



Society of Occupational Medicine
Occupational Health Awards 2024

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Welcome to the SOM Occupational Health Awards 2024

Launched in 2019, the SOM Occupational Health Awards are a celebration of the superb work that occupational health professionals undertake every day.

The Awards showcase occupational health – demonstrating the value of occupational health to organisations and the wider community.

This year, we were once again overwhelmed by the number and quality of submissions. It was a pleasure to read through the entries and discover the innovative and important work that is being done at both an individual and organisational level.

When judging the Awards, we looked at innovative leadership e.g. influencing Boards for real health and business benefit; collaborative work – delivering and influencing as part of a multidisciplinary team; driving best practice and overcoming barriers beyond the traditional occupational health service model, and innovation e.g. on risk management and contribution to prevention.

Huge congratulations to the very deserving winners and thank you to everyone who took the time to enter this year.

A big thank you also to our generous sponsors: Meddbase and NEBOSH.

**Professor
Kaveh Asanati**



**Head Judge
SOM Occupational
Health Awards 2024**



Meet our generous sponsors

NEBOSH

NEBOSH is a charity who have been developing relevant, recognised and respected health, safety, wellbeing, risk and environmental qualifications for over 40 years. Over half a million people from around the world have achieved a NEBOSH qualification, and use the knowledge and skills gained to keep colleagues safe and well in their workplace.



Meddbase

Meet Meddbase, the secure Occupational Health Management Software at the forefront of digitally connecting healthcare operations for organisations worldwide.

Tailored for the needs of Occupational Healthcare, it empowers organisations through time-saving workflow automation, ensuring accuracy and enabling scalability.

With a vision of creating a future where all facets of healthcare operate cohesively through technology, Meddbase continues to be a trusted partner for global healthcare providers.





Outstanding Occupational Health Initiative 2024

Kirklees Council has seen an increase in sickness absence since 2022, with mental health the biggest cause. Analysing Occupational Health and Wellbeing data highlighted a noticeable trend in workplace relationship breakdowns. In response, the unit embedded relational and restorative specialists into the team and in partnership with clinicians an enhanced service offer was developed to support a change in culture.

OH management referrals for stress/anxiety as a result of a workplace relationship breakdown/ conflict are jointly triaged between a clinician and a restorative practice specialist. Employees receive additional support to address relationship breakdowns as opposed to the conventional management referral route and occupational report making recommendations that may or may not be followed.

A programme of support has been developed to help the employee develop skills in building, maintaining, and repairing relationships. Employees are encouraged to consider how their behaviour and relationships can impact on their own and others wellbeing and levels of stress.

To date, 500 employees have received additional restorative support and analysis of feedback shows that these employees valued the combination of sharing personal experiences and learning new techniques to minimise workplace stress/anxiety. They understood the importance of feeling connected to colleagues to enhance wellbeing.

This initiative has seen a reduction in management referrals where a challenging relationship impacts on positive wellbeing and mental health which could potentially result in long term sickness absence. Employees are seeking direct support at the earliest opportunity.

Winner:
Kirklees Council





Outstanding Occupational Health Initiative 2024

Thirty five percent of referrals to Wye Valley NHS Trust OH are for mental health issues. Provision of specialist mental health support presented unique challenges in a small rural NHS Trust, located within farming communities, which struggles with recruitment.

Funding was secured from NHS Charities for recruitment of a mental health and wellbeing nurse for a 12-month pilot from June 2023. The appointed candidate had experience with CRISIS and home treatment teams, CAHMS, community mental health, service development and dementia care. The pilot integrated with the OH team to provide:

- Support through management and self-referrals for comprehensive mental health and fitness to work assessments with appropriate further signposting and referral.
- Manager and HR consultations to improve understanding and communication of mental health when managing staff with complex mental health presentations.
- Group workshops - wellbeing sessions, bereavement support, binge eating disorder, still-birth support and compassionate mind training.
- Bespoke training to departments with high sickness absence.
- Doctor training on workplace mental health and wellbeing.
- Assistance with the Trust's suicide prevention guidance.
- Conversations around suicide at community awareness events.
- Trust Wellbeing Champion supervision.
- Relationship building, and smoother referral pathways, to enhance staff offer with the Hospital Independent Domestic Violence Advocate, Turning Point, IAPT, victim support and mental health services for vulnerable staff.
- Team bereavement support following death in service.
- Promotion of a positive, inclusive mental health culture through accessing proactive mental health services.
- The successful pilot resulted in a 12-month extension for further evaluation to support a full-time permanent post.

Highly Commended:
Wye Valley NHS Trust





Outstanding Occupational Health Practitioner 2024

Over a 25 year career as a specialist OH practitioner, Harj has directly contributed to the innovative GMC policy for supporting doctors with disabilities (Welcome and Valued – adopted across the UK), Midlands charter collaborative improving all trainee doctors wellbeing in the workplace via an agreed charter (that went on to win the BMJ wellbeing workforce team award 2021) and delivered an innovative burnout strategic workshop (winner of a national ophthalmology training award) for Midlands Regional eye surgeons through the Visuacademy.

Harj has been regularly invited to support workshops/conferences across the UK with AOMRC, RSM - Occupational Health section, NHSE, HEE, NSOH, worked with DWP, examined for FOM and been a member of numerous working parties during the COVID pandemic, including leading a regional staff mental wellbeing Hub in Leicestershire.

At a UK level of adoption since 2016 as national TPD at NSOH within England, Harj has developed strategies that have standardised induction, developing and supporting new training posts in industry, supported inter-disciplinary standards, improved training for trainers, set a standard for study leave, and improved quality and numbers of benchmarked doctors wanting to come into the speciality including standardised quality assessment processes (ARCP) for trainees.

As a local trainer, Harj has supported both doctors and nurses into the specialty with some going to take on national roles - Dr Yousef Habbab as FOM Treasurer and Dr Charles Goss as chair of the Health at Work Network. Harj has also developed and delivered on the first hybrid training post for NHS/Ford UK with RPS.

Joint Winner: Professor Harj Kaul





Outstanding Occupational Health Practitioner 2024

Emma has contributed significantly to the understanding and implementation of inclusive women's health in the workplace, changing the landscape for OH professionals and the communities and groups they serve. She has and continues to work tirelessly with passion, enthusiasm and commitment to change the narrative in creating equity for women of working age, and beyond into healthy ageing.

Emma's work and expertise has been recognised by many, including being awarded the prestigious title of Queen's Nurse in 2022, and she is co-chair of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Women and Girls panel. She has acted as vice chair of the SOM's Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, working collaboratively to develop inclusive workplace strategies; for this she was recognised as a finalist at the Nursing Times awards in 2022.

Emma was also asked to become a committee member, representing health at work in contributing to the European Menopause and Andropause Societies global statement on what healthcare professionals need to know about menopause.

Emma was invited to be a committee member for the British Standards Institute and collaboratively wrote the first industry standard to recognise reproductive health in the workplace agenda. This standard - Menstruation, Menstrual Health and Menopause Workplace Guide 2023 was awarded Standard of the Year in 2024.

Emma has chaired (including the all party parliamentary group on menopause), blogged, written, educated and supported on many levels and at many events, which is testament to how well respected she is for her knowledge and commitment on changing the landscape in workplace health.

Emma continues with passion to drive change, now being chair of the recently formed SOM Women's Health at Work Network, the aim of which is to build better women's health in the workplace across the life course.

Joint Winner:
Emma Persand





Outstanding Occupational Health Practitioner 2024

Linda Nicholas deserves to be celebrated as the driving force behind the success of the Occupational Health Department at Wye Valley NHS Trust. She has been integral to the department for 10 years, starting as a Band 5 clinic nurse in 2014 and promoted to manager in 2019 after completing a degree. Her positivity shines, reinforcing her view that the challenges of leading an Occupational Health Service within a rural farming community are an opportunity to innovate.

Linda introduced a paper-free system resulting in cost savings and improved staff clearance times. By working with the education team, she secured student nurse placements in OH to showcase the speciality and attract future talent. She works clinically with a commitment to supporting staff with training opportunities, including mentoring through an OH degree, enhancing retention and enabling staff to thrive.

Linda was largely responsible for the department regaining SEQOHS accreditation. She personally supports the staff menopause group. She has written business cases to gain funding and Executive support for mental health and musculoskeletal health initiatives which were subsequently commended at the NHS Health at Work Awards and highlighted in Trust communications and the AGM.

The department's impressive work spearheaded by Linda, resulted in Wye Valley NHS Trust having the lowest sickness absence rates within the Foundation Trust. Her welcoming manner and advocacy for greater recognition of Occupational Health have led to an upsurge in healthcare professionals undertaking shadowing opportunities within the department. She receives consistently excellent feedback from colleagues and patients alike.

Highly Commended:
Linda Nicholas





Outstanding Occupational Health Practitioner 2024

Lee is a Senior Physiotherapist who has been recognised by the University of Liverpool for the contribution he has made in AHP education. A testimonial by a student in 2024:

“Lee is an amazing educator and mentor. He has taught me not just assessment skills, but also valuable interpersonal skills. My learning environment was always healthy and positive.

Any student would be extremely blessed to have him as a mentor. I have not only grown as a physio but also as a person after my time with him.”

Special Mention: Lee Stenson



Gregor is an Occupational Health Technician at Optima Health. In the past six months alone, Gregor has gone above and beyond to support two individuals who fell ill whilst he was working at client sites. These cases exemplify Gregor's commitment to going over and above in his role, which he does daily with his clients. His actions in these emergencies ultimately helped to save the lives of the individuals.

Special Mention: Gregor Cleland





Outstanding Contribution by an Employer to Workplace Health and Wellbeing 2024

Health, safety, and wellbeing are paramount to Wales & West Utilities. They have taken important steps to help colleagues thrive while embedding wellbeing into the very heart of the workplace culture.

Over the past two years, Wales & West Utilities have continued to prioritise physical safety and improved access to mental health and wellbeing support. They have embarked on a cultural journey to enhance psychological safety – a unique development in the sector.

Notable successes:

- Refreshing their Better Wellbeing strategy.
- Improving usage of mental health support from 4.5% to 10%.
- Reducing unused health surveillance appointments by 4.2%, resulting in 99% of their workforce completing a health surveillance assessment and 100% being offered an appointment.
- Rolling out to 130 managers a structured training programme on psychological safety.
- Training all managers on Inclusion, Equity and Diversity.
- Establishing leadership 'nudges' to keep essential topics at the forefront of the mind.
- Training 35 colleagues in mental health first aid across the business.
- Encouraging exercise through their Cycle to Work Scheme, with 77 people signed up to date.
- Encouraging 775 colleagues to participate in their Big Team Step Challenge.
- Creating a new stakeholder publication, 'Thrive', focused specifically on health and wellbeing and showcasing colleague experiences.
- Updating 'Choices', their digital platform to provide a wider range of health, financial and wellbeing services.
- Onboarding a 24/7 online GP service.
- Promoting wellbeing at colleague roadshows throughout the region.



Winner:
Wales & West Utilities



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Outstanding Contribution by an Employer to Workplace Health and Wellbeing 2024

Cadent Gas has a workforce of over 6,000 employees, many of whom work remotely in challenging conditions. Employees work in safety critical roles, and enhancing their wellbeing has a significant impact on their health and their safety.

Over the past year, Cadent Gas have introduced a significant initiative: their voluntary wellbeing behaviour change programme, delivered by their in-house team of occupational health technicians. This programme offers all employees a free 30-minute wellbeing health check, with behaviour change coaching, a personalised action plan, and further follow up support for those at highest risk. This programme not only addresses modifiable risk factors for disease but also provides a chance for employees to understand their results and to be coached through certain behaviours in order to best improve them.

This approach has not only made their support more targeted but has also led to genuine, measurable health improvements. They have seen reductions in blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI, and glucose levels, as well as improvements in self-reported healthy lifestyle behaviours such as exercise, nutrition, sleep, and smoking cessation.

For a voluntary programme, they have seen fantastic engagement, with over 800 employees since January 2024 and 280 more on the waiting list for this year. This initiative has not only supported employees' wellbeing but also raised awareness of other avenues for wellbeing support. All employees leave with a personalised action plan and a supporting handout. As a result, they have seen a 20% increase in visits to their wellbeing hub since January 2024.



Highly Commended:
Cadent Gas



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Special mention:
Enerjisa Üretim

ENERJISA ÜRETİM

To create a psychosocially safe environment, one-on-one, and face-to-face psychosocial risk assessment interviews are conducted with all employees once a year with the application of organizational psychology specialists. The analysis is carried out in the upper dimensions of job design, social factors, precarious work/working conditions and environment', mistreatment in the workplace, WHO-5 wellbeing index, and employee wellbeing.



Outstanding Contribution to Diversity and Inclusion 2024

Understanding that the world of work and wider environment is not always healthy, open and inclusive in providing equal access to all, Harj has accessed networks and national platforms to support several relevant causes:

1. Royal Medical Benevolent Fund - medical charity supporting financially challenged doctors and their families for over 10 years. Harj has freely at his own cost delivered lectures and workshops that highlight its good work but also given strategic advice on emerging issues to the CEO across the career life spans on what this charity should be offering medical practitioners. During the pandemic Harj was asked to support guidance for volunteers.
2. Neurodiversity in the workplace requires a fair and balanced support structure and Harj has been part of UK developing guidance for postgraduate Deans (CoPMed), having delivered numerous lectures across the UK and supported workshops following numerous invitations for workplace employee fairness.
3. In clinical practice, Harj has observed many female victims of domestic and childhood abuse, developing signposting guidance to improve the future by limiting trauma. He has also shared ideas with the women in medicines group in Leicester about improving parenting skills and the mental health of children of female doctors.
4. As national TPD in the background Harj continues levelling the access and support in confidential safe spaces by providing guidance, mentoring, pastoral and career coaching for OM trainees of different cultural backgrounds and health disabilities by supporting full participation in the future OH workforce.

Winner:
Professor Harj Kaul



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Outstanding Contribution to the Global Development of Occupational Health 2024

Professor Dingani Moyo has served two terms (2015-2018 and 2022-2024) as board member of the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) where he has contributed to the development of good OH practice standards globally. He serves in the ICOH Working Group for the modernisation of ICOH processes and practices through advising the officers and the Board. He has co-chaired the ICOH Mining Occupational Safety Health Committee (MinOSH) on artisanal and small-scale mining and has served as an executive committee member of the Training and Marketing Committee of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM).

Dingani has served on several boards and executive committees of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine of Ireland's Scientific Committee, the South African Society of Occupational Medicine Executive Committee, and the Continental OSHAFRICA Board of Trustees, as head of the Continental OSHAFRICA Education and Capacity Improvement Scientific Committee where he has promoted OH practice globally.

Dingani has over 45 publications in OH in peer-reviewed journals and has authored over 50 OH technical reports, policy frameworks and standard operating procedures for more than 15 African countries under the African Union, World Bank, Global Fund, USAID and the East, Central and Southern African Health Community (ECSA-HC) projects.

Dingani has contributed to improved access to OH services for artisanal miners in Zimbabwe, leading to a screening of 15,000 artisanal miners and diagnosis and commencement of TB preventive therapy of 3000 silicosis cases and over 1000 TB cases diagnosed.

Winner:
Professor Dingani Moyo





Outstanding Occupational Health Team 2024

The PAM EKFB team started its journey in November 2019 and has grown over the past five years into a 44 strong multidisciplinary team. The team brings together OHP, OHA, OHN, OHT, Physiotherapists, Counsellors, Wellbeing Experts, OH Hygienists, D&A Team, GP services and client services and is led by an Operations Director, Clinical Operations Manager and Client Services Manager. The team are dedicated to EKFB, a joint venture of four companies collaborating on the HS2 project over an 80-kilometre stretch.

Since November 2019, the team has grown to meet the diverse needs of the client operating in rural multisite locations with none or limited facilities close by. The project has five sections and has a Health & Wellbeing Centre within each section. The team have had to be flexible to not only meet the geographical spread but also the differing sections and client requirements.

The team aspire to deliver the highest quality service and are passionate about the health and wellbeing of everyone involved with the project. They have had to create effective and innovative ways to improve health and wellbeing, for a workforce that is geographically spread and culturally diverse, with many who live away from home.

Inspiring the team to gain new skills through cross or formal training has supported enthusiasm and retention. Such a multi-disciplinary approach ensures that every aspect of an employee is considered to provide the best care within the OH remit. Collaboration and transparency between PAM and EKFB has achieved an exceptional service by a dynamic team.

Joint Winner:
PAM EKFB



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Outstanding Occupational Health Team 2024

The Northumbria NHS Trust OH service is committed to the 'Growing Occupational Health and Wellbeing' programme, evidenced through their multi-disciplinary team and collaborative working to promote workplace health and influence national and regional public health campaigns.

The team has a core of Specialist OH Nurses, OH Physicians, Physiotherapists, Psychologists and Counsellors. They can provide faster access to support the prevention and treatment of musculoskeletal and psychological ill health - key causes of absence within the public sector. They have innovated in establishing a permanent vaccination team, who support the Trust with staff vaccinations, in-patient and community vaccinations and year-round maternity vaccines.

The department works alongside the Trust's Public Health Team, using the annual Health Needs Assessment data, with national policy drivers. Strategically this is collaborating on current work to improve Women's Health, with a 6-month pilot approved for a Menopause advice clinic. The team has provided follow-up blood pressure monitoring following public health mini-MOTs for staff, identifying staff at risk, benefitting their health.

The team has seen unprecedented demand over the past year and has implemented new processes to triage referrals, leading to significantly reduced waits. The team includes a data analyst, with the creation of a dashboard so that they can see successes and areas that need improvement.

The team also has a wellbeing service, with dedicated staff gyms, staffed by qualified instructors who can provide individualised personal trainer sessions, for a monthly fee of £1 a month. The team can improve confidence in being active and provide health eating advice.

Joint Winner:
Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust



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Outstanding Contribution to Occupational Health Research 2024

In the past five years, Dingani has experienced a significant transformation in occupational health with increased OH research publications. Dingani's contribution to OH research in Africa has been nothing short of transformative. In 2024 alone, he published 14 research papers on OH in regional and international peer-reviewed journals. His areas of research interest are in silicosis, tuberculosis, HIV in artisanal and small-scale miners (ASMs), and on OH barriers in Africa, food safety, and health workers' capacity development. He has published 37 OH research papers in the past five years. His research articles have close to 400 citations with an h-index of 12 and i10-index of 13.

In most of his research publications, Dingani has collaborated with local, regional and international authors to add significantly to the African perspective of OH. He has carried out extensive OH work in Africa where he has researched and authored over 45 OH technical reports, policies and procedures for the African Union Development Agency, Global Fund, World Bank, US Agency for International Development (USAID), East Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC) and governments of Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Malawi.

His research publications have enriched OH knowledge and, in some cases, resulted in national policy changes in southern Africa, especially around ASMs. He is prominent and exemplary in OH activities where he is an active and leading member of OH groups such as OSHA Africa Academic and other research academic groupings such as ECHO.



Winner:
Professor Dingani Moyo



Special mention:
**Southern Africa
Miners Association**



The SAMA team have fought tirelessly to facilitate essential benefits medicals for those entitled to medical surveillance having worked in the gold mines of South Africa. They have also set up measures to use AI technology using CAD to facilitate the early detection of TB and silicosis. This novel research and application will aid the early diagnosis and avoid misdiagnosis common in this cohort.



SOM Lifetime Achievement 2024

Dr Elizabeth Murphy has tirelessly worked for decades in promoting best practice, inclusive development of the wider OH team and excellent training within NHS Occupational Medicine and has grown and developed NHS Grampian and subsequently Newcastle Hospitals NHS Trust OH departments. She excels in leadership and support of the whole team, encouraging clinical and non-clinical staff to develop their practice, seeing and showing each one their value, encouraging involvement in research, audit, conferences and management/ leadership skills.

Elizabeth is at the forefront of demonstrating the importance and value of the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT). She has encouraged and supported many trainees and GPs to choose Occupational Medicine – recruiting them into the speciality with her unique brand of encouragement and support. She has mentored physiotherapists to become senior managers and has supported administrative staff and allied health professionals to conduct research, produce publications, and to present posters at annual FOM/SOM conferences.

The speciality has a lot to thank her for in terms of recruitment and retention of committed skilled OH practitioners across the MDT. She is Regional Training Program Director for Occupational Medicine and has trained and supported countless trainees. Five of these are now working in NHS consultant roles across the North East and Cumbria, forming a regional network with close ties and collaboration, with many others working across public authorities and private sector roles.

Elizabeth is a passionate promoter of best practice through education. She has recently co-founded a FOM approved Introductory Training Course in Occupational Medicine, introducing the specialty to a wider audience. She has been Clinical Director of Newcastle OHS since 2013, leading her team to win the SOM Outstanding OH Team award in 2020, for innovative response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She co-authored a Lancet publication in the same year.

Elizabeth plans to retire in June 2025 and leaves behind her a legacy of OH professionals across the country who owe her thanks for her encouragement, determination and excellent training and support (professional and personal). Undoubtedly deserving of recognition for her many years of service to the speciality.

“Dr Murphy has offered so much support through the years of training and now into my Consultant post – I will always appreciate her openness and endless availability and I know that many others will too.”

“Dr Murphy has tirelessly supported me through my career, and I can most definitely say that I would not have considered or undertaken CESR accreditation without her support.”

“As a former trainee and now NHS Consultant, I have personally benefitted from unwavering support from Dr Murphy to complete training, an MSc and publication. I have benefitted from innovative remote clinical supervision to provide OH services to an area with clinical need, distant from the host Trust, leading to a subsequent substantive NHS post.”

Winner:
Dr Elizabeth Murphy



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SOM Lifetime Achievement 2024

Lyndsey undertook her nurse training in 1998 while serving in the QARNNS Royal Navy. She joined the Prison Service and then went to Hobson Health in a training post where she stayed until 2010. After a brief employment with ATOS she set up Phoenix Occupational Health (now registered as a placement provider for pre-registration nurses).

Lyndsey joined AOHNP, became a board member, and was very active as Regional Director Dec 2013 - Jan 2016. She was a Practice Teacher for OH nurse education at two universities and has promoted professional practice as Membership Director of the Faculty of Occupational Health Nursing for the past six years.

Statement from the SOM judges:

The judges have been made aware of the challenges Lyndsey is facing and acknowledge the significant impact she has had on OH and for her colleagues. We wish her all the best with her health challenges.

Special Mention:
Lyndsey Marchant



Supporting occupational health
and wellbeing professionals