

PRESS RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL 1 April 2015

IMPROVED SEQOHS STANDARDS LAUNCHED

The Faculty of Occupational Medicine will launch its revised SEQOHS standards on 1 April 2015.

SEQOHS was the first standard setting system for occupational health services in the UK and a ground-breaker internationally. SEQOHS - 'Safe Effective Quality Occupational Health Service' - constitutes a set of standards and a voluntary accreditation system for services that meet the standards.

In 2010 the Faculty of Occupational Medicine committed to reviewing the standards by 2015. So, in early 2014 the Faculty embarked on an extensive consultation process, including an open survey which elicited 178 responses. The consultation is now complete and the new standards are about to be published.

An important change which the Faculty has agreed with the Board of the NHS Health at Work Network is that the NHS standards, previously an extra domain, have been incorporated into the other existing domains, A to F. This has been achieved through their integration into the core standards, or, where more appropriate the specific evidence requirements. Achievement of the NHS requirements will be recognised in the SEQOHS certification.

Other changes include:

- a new standard requiring systematic audit of clinical practice
- a requirement that purchasers must be advised of the value of conducting an occupational health needs assessment, and
- special guidance for single-handed practitioners

The SEQOHS occupational health standards have stood the test of time. The revised version has important but minimal changes, for example the increase in focus on audit. Occupational health services which are already accredited or going through the accreditation process will be allowed a period of grace before moving to the revised standards.

Full information on the revised standards and the change process between the old and the new will be available at <http://www.fom.ac.uk/standards-for-occupational-health-services> from 1 April.

The refreshing of the standards is one of a number of developments currently underway for SEQOHS. The scope of the standards is being extended to include occupational health physiotherapy services. This introduction follows a successful pilot scheme run in collaboration with The Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Occupational Health and Ergonomics (ACPOHE); OH physiotherapy services can register with SEQOHS from 1 May 2015 and further information on this will soon be available.

Faculty President Dr Richard Heron said:

"I think we now have a usefully refreshed and very sound set of standards and I am delighted to be presenting them to the occupational health community; to employers and employees; to

commissioners of services; and to workers in the UK and beyond, whose health and well-being the SEQOHS standards are ultimately designed to protect and enhance.”

Notes for editors

1. SEQOHS is managed by the Royal College of Physicians on behalf of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine.
2. Since its launch in 2010, the SEQOHS accreditation has become recognised as the industry standard for occupational health services, with over 150 accredited and many more undergoing the accreditation process. Accredited services encompass both NHS and private sectors and range from single handed practices to multinational companies.
3. Occupational health services wishing to become accredited register first with SEQOHS; they upload evidence into the SEQOHS web system and then, when their uploading of evidence is completed, they receive a site visit by trained assessors. Accreditation is valid for five years, subject to annual renewal.
4. SEQOHS provides training days to help occupational health units prepare for the accreditation process.

Further information

www.seqohs.org

<http://www.fom.ac.uk/standards-for-occupational-health-services>

Contact

Patrick Cullen
020 3116 6910
Patrick.cullen@fom.ac.uk