



Briefing from meeting on 3 February 2011

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Council considered the issues of accommodation and funding and how they could ensure its sustainability. Considerable savings had been made as members had provided rooms for meetings at no cost but the Council would need to consider other funding options for the future, eg. to become a member organisation or to seek central funding. It was agreed that the Council should develop a business plan which would identify the running costs for 2012/13 to establish the income required to maintain it. A work programme with defined outcomes should also be developed. This should focus on areas which may be specific to one member organisation but would benefit from input from all professions.

Judith Allanson was nominated to maintain an overview of the work capability assessment process in the light of Professor Malcolm Harrington's review and the Government response, and to represent the Council in any further consultation.

Diana Kloss had prepared an article on the Equality Act which would be uploaded to the website.

David Coggon reported on a successful meeting between himself and Olivia Carlton and Anne Milton, Minister for Public Health, and Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform. They discussed how occupational input into local public health services can be achieved and training for OH physicians and other professions.

Erin Flood from ABI (Association of British Insurers) gave a very interesting presentation and Q&A session on 'Removing disincentives from Vocational Rehabilitation', based on a report written in 2009 from an original piece of work by ABI. The report had not been published as it contained information which had been provided confidentially but had been discussed with the Treasury, although no action had been taken.

The sub group on guidance for employers on communication with general practitioners had produced draft documents for discussion. The comments of the Council were noted and would be taken back to the group to update the documents.

Diana Kloss and Helen Kirk reported on a meeting with the NMC on 24 January to discuss the Council paper on training for OH nurses. Ann Harries had also attended on behalf of the Council. Although the NMC agreed with the points raised they felt that this is part of a wider issue and are currently reviewing Part 3 of the register. The results of the review will go out to consultation when complete. Helen Kirk reported that the RCN were also conducting a review which will be published shortly and will identify 3 levels of practice: novice (requiring supervision), practitioners, and advanced practitioners. OH nurses should fall into the latter. The NMC emphasised that their role was to protect the public but it could be argued that ensuring healthcare professionals are appropriately qualified is in the public interest. David Coggon and Dame Carol Black agreed to write to the NMC to support changes in nurse training.

A sub group was currently developing a framework to map the skills and knowledge required for other professionals working in occupational health. Nicola Hunter had provided a written update on progress which had been circulated but expressed some concern that this might not be specific enough to develop and improve training programmes. It was agreed to review this and identify further action at the May meeting.

A project to identify fiscal disincentives to health promotion in the workplace was proving difficult to move forward due to lack of information costs and benefits. It was therefore agreed to drop this.

It was agreed that the Council should respond to the White Paper but specifically to the section on 'Working Well', which related to occupational health.

David Coggon shared the FOM response to consultation on 'Liberating the NHS – developing the healthcare workforce' and it was agreed that the Council should also prepare a response to this.

The Council had been invited to attend a roundtable on health and welfare reform on 8 February. Nicola Hunter agreed to represent the Council.

The date of the next meeting was 11 May 2011.