



## **THE UK GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO DAME CAROL BLACK'S REVIEW OF THE HEALTH OF BRITAIN'S WORKING-AGE POPULATION**

Founded in 1953, the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) is a learned society with the objects of improving scientific knowledge and practice in the prevention of ill health from occupational and environmental hazards. Its members are drawn from a wide range of multidisciplinary specialities and include leading academics and practitioners in the field. Our organisation includes the Faculty of Occupational Hygiene, which provides examinations and qualifications in occupational hygiene. Our publication, the Annals of Occupational Hygiene is acknowledged as one of the leading global scientific journals in the field. The BOHS was founded in 1953 and for over 50 years has worked to prevent ill health from work.

### **Improving health and work: changing lives**

Occupational Hygiene is one of the key activities under occupational health identified by Lord Roben's report on Safety and Health at Work in June 1972. Occupational Hygiene is concerned with reducing the incidence of work related ill health, an area that deserves greater recognition in the report on work and health – occupational illnesses are currently 18 times that of fatal and major injuries. In 2007/08, HSE report:

- **2.1 million** people were suffering from an illness they believed was caused or made worse by their current or past work.
- **1.3 million** of these cases were suffered by people working during the year, of which 563 000 were new cases.
- **2056** people died of mesothelioma (2006), and thousands more from other occupational cancers and lung diseases.
- **34 million** days were lost overall (1.4 days per worker), 28 million due to work-related ill health and 6 million due to workplace injury

The case for the new European Regulations on Chemicals REACH is largely based on reducing the impact of chemicals on health at work and this will increase attention on the practice of occupational hygiene principles. The society therefore welcomes the timely and constructive response by the UK Government on Dame Carol Black's report and wishes to make a contribution, particularly in the continuing need to reduce the above figures. As a multi-disciplinary society with decades of experience in this area, BOHS is uniquely positioned to provide a contribution on the impact of the working environment on health and the means to control hazardous exposures and reduce the burden of occupational ill health.

Members of the Society have a long track record of contributing and serving on HSE Advisory Committees and taking a full and constructive part in improving health at work. The Society would therefore welcome the opportunity to contribute to this important work.

BOHS therefore requests the opportunity to nominate a participant to join the proposed Council on Occupational Health.

**Steve Bailey**  
**President**



**Disclaimer**

The views in the document provide a considered opinion of the issues as they relate to the objects of the Society to improve scientific knowledge and practice in the prevention of ill health from occupational and environmental hazards. It may not necessarily coincide with the views of individual members or their employing organisations. It is not intended to convey any legal interpretation.