

THE COUNCIL FOR  
**WORK & HEALTH**



# March 2026 Newsletter



## A message from our Chair, Kevin Bampton

Recent weeks have seen a flurry of activity around workplace health of a pace and intensity I have not seen since the outbreak of COVID-19.

Part of this pace is clearly being influenced by the Keep Britain Working (KBW) team's agenda.

At February's IOSH Parliamentary event, Sir Charlie Mayfield set out the team's intention to further develop the employer's voluntary standard and to persuade more workplaces to buy into it. He also set out the desire to come up with incentives for employers to do so and to create a "compelling evidence base" for it. It is clear that the KBW team are working with a few trusted "suppliers," rather than having an interest in getting caught up with professional, standards or regulatory bodies. KBW is pitched very much as a "movement" of employers wanting to keep people in the workplace and productive for the benefit of employers, led by business interests, which may or may not be aligned with the short, medium and long-term health needs of employees.

It does present a clear choice for those who provide support to workplaces. Interventions for better health seldom work without employer engagement and support and occupational health is commercial market. Good business sense and pragmatism would be to follow the money and to shape the standards of service provision around the standards employers set. However, if this is the only approach, then it sits uncomfortably with me from the point of view of ethics and law. The focus of provision of professional health services must be the person, not the paymaster and the standard of care provided must be determined by good professional judgement, not by business convenience.

If we needed evidence of the importance of a standards-led, evidence-based and person-centred approach, it came out in the eloquent and sometimes distressing discussions in the Council's Creative Industries Webinar. Employer need and health protection in the workplace are not aligned, even when the principal asset of the workplace is individualised down to a particular performer.

Providers need to have clear and comprehensive service standards and professional competency standards, derived from an evidence base of what works. For this reason, we are inviting all members, especially those who contribute to service and professional standards setting, to an in-person meeting with the Council. Our aim is to set out

a national standards framework to underpin good ethical and professionally defensible practice in the sector. This is an end in itself, but should also facilitate a clearer idea for employers and worker of what the role and expectation is from clinical and non-clinical providers, demystify language and act as a precursor for any other national developments, such as the much-desired national provision available to all.

The meeting is taking place in Central London on Tuesday 24 March 2026, from 1600-1800. Anna will send details to all Council members now. If you need further information please contact:

[Anna@forumconferences.com](mailto:Anna@forumconferences.com)

There will be overlapping, complementary and perhaps even somewhat competing standards, but we can work together to make the case for professionally standardised, person-centred occupational health if the UK's occupational health professions are going to be impactful and effective.

# THE COUNCIL FOR **WORK & HEALTH**

## **Working Well in the Creative Industries: Staying Creative for Longer**

**Webinar held on 26 February 2026**

A few words from Mandy Murphy, Deputy Chair

We had a fantastic line up of speakers at the event last week and what an honour to collaborate with Dr. Justin Varney and Jean King from DHSC. Listening to the speakers at this event left me both fascinated about work and research in this field and some sobering messages that peaked my curiosity.

What struck me most throughout this session was how much of the creative industries I had taken for granted and aspects of health and risk I had not appreciated fully, until you look closer.

From the design and engineering of stage sets, to the physical demands placed on dancers, to the psychological load carried by musicians and performers navigating competition, precarity and public scrutiny, and the challenges with being a freelancer and less access to health and wellbeing services we see in many employer organisations these days. Every speaker revealed a layer of work that is largely invisible to audiences.

Again and again, health and wellbeing surfaced as something very practical: noise exposure, injury prevention, fatigue, mental health, access to early physio rather than the abstract 'nice to have' option we see so often. We heard examples of employers who have embedded this well, offering on-site physios, psychology support, and other forms of accessible support such as training leaders to assess and sign post early for interventions, and the difference this makes was striking. Speakers spoke about where support existed, performers felt valued. And when people feel valued, they perform better. And the other point I was taking home was while skill and talent may get someone on stage, sustaining a career for these performers requires care for the *whole human* behind the performance, and everyone around them.

There are many questions that lingered such as "If the benefits are clear, the evidence strong (which it was), and the costs not prohibitive, why isn't this already mainstream? And what would it take to make health and wellbeing a standard feature of creative work, rather than a privilege for the few?" It's possibly a question that sits in many industries where we work and maybe there will be lessons learned from other industries to this one.

So the conversation will continue in this space as we will collaborate with DHSC on establishing a working group to support taking these conversations further.

## News from Council Members



## iOH

iOH have published OH Today with articles including neurodiversity in the workplace, the value of occupational health, absence management, proprioception and work, cardiac conditions in the rail industry, wellbeing insights and others

<https://ioh.org.uk/oh-today/>

We are all geared up for the NEC Health and Wellbeing at Work conference and their annual RAML dinner, which features Nancy Doyle as speaker. Tickets are still available <https://ioh.org.uk/ruth-alston-memorial-lecture-and-gala-dinner-2026/> We so look forward to networking opportunities of both events and of course the learning opportunities. Several board members will be speaking.

A new offer to members of an EAP and wellbeing service, starts from March 2026. More news on this next month

IGPP have offered free tickets for several conferences and discounted courses to iOH members including HR, AI in Health Care and others, following a successful Health and Wellbeing conference. This blog from Dr Karen Michell of IOSH describes the key learning points of the event <https://ioh.org.uk/2026/02/the-annual-health-and-well-being-in-the-workplace-conference-2026/>

The AI in OH collaboration group has had a rebrand and now has a linkedin page. Work is proceeding on a transformation project. This latest publication describes achievements to date <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/ai-in-occupational-health-what-comes-next/> .

Recorded webinars are available and further webinars are planned and can be found alongside signposting to training and latest news.

<https://ai.ioh.org.uk/>

Janet O'Neill

Vice President



# Home working guidance and resources

**Employers have the same health and safety responsibilities for people working at home as for any other worker.**

Our [home working guidance](#) provides straightforward actions to manage home workers' health and safety.

This includes the risks of [stress and poor mental health](#) as well as [working with display screen equipment \(DSE\)](#).

Our website also offers:

- [advice for home workers](#)
- a [video and practical tips on good posture](#) when working with DSE



## New to the job: health and safety

Workers have the same chance of an accident in the first 6 months at a workplace as during the rest of their working lives.

Anyone new to the workplace will be facing unfamiliar risks from the job they will be doing and from their surroundings.

We have [guidance to protect those new to a job](#), which includes an in-depth guide to these 6 steps to protect new workers.



**IOSH**

## **Workplace wellbeing: from perks to prevention**

Workplace health and wellbeing issues are rising sharply, with 67 per cent of employers reporting increased issues. Our new white paper urges organisations to stop relying on perks and shift to prevention-first approaches that tackle root-cause risks in workload, culture and job design. Download the paper [here](#).

## **Occupational cancer resources**

IOSH has long highlighted the scale of exposure to carcinogens in the workplace through its No Time to Lose campaign. On World Cancer Day (4 February 2026) IOSH encouraged organisations to review workplace cancer risks, refresh their prevention strategies, raise awareness among workers and join the global conversation. To support employers and OSH professionals, IOSH provides evidence-based, practical [resources](#) to help identify and manage cancer-causing hazards at work, including asbestos, silica dust, sun safety and diesel engine exhaust emissions.



# **National School of Occupational Health (NSOH)**

NSOH and SOM are proceeding with two projects: the training framework for nurses entering OH and clinical standards for management referrals. Both are hoped to be completed by quarter 3 this year

The recordings are now available from our substance use in the workplace conference - if anyone hasn't yet had a link to these, who registered, please email the school.

For further information, please contact Janet O'Neill on [janet.oneill6@nhs.net](mailto:janet.oneill6@nhs.net).



## RoSPA

### EXPERT COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE FUTURE OF OSH SKILLS

- RoSPA is convening leading OSH professionals to tackle workplace skills challenges
- Five focus areas and expert commissioners announced at House of Lords launch event
- The OSH Skills Commission will produce a report of strategic recommendations for government and industry

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), in partnership with Speedy Hire, is bringing together experts and industry leaders to strengthen skills critical to occupational safety and health (OSH) in the UK. The initiative is designed to provide insight and solutions to help OSH professionals tackle a range of challenges

threatening workplace safety, including widening skills gaps, the loss of experienced professionals, and mounting pressures on remaining staff. These issues are being further compounded by difficulties attracting and retaining talent combined with demands associated with changing working conditions and technology.

Launched at a prestigious event at the House of Lords by Head Commissioner and RoSPA Vice President Baroness Crawley of Edgbaston, the OSH Skills Commission will consist of five roundtables of experts addressing a key topic for OSH outcomes, all chaired by distinguished leaders in their field. These discussions and findings will then be compiled into a report containing strategic recommendations for government and industry to support future-proof skills development and workforce resilience

The five topics and commissioners:

- **Recruitment of competent people** - Claudia Jaksh, CEO, Policy Connect
- **Retention of competent people** – Rick Bate, President, Institution of Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH)
- **Consultation and worker representation** – Luke Collins, National Health & Safety Officer, Unite the Union
- **Wellbeing, culture & psychological safety** - Nick Pahl, CEO, Society of Occupational Medicine (SOM)
- **Technology in OSH** – Kate Field, Global Head of People and Social Sustainability, British Standards Institute (BSI)

*Please contact [pressoffice@rospa.com](mailto:pressoffice@rospa.com) for full biographies and images of each commissioner.*

Find out more about the [RoSPA OSH Skills Commission](#)



## **SOM activities and updates**

### **SOM Podcast on Fit Notes: Are we using them as intended?**

In this episode of the SOM Podcast, host Steve Randall is joined by a panel of leading clinicians and occupational health experts to discuss:

- how Fit Notes work in general practice,
- barriers to meaningful “maybe fit for work” recommendations,
- international comparisons from Guernsey’s healthcare system, and
- the growing call for stronger occupational health integration.

[Listen here.](#)

### **OTHER NEWS:**

SOM has issued a [position statement](#) regarding the FOM announcement of the formation of a college for work and health.

SOM will be launching, with the RCPsych, a quality mark for wellbeing products and services shortly.



## **BOHS - Latest News**

### **Action to tackle fraudulent asbestos surveyors - Press Release**

The British Occupational Hygiene Society, the leading certification body for professionals involved in the identification, protection and analysis of asbestos, is leading a national initiative to drive out criminals from the asbestos surveying industry. Asbestos, a substance found in hundreds of thousands of UK buildings becomes cancer causing when it is disturbed, resulting in around 5,000 preventable deaths a year. Identifying the presence of asbestos requires specialist knowledge to safely survey, identify likely places where it is present and to safely take samples.

[PRESS RELEASE](#)

### **IOSH Policy Workshop**

Kevin Bampton, Chair of the Council for Work and Health and BOHS CEO was invited to be a speaker at an IOSH policy workshop that took place on Tuesday 24th February at the Houses of Parliament. The workshop explored how a prevention-first, person-centred approach can Keep Britain Working. Kevin sat on the opening panel and emphasised that prevention only works when we work together — policymakers, employers and health professionals aligned around a shared goal: stop harm before it happens. Occupational hygiene achieves this by controlling exposures at source, protecting people

long before illness develops. The constructive and forward-looking discussion closely reflected BOHS's new 5-year strategy: we won't treat our way out of workforce ill-health — we must prevent it. At the event, we also heard from Sir Charlie Mayfield and the Minister for Employment, Dame Alison McGovern, on early implementation of the Keep Britain Working Review.

### **New DEEEs Guidance**

The Faculty of Occupational Hygiene (FOH) and BOHS have published new [Guidance for Occupational Hygienists on the Assessment and Control of the Health Risks from Diesel Engine Exhaust Emissions \(DEEEs\)](#). While the guidance provides professional information for experts, it should also help health and safety and other professionals understand the required approaches to control exposure to diesel engine exhaust emissions.

### **New BOHS and WFF kitemark scheme**

The Worktop Fabricators Federation (WFF) and BOHS are launching a new industry quality mark to help identify surfaces that have been produced safely, in an effort to protect the health of fabricators.

Set to be officially rolled out this year, the new scheme follows rising diagnoses of silicosis which has been linked to unsafe working practices.

It will be underpinned by regular, independent workplace assessments conducted by professionally registered occupational hygienists, who will focus on the recognition, evaluation and control of workplace health hazards.



## VACANCIES

### **DWP Chief Medical Advisor role**

CS Jobs [Chief Medical Advisor \(SCS2\) - Civil Service Jobs - GOV.UK](#)

Allen Lane Site - [Chief Medical Advisor \(SCS2\) - Allen Lane](#)

# Funding boost to support patients to stay in, and return to work

Patients will receive better support to help them stay in and get back to work, thanks to a £25 million funding boost for a pilot scheme in areas of high economic inactivity.

Health and Growth Accelerators bring together work and health support for people with health conditions, aiming to stop health problems becoming work problems. The pilots in the north of England target the most common conditions that are experienced by people who are economically inactive because of poor health, such as:

- musculoskeletal conditions
- metabolic disorders such as diabetes and hypertension
- mental illness

Case Study: One patient – an accountant who had experienced a stroke and was suffering from fatigue and brain fog – benefitted from its Stroke Rehabilitation Service. She was provided with a tailored return to work plan and supported to work with her employer to request an occupational health review, ultimately allowing her to return to her original work hours within months.

To read the full press release, [click here](#).

## Dates for your diary



## 4 March 2026

Work-related stress training courses from HSE

Our training is delivered by experts to help organisations comply with the law and keep workforces healthy and safe.

We are running the following stress-themed courses in the near future:

- [Work-related stress: developing manager capability](#)  
4 March, live online
- [NEBOSH HSE Certificate in Managing Stress at Work](#)  
25 March, HSE Science and research centre, Buxton

HEALTH &  
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@WORK

## 10 & 11 March 2026

Health and Wellbeing at Work conference will take place on 10 & 11 March 2026 at the NEC Birmingham.

The event is the UK's largest event dedicated to improving the health, wellbeing, safety, behaviour and culture of today's workforce



## 22 April 2026

Visit to University of Lancashire Wellness Centre 22 April

Book at <https://www.som.org.uk/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=923>



## 29-30 April 2026

## **Asbestos 2026 FAAM Conference**

2026 sees the ninth annual asbestos conference organised in conjunction with the Faculty of Asbestos Assessment & Management (FAAM) with an in-person event on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April in Birmingham.

The event brings together researchers, academics, practitioners & regulators, through talks & technical sessions dealing with scientific topics covering key areas regarding the assessment, control & management of asbestos. The conference is open to anyone to attend, not just BOHS & FAAM members. The 2026 Asbestos FAAM conference programme will be available soon!

You can find more information and book your place [here](#).

**[Asbestos 2026 – FAAM Conference \(Birmingham\)](#)**



## **11-14 May 2026**

**[Inhaled Particles & International Particle Toxicology Conference \(Glasgow\)](#)**

**11-14 May 2026**

Two major international conferences unite to explore cutting-edge

science on particle exposure, inhalation and toxicology, with parallel strands and joint sessions.



## 16-17 June 2026

**Call for Abstracts for the SOM/FOM 2026 Annual Scientific Meeting is open. All submissions welcome.**

The Conference will be held in Nottingham on 16th and 17th June 2026. The day before the main Conference, 15th June - there will be workplace visits available (pre-booking essential), as well as the Welcome Reception in the evening at the impressive Nottingham Castle. Please see below for the information. *Submit your abstract(s) ahead of 2nd March 2026 at*

<https://www.occupationalhealthconferences.com/>



## 16-18 June 2026

## **OH2026 – The Workplace Health Protection Conference (Glasgow)**

**16–18 June 2026** (PDCs on 15 June)

A larger, more innovative programme for 2026.

Abstract submissions now open:

<https://app.oxfordabstracts.com/stages/79525/submitter>



# **14-19 February 2027**

## **ICOH 2027 – Call for Abstracts**

Mumbai, India | 14th–19th February 2027 The International Scientific Advisory Committee, the Trustee Committee and the National Scientific Committee of ICOH 2027 invites researchers, professionals, practitioners, and students to actively contribute to the scientific program by submitting abstracts for consideration as oral or poster presentations in the Free Paper Sessions.

<https://www.icoh2027.in/call-for-abstracts.html>. For more information please contact: Email: [SC@icoh2027.in](mailto:SC@icoh2027.in)

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