



Society and Faculty welcome today's announcement of the provider for the Government funded new Health and Work service

The Society of Occupational Medicine and the Faculty of Occupational Medicine welcome today's announcement that the DWP has appointed an accredited quality assured provider* to deliver the new Health and Work Service and that it will become operational later this year.

Dr Richard Heron, President of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine said "This new Government funded service will improve access to occupational health services as anyone who has been off sick for more than four weeks will be able to access it.

Even after short periods, if people fall out of work through sickness, research shows it can be very difficult to re enter the workforce. Run well, this service should support employers to help their staff quickly so they remain in work.

I welcome the proposal for work plans and recommendations to help with return to work, information on how to get appropriate help, and the earlier announcement of a tax exemption of up to £500 a year for each employee on medical treatments recommended by the Health and Work Service or an employer-arranged occupational health service. For this service to be truly effective the issue of funding interventions where needed, such as physiotherapy or counselling, will be critical.

As workers become older, the UK will need to keep people healthy and economically active – often when they are already suffering from a long-term condition or health problem. This new service can help raise awareness amongst workers and employers of the benefits of occupational health and that investment in services is a win-win-win. It's good for the UK's prosperity, it's good for individual businesses and most importantly, it's good for workers' health."

**Safe Effective Quality Occupational Health Service (SEQOHS) is a voluntary accreditation system for occupational health services; it is recognised as the industry standard for occupational health, with approximately three quarters of occupational health services in the UK now signed up to become accredited. Further information is available from: www.seqohs.org*

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Notes

The Society and Faculty of Occupational Medicine are the two leading bodies in the UK for occupational medicine and health.

Further information at: www.som.org.uk and www.fom.ac.uk

The two are in discussions about forming together a single organisation for occupational health.
Further information at: <http://singleorg.co.uk/wordpress/>

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