- The HSE toolbox was now on the website and between 5 September and 31 December 2012 there had been 75,631 separate visitors to the toolbox.
- The HSE website review had now been completed.
- On 31 December 2012 HSE published a research report that was commissioned to help decide if the core set of health and safety regulation could be consolidated to provide clarity and savings for businesses.
- A consultation on 14 legislative measures proposed for revocation ran between April and July 2012. Responses have been analysed and presented to the HSE Board. HSE is on track to revoke these in April 2013 and one further regulation is still under consideration.
- Consultation on plans to simplify and clarify RIDDOR and to exempt some self-employed people from H&S legislation has now closed. Responses have been analysed and the findings will be considered by the HSE Board in early 2013.
- The outcome of the consultation on ACOPs was considered by the HSE Board in December 2012 and the proposed revisions and consolidations agreed. The three proposed withdrawals are to be considered at future HSE Board meetings and are due to complete by the end of the year.

CMcN concluded by stating that the HSE continues to make good progress on the delivery of the Lofstedt recommendations, in line with the timetable announced by the Government.

RB stated that regarding safety and the self-employed, he felt that the HSE had made things more complicated than necessary.

SL added that the HSE were trying to promote that employers should not need to worry about health and safety but focus on their own level of risk. He commented that the courts were at odds with the HSE and asked if HSE were talking to the courts.

CMcN replied that the Myth Buster Panel had been set up to clarify the myths.

RB recommended that a representative from occupational health and safety lawyers be invited to attend a future meeting. RB would supply contact details to AM in due course. It was agreed that a representative could be invited to attend the October 2013 meeting (when it was hoped that Adam Marshall of the British Chamber of Commerce would also be present).

Action: RB and AM

11. To consider how POOSH should respond to consultations

SB reported that POOSH and the Council for Work and Health had been invited by IOSH to sign a tri-network letter on common areas of concern and possible solutions to the Employment Minister, Mark Hoban MP). However, not all members of each organisation were happy to sign the letter and therefore the letter was not sent.

It was noted that on this occasion the package of areas of concern were too large and the timescales too tight to work with. HH recommended the group should consider a mechanism to enable POOSH to respond to future request.

RB added that the purpose of POOSH was to exchange views between organisation, speak singly and also collectively. Drawing up a Memorandum of Understanding would show how this could work. He added that POOSH members should remind their organisations and associations to respond to consultations.

SL asked if there was an appetite for POOSH to respond to consultations and / or to support other organisations' statements. If so, it would be necessary to agree the mechanism of the process and consider how it would be implemented. He added that if POOSH could start to support statements by member organisations it would strengthen POOSH's reputation and standing.

It was agreed that there was an appetite for POOSH to respond to consultations and support other organisations' statements where it could be kept to main points of principle. The Lofsted 'review of the review' would be due shortly and it was hoped that it would be possible to find a common view that POOSH could put forward.

It was agreed that AM would circulate the current terms of reference to the group for comments and SB would pull together the responses.

Action: AM, All and SB

12. Any other business

12.1 RoSPA

RB circulated copies of “The Big Book of Accident Prevention” to the Group. RB reported that hospital admission data (A&E) had been analysed and he felt that accidents should be re-prioritised in public health. He added that there were more hospital admissions outside working hours and more life years were lost through accidents than cancer, heart disease and stroke. RB requested that POOSH members give him any feedback on the document.

Action: All

12.2 AOHN

SE informed the Group that the Ruth Alston Memorial Lecture will take place at the NEC on Tuesday 5 March 2013, 7pm. Professor Diana Kloss will be the guest speaker and all would be welcome.

For further details please contact admin@aohnp.co.uk

13. Date, time and venues of the next meetings

The meetings for 2013 were confirmed as follows:

Tuesday 14 May 2013

1100 – 1430

Host – BOHS, Derby (full location details to be circulated in due course)

Thursday 10 October 2013

1100 – 1500

Host - CIEH (to be confirmed)