



## **Briefing from Council Meeting held on Thursday 16 May 2019**

The meeting was chaired by Steve Boorman and the following items discussed:

### **WHU Workplace Modifications Project**

The chair reported the project had finished at the end of March and been delivered to the WHU. He went on to give a history of the project. He noted that the resource was aimed at doctors but could be used by other professionals freely. He added that following the launch of the resource the traffic to the Council's website had increased significantly. It was noted that a GP On-line article had recently been published. To date, only positive feedback had been received regarding the resource, which was very encouraging. The Council were informed that the Workplace Modifications project had won the Vocational Rehabilitation Association award for Innovation and Research (2019).

Council members, who had been involved in the project, were thanked for all their efforts. He added that the resource was on the website and would be updated and edited when necessary.

### **WHU "Transforming Occupational Health" and Expert Advisory Group**

It was noted that a consultation exercise will proceed, and would look at future models for OH, methods of funding and innovation and technology. However, it was not known at this point when the consultation would go live. The OH Expert Stakeholder Group would continue as a 'virtual' group.

### **Taxation attracted by the provision of occupational physiotherapy and mental health provision**

Concerns were raised regarding the tension with the "benefit in kind" taxation system between an employer offering early intervention support and care and a personal tax liability for the employee (that the employer often has to support in some way, adding to the cost).

It was noted that recently many large provider organisations had received letters from HMRC with a list of criteria, including that delivering care within four weeks of first going off sick would be expected to attract tax liability. This is significantly at odds with the strong evidence in multiple studies that early intervention (prior

and within days of first needing time off), is effective and does reduce sickness absence levels. It was noted that employer-supported care after 28 days would be unlikely to be effective as at this point, conditions are often more chronic and require longer term treatment.

Council discussed this fully and it was noted that this was a key to incentives and disincentives. It was agreed that this was an important area to be covered in the Transforming OH consultation exercise and if possible should be specifically referred to.

### **Business Plan**

The revised Business Plan was approved by the Council and would be placed on the Council's website.

It was noted that two new subgroups would be formed, a Marketing Subgroup and a Governance Subgroup.

### **Health and Wellbeing @ Work Conference (Birmingham 5-6 March 2019)**

The chair reported that there had been approximately 3000 delegates at the event. The Council had been well represented, with speakers in all streams. The Council had a stand at the event and over 500 leaflets and business cards were handed out.

### **Consultations: "Work as a Clinical Outcome"**

It was noted that this piece of work had been completed and passed to the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges. A conference took place on 9 April 2019, at which Anne de Bono, Rob Hampton, Gina Radford and the chair were speakers. The chair reported that the Colleges were committed to getting this topic into undergraduate and postgraduate teaching programmes. The GMC also agreed it should be part of the basic medical training.

### **Website**

The deputy chair gave a presentation showing the website traffic figures for the past year. It was noted that the traffic to the 'revamped' website (which was launched in December 2018) was considerably higher than previously. The next important feature to note was that the numbers accessing the website following the launch of the Work Modifications resource launch had risen significantly.

The next meeting of the Council will take place on Tuesday 17 September 2019