

National School of Occupational Health

Strategic Plan 2023-2028



Developing people for health and healthcare

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Foreword

Since its creation in August 2014, the National School of Occupational Health (NSOH) has developed into a major stakeholder and leader in the occupational health (OH) arena. Whereas the core function of NSOH remains excellence and quality assurance in the training of the next generation of OH professionals, NSOH is involved in larger strategic initiatives with partners such as the Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM), Faculty of Occupational Health Nursing (FOHN), Society of Occupational Medicine, Joint Work and Health Directorate (a joint venture between Department of Work and Pension (DWP) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)) and NHS England with the aim to maximise access to high-quality OH for working age population.

The COVID pandemic and the aftermath including the growing issue of Post COVID Syndrome, underlined the role of OH in various aspects of protection and rehabilitation of working age population at individual, organisational and national levels. It also provided a platform for rapid technological development which not only enables far-reaching delivery of OH services but more generally, created a new wave of working remotely with new benefits and challenges.

Essential to the function of NSOH is excellence of training with the curriculum as the benchmark. NSOH contributed significantly to the development of the new Occupational Medicine curriculum ([OMST2022](#)) and continues to work closely with FOM in the implementation of the curriculum. Equally, NSOH has been working very closely with academia, FOHN and educational providers to create, develop, harmonise and implement curricula for other OH professionals. This aligns with NSOH's objective of promoting interdisciplinary training as a means to enhance the multidisciplinary team approach within OH. NSOH was one of the first schools within Health Education England (NHSE WT&E) to include non-medical training and education in its objectives and will continue to do so as an underpinning initiative in all work streams.

Whilst the conventional training methodology remains an essential part of the operation, NSOH recognises other methods such as apprenticeship and portfolio career as an important pathway to acquire the necessary skills and qualifications. As a matter of strategy, NSOH will continue working with stakeholders to promote all routes to the speciality whilst maintaining the quality of the offer.

This strategy sets out NSOH's priorities, pertinent objectives, pathways to achieve them and importantly how success is measured in the next five years. At the time of finalising the strategy, a new organisation is being formed to amalgamate NHS England, NHSE WT&E and NHS Digital which provides an ample opportunity to streamline the operation, work closely with stakeholders and enhance a data-driven delivery of the objectives. We look forward to another 5 years of exciting opportunities to consistently deliver high-quality training that meets the needs of the working-age population!

Dr Ali Hashtroudi
Head of National School of Occupational Health

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Section 1: Our Purpose

The purpose of the National School of Occupational Health (NSOH) is to quality assure (QA) the training of the next generation of occupational health (OH) professionals. In achieving this purpose, inevitably NSOH is closely involved in the public and UK OH workforce development, with various stakeholders in England and Wales. Thereby NSOH remains true to the delivery of excellent healthcare and health improvement to the public by ensuring that the OH workforce of today and tomorrow has the right numbers, skills, values, and behaviours to meet emerging needs.

1.1 Occupational Health Workforce

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of OH in supporting the needs of organisations and the workforce. New ways of working within OH, alongside changes such as a greater focus on health and wellbeing, have changed the landscape of health and work. Factors such as health inequalities, diversity and inclusion, long-term chronic health concerns, hybrid working, an economic downturn and the implications of Brexit on changing legislation have had an impact. We need to think differently about our future workforce as the skills profile beyond 2028 will likely change.

New models of access to occupational health will be required in the future which will influence the number of occupational practitioners and their skill mix. The [Government response](#) to [Health is Everyone's Business \(HiEB\)](#) acknowledged the important role OH plays in supporting job retention and enabling individuals to thrive at work. [Planning the future: Implications for occupational health; delivery and training](#) envisages an occupational health workforce with a distributed range of knowledge, skills, and competencies. A multi-agency approach is required to address health and wellbeing in the workplace holistically. There is a need for competency frameworks that reflect new ways of multidisciplinary working and delivery of occupational health. Allied with this, improved occupational health workforce planning methods will be required. An example is the NHS "Growing OH" program, which focuses on NHS workforce development, career pathways, education, training, leadership, and the multidisciplinary team. Some OH providers are investing significantly in in-house organic growth of OH practitioners but there needs to be consistency and quality-assured training products that are transferable across the evolving UK workforce.

Task and Finish Group

The Task and Finish Group (TFG) led by NSOH in 2021/ 2022, with the assistance of the Joint Work and Health Directorate, brought together stakeholders to identify measures to increase the number and quality of OH professionals. The TFG identified two themes and made recommendations as follows: -

Theme one focused on the lack of knowledge of OH as a career. Therefore, marketing and increasing exposure to OH at various stages of training and post-qualification. The recommendations apply to prospective candidates across different career stages (undergraduates, post-graduates, post-qualified) and all relevant disciplines (including non-healthcare workers).

1. Assessment of current communication and advertising platforms and to improve where required
2. Conducting a multidisciplinary audience research
3. Building a strategic approach and narrative informed by audience research
4. Exploring promoting to international prospective OH trainees
5. Alignment of all OH promotional activities and access to training and recruitment opportunities

Theme two focused on the lack of sufficient and diverse training opportunities. To promote multidisciplinary routes into the OH profession, identifying barriers and enablers to create new training opportunities and maximise existing ones, the following recommendations are made:

1. Identify and explore barriers and enablers to revive posts
2. Exploring barriers and enablers to creating new multidisciplinary posts including hybrid training models and academic posts
3. Development of funding models including cross-sector collaboration between public and private sectors
4. Reforming training, standards, and guidance to increase the choice of training routes and opportunities into OH.

Other factors

NSOH recognises the following factors in addition to the above:

A) Workforce planning:

The key to expanding the OH workforce is workforce planning which relies on the following

- Intelligence about the existing workforce including numbers of professionals active in each discipline, geographical distribution, and the sector (specific expertise)
- National objective; expanding to provide access to OH for all or current model of employer's-based commissioning
- The emphasis on health inequalities, equality and diversity, environmental and future public health factors, and the effects these will have on the skills and priorities within OH
- Change of occupational settings and traditional employee/employer relationship e.g., remote / home working, portfolio career, the gig economy.

B) Training context

It is more important than ever to recognise the value and implement multidisciplinary team (MDT) ways of working:-

- Flexible model of training for doctors including CESR, credential, and portfolio pathways

- Flexible model of training for nurses and other clinical professionals e.g., apprenticeship, portfolio, diploma, Higher Education Institution (HEI) pathways
- Role of non-OH specialist professionals in the context of work and health
- Innovation in OH education, alongside support for any new training such as the FOM Diploma and new NMC standards for specialist OH nurse education, encourages the use of apprenticeships when available.

1.2 Mission and Vision Statement

Our Vision

A 21st century occupational health workforce that has the capability and capacity to optimise the workability of the working age population

Our Mission Statement

To promote the highest standards training and to quality manage the provision of training for a multi-disciplinary occupational health workforce

Who Are We

- Head of NSOH (Strategic Direction of NSOH and OM Training)
- Deputy Head of NSOH (Multi-professional Training)
- National Training Programme Director (OM Training)

Section 2: Our Priorities and Objectives

2.1 Priorities

- An evidence-based and consistent approach to the education, skill, and competency development of OH professionals including career progression
- High quality in learning, supervision, and mentoring
- The right professionals, with the right skills and values, providing clinically effective OH services to the working-age population at the right time
- Obtain support from stakeholders including government bodies, public and private sector employers, and academia
- Grow the workforce and attract professionals into the speciality with more training opportunities available
- Create a community of learning and interdisciplinary support throughout the training journey, to encompass all sectors, to ensure quality, consistency, and support throughout the training journey.
- Encourage diverse training providers with a multidisciplinary OH education, by the relevant curriculum.
- Maximise opportunities for under and post-graduate students to have placements within OH, to grow awareness of OH as a career.

2.2 Our objectives aligned with NHSE WT&E Quality Framework

NSOH Objectives	NHSE WT&E Quality Standards	NSOH plan:
1. Workforce planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6. Developing a sustainable workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Revive and create training posts as well as hybrid posts to ensure that we have a workforce in the right numbers, with the right skills, values, and behaviours to respond to the current and future needs of occupational health b. Market OH to the workforce of the future, working with multiple interested parties such as the Government as part of the Task and Finish project, NHS in their Growing OH program, and OH and Wellbeing agencies c. Focus on marketing and increasing exposure to OH at various stages of training and post-qualification.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Promote OH as a profession to attract high-calibre trainees from regulated professional groups alongside those who are not yet qualified e. Develop an OH multidisciplinary team model, providing clarity on the skills and competencies other professionals can contribute to OH delivery f. Focus on multidisciplinary routes into the OH profession, identifying barriers and enablers to create new training opportunities and to maximise existing ones g. Define routes to training for the multidisciplinary team. h. Plan progression and succession by promoting career options in the field of OH, including but not limited to leadership, advanced practice, education and supervision, journalism, mentorship, and research.
<p>2. Influencing a single approach to education and training in OH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5. Influencing the curricula and assessments • 1. Learning environment and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Define Quality Assurance of non-medical training posts by benchmarking recruitment to training programs; ensuring a consistent benchmarking process b. Establish a framework for the governance of Educational Supervisors and equivalent in other areas of OH education (e.g., Practice Teachers, clinical supervisors, and assessors). c. Standardise assessment for competence d. Support Interdisciplinary training (IDT) sessions e. Influence curriculum development and competency frameworks in each of the professional groups. f. Incorporate the pyramid model of OH Education (see Appendix 1) g. Encourage diversity of training providers alongside flexible routes to training h. Provide strategic leadership within the wider OH agenda, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to ensure visibility of training and education.
<p>3. Develop a quality management framework for specialist OH education and training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. Learning Environment and Culture • 2. Educational Governance and Leadership • 6. Developing a sustainable workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encourage consistent quality assurance of all training posts b. Develop guidance for clinical practice placements for all OH professionals per the NHSE WT&E Quality standards. c. Ensure a robust framework for supporting trainees that are in difficulty. d. Auditing quality of training provision using a variety of opportunities such as the National Education and Training Survey and ARCP feedback. e. Influencing the regulator and professional bodies to define consistency in using 'occupational' as a prefix.

<p>4. Create a community of learning for occupational health practitioners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3. Developing and supporting learners • 4. Developing and supporting supervisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support the development of training networks to support regional and national multi-professional education networks. b. Develop working relationships with academic institutions. c. Be the 'go-to' location for queries and advice about training in OH d. Promote and facilitate training events to raise awareness and good clinical practice of current topics and issues within wider OH disciplines e. Using technology e.g., virtual training opportunities and simulation to maximise opportunities for training
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2.3 Our work plan and measurables:

Workforce planning	Measures
<p>Develop a sustainable workforce Numbers, skills, values and behaviours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dormant training posts are identified and revived • Approval of training posts is simplified • The establishment of new training posts is facilitated and supported • A marketing plan to attract into the profession is established and ongoing • OH is known to the future workforce as a career option • OH is known to the current regulated professional workforce as a career option • A MDT route into the profession is established • A multidisciplinary (MDT) model with clarity on skills and competencies has been built • Minimum standards for routes to training for the MDT are identified • Career options identified for career progression
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audience research undertaken and knowledge obtained to meet the plan • Effective promotional activities identified and developed • Materials to highlight the role of each OH discipline and pathway developed • International prospective OH trainees engaged • Engaged with academia

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to MDT posts, hybrid training models and academic posts identified • Hybrid training models facilitated • Funding models identified including cross-sector collaboration • Benefits of investment in training identified • Baseline of training, guidance and standards identified
<p>Influencing a single approach to Education and training in OH</p>	<p>Measures</p>
<p>Influencing the curricula and assessments, learning environment and culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality assurance of non-medical training programs defined • Interdisciplinary training sessions developed • Influence curriculum development and competency frameworks for each professional group • To incorporate a pyramid model of OH Education (see appendix1.) • Diverse training providers with flexible routes to training • Benchmarking process for recruitment to training programs consistent • A framework of governance for supervisors, assessors, practice teachers and educational supervisors developed • Competency assessments standardised • Strategic leadership in collaboration with stakeholders is evident in the visibility of training and education
<p>Develop a quality management framework for specialist OH education and training</p>	<p>Measures</p>
<p>Learning Environment and Culture Educational Governance and Leadership A sustainable workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All training posts are quality managed by NSOH • Guidance, matched to NHSE WT&E quality standards are evident • A framework for supporting trainees in difficulty is available • Training provision is audited • Influencing regulators and professional bodies to use “Occupational” as a prefix in a defined and consistent way.

Create a community of learning for occupational health practitioners	Measures
Developing and supporting learners and supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional and national multi-professional education networks are in place and thriving • Working relationships with academic institutions are in place • NSOH is the go-to body for advice on training and education in OH • Training events are facilitated and promoted incorporating current topics and issues • Guidance on supervision and assessment is available

Section 3: Delivering with our partners

The NSOH will continue to work with multiple stakeholders including: -

- Government bodies e.g., DHSC and DWP Joint Work and Health directorate)
- NHSI and NHSE WT&E
- Higher Education Institutions and educators,
- Regulators
- Training providers,
- Assessors, and supervisors
- The Council of Work and Health (CWH)
- Society of Occupational Medicine (SOM)
- Faculty of Occupational Nursing (FOHN)
- NHS Health at Work network
- Vocational Rehabilitation Association (VRA)
- Learners or students and placement providers
- Member organisations
- Occupational Health professionals wishing to progress



Section 4: Governance

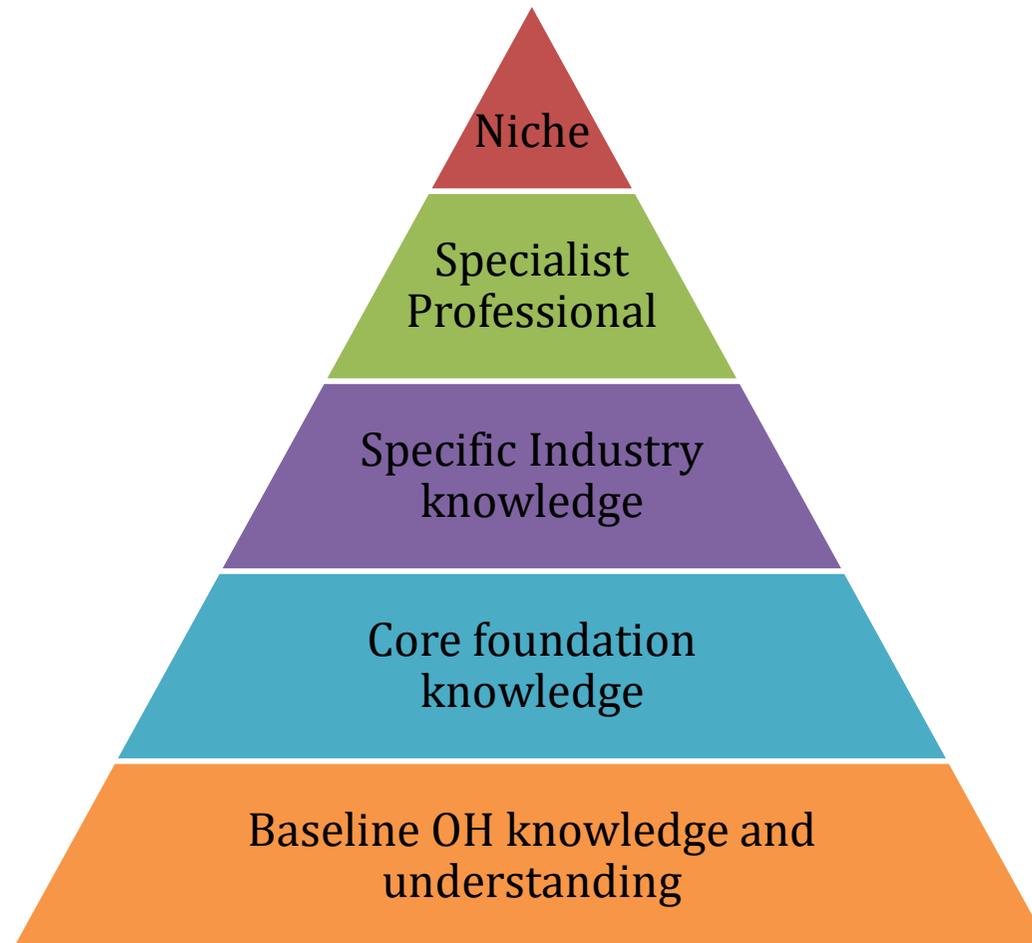
4.1 NSOH Board

- The Board's overall purpose is to provide strategic direction and educational governance for the National School. The Board is responsible to ensure NSOH remains on course to achieve objectives set out in this strategy and is responsive to national changes and requirements. Membership is representative of the constituency represented by the school and will aim to reflect the diversity of its constituent groups. Membership of the NSOH board will reflect the diverse training programmes across the OH speciality and ensure the quality and safety of training and education meets the evolving needs of trainees and future employers.
- The Board reports to the Post Graduate Dean responsible for the speciality.
- Meeting frequency: The Board will meet twice a year by virtual means

4.2 NSOH Executive

- Implanting the objectives set out in this strategy for the National School in the development of its business, having regard to the interests of its stakeholders, including but not limited to trainees, supervisors, educational institutions, and membership organisations. Executing the objectives and strategy approved by the Board. Membership: Head of School, Deputy Head of School, National Training Programme Directors, and Healthcare Education Team members supporting NSOH.
- The Executive reports to the NSOH Board
- Meeting frequency: 12 times per year (monthly)

Appendix 1. Pyramid Model of OH Education



Appendix 2. Board Terms of Reference

School Board Terms of Reference

Board structure

Membership of the NSOH board will reflect the diverse training programmes across the OH speciality and ensure the quality and safety of training and education meets the evolving needs of trainees and future employers.

1. The Head of School (Board Chair)
2. The Deputy HoS
3. National TPD/Senior TPD rep
4. Representatives from the Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM)
5. Representative from the Faculty of Occupational Health Nursing (FOHN)
6. A representative from the Defence Deanery
7. A trainee representative x 2 (medical and non-medical)
8. NHSE WT&E administrative and management

Other representatives who can either be considered as part of the board or be called upon in relevant circumstances and may form part of the professional community include:

- NHS Employer/ NHS Health at Work representative and commercial provider, as a large LEP and also the OH consumer.
- A representative from academic education providers.
- OH, professional bodies.
- A representative from the UK Employers / HR profession, nominated by the CBI / Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) or similar professional body.
- EHIE (DWP/DHSC department).
- NHSE WT&E representative, e.g., quality, recruitment etc.

Professional Advisory Community

We recognise that there are many existing groups of specialist practitioners working across the OH spectrum within both the NHS and the private sector that can provide valuable advice and guidance to the school on operational, educational and professional matters. Access to the professional advisory community will ensure there remains a channel for these groups and communities to inform the Board without creating additional workload and administration, and to involve volunteers in relevant 'task and finish' groups when the need arises. These communities will vary depending on the requirements at the time and the Head of School will lead on the direction and membership of these groups.

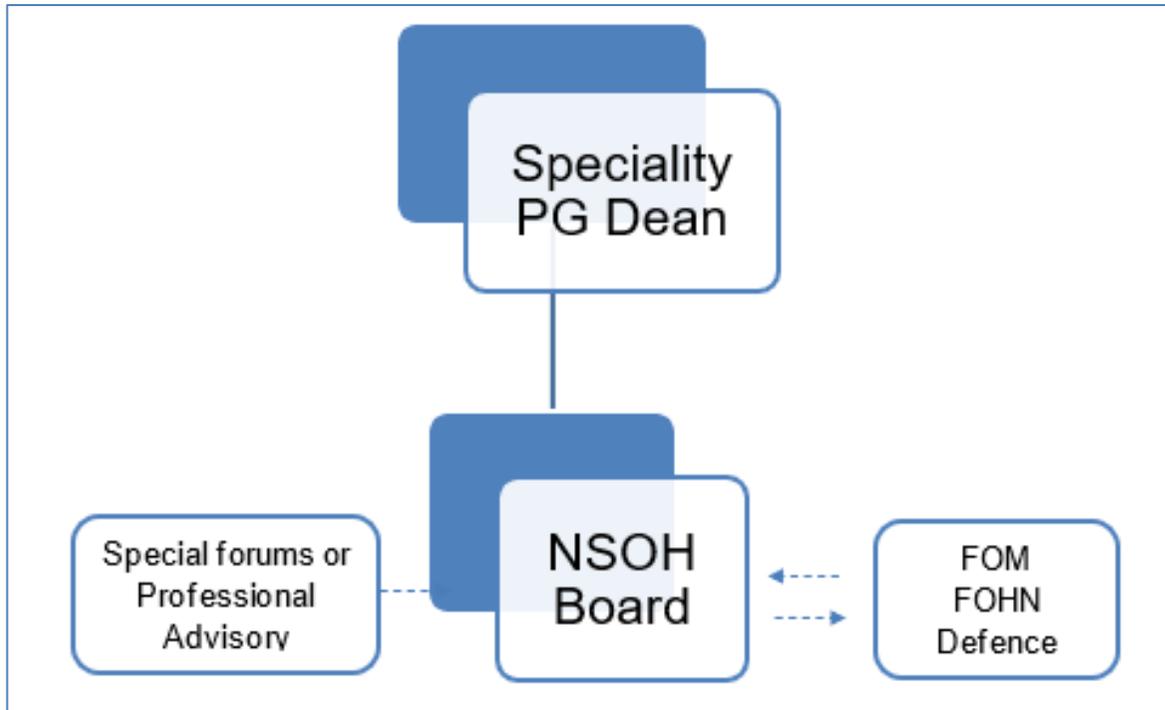
Meetings

The Board will meet up to twice a year by virtual means.

Accountability and Responsibility

The NSOH Board will be accountable to the Speciality Postgraduate Dean.

Governance Organisation Chart



Obligations of NSOH Board Members

A School Board is a meeting of an obligation. Members are expected to:

- Monitor the implementation of the NSOH Strategy
- Contribute to decision-making and share responsibility for Board decisions.
- Be well prepared by reading papers and making contributions in advance, where appropriate.
- Keep up to date with relevant subjects to the speciality of occupational health, education, legislation and government policy.
- To ensure that Postgraduate doctors in training (PGDiT) develop the knowledge, competencies, skills and attitudes relevant to their level of responsibility to allow them to practice safely.
- To ensure that trainers have the skills and infrastructure to deliver these objectives.
- To ensure adherence to good governance and high standards of education and training across all specialities for which they hold responsibility.

NSOH Strategic pillars

NSOH strategy currently defines its work objectives under the following 4 pillars:

1. Workforce Planning.
2. Influence a national approach to education and training.
3. Develop a quality management framework for OH specialist education.
4. Create a community of learning for OH professionals.