

# Political drivers

- “It’s the economy stupid”: Ill health affecting the employment market
- Conservative party in power:– no nationalising of Occupational Health. Mixed market model only option
- Interest from civil service: Department of Health and DWP work and health unit. Support of CMO
- Influence of trade associations lobbying e.g. CBI, FSB
- Tactics – SOM House of Lords lunch with Lord Blunkett
- Evidence informed: SOM value proposition document and policy-literature
- Covid - new role of employer?
- Cost of living crisis

# Process reflections

---

## Before Budget:

- OH related policy paper before – DHSC/DWP *Health is Everyone's Business* - laid the ground
- OH seen as solution to the worklessness due to ill health
- SOM/FOM and others capacity to engage with pace of policy development
- Solution offered
- Complex area – also management/ access/ leadership issue

## 2023 Budget recognition

- Political response to ill health affecting employment market. OH mentioned 20 plus times Support from CBI/CIPD/FSB etc
- SOM supported Budget measures:  
<https://www.som.org.uk/budget-health-measures-first-step-towards-tackling-workforce-drop-outs>

## Budget – detail

£25m for a subsidy pilot for SME's to access occupational health to examine the impact on uptake of OH and build an evidence base for a national roll out of the subsidy. Likely 80% subsidy for first assessment

## Two new consultations:

- Treasury - concerning opportunities to incentivise uptake of OH for employers through taxation
- The second explores increasing employer engagement with OH by regulation or other levers.

<https://www.som.org.uk/new-government-consultations-occupational-health>

## What else was in the budget?

---

- A new service called “WorkWell” – a three-year pilot to provide funding for Integrated care systems (ICSs) to provide lower level biopsychosocial support from clinical and non-clinical services to encourage people to return to work. Exact service decided at local level by the ICSs, but may include access to OH /MSK services
- MSK and Mental health online tools - £400m
- A “Universal Support” offer

## Other engagement – NHS/ DHSC Major Conditions Strategy

---

Focuses on how best to prevent, diagnose early, treat, and manage the six major groups of conditions, including MSK.

Looking at conditions that drive-ill health and contribute to the burden of disease in the population in England



Supporting occupational health  
and wellbeing professionals

# Future OH delivery landscape

---

- Multidisciplinary approach
- Bio psychosocial delivery, with OH wrap around
- Use of online tools
- Mixed market model
- Better outcome measures
- Improved quality indicators e.g. through SEQOHS
- Greater use of innovation e.g. AI for Fit note. OH following discharge from hospital
- Engage with future of work; design based approach, job design and good work

..role of manager crucial – support / flexibility etc



Supporting occupational health  
and wellbeing professionals

# Future Advocacy focus

---

## External

- Universal Access to OH including enforcement using HSE
- Localising agenda – DWP/DHSC link up
- Need for regulation e.g. mandatory return to work plan as in Netherlands
- Fit note review

## Internal

- Use of technology (mindful of inclusivity) e.g. AI
- Data – on OH workforce and activity.. through OH census
- Focus on prevention and benefits of investment
- Strengthening OH leadership
- Accountability through outcome measures



# Risks

---

- Unemployment increases leading to loss of interest on issue
- Change in Government and loss of interest
- Change in personnel e.g. CMO

# Next steps

---

- Consultation responses
- Launch OH census
- Lobby for OH investment in Autumn statement
- CMO meet - align across Government departments
- Implementation support e.g. Public health /ICS engagement
- Manifesto advocacy