

Accredited Registers Impact Assessment

Accredited Register: British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS)

Type of Review: Initial application

Period under review: N/A

Date Approved for Panel: 10 November 2023

Introduction

Before we make a decision about accreditation, we undertake an impact assessment to understand likely effects on different groups, and the wider health system. We begin to gather the information required for the impact assessment when a Register first applies for accreditation. We consider any changes to impacts when we renew accreditation, and when taking other decisions that affect accreditation status such as imposing Conditions or suspension.

A key part of the impact assessment is consideration of equalities. The Equality Act 2010 imposes a legal duty, the Public Sector Equality Duty on all public bodies to consider the equality impact of its policies and decision making. The duty is known as the Equality Duty and it requires a public authority, in the discharge of its function to consider the following three aspects which form the basis of the duty:

- Consider the impact and eliminate unlawful (direct or indirect) discrimination and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people with protected characteristics and those who do not share these characteristics
- Foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those who do not share these characteristics.

This means that public bodies must consider equality impact on individuals protected under the Equality Act 2010 in carrying out their work. The Authority, therefore, needs to be always mindful of the public duty when carrying out its oversight role which includes the approving of registers. It needs to have 'due regard' to the needs to balance the three aspects which make up the Equality Duty when achieving its goals.

The Equality Impact Assessment is an important tool/mechanism for demonstrating 'due regard' through the consideration of evidence and analysis, actual and potential to identify positive and/or adverse impacts. The key groups we need to consider when making our decisions are, sex, age, ethnicity, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, and maternity.

Impacts

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Equalities impacts - summary

- Occupational hygiene affects a significant proportion of the UK population – and most of the 32 million UK workers. Accreditation should help to advance equalities, by recognising BOHS' work to encourage diversity in the profession itself and to progress understanding of how groups with protected characteristics are affected by their work.
- BOHS collects and analyses diversity data about its members. It uses this to inform diversity impact assessment of significant changes to its membership, qualifications, and events. It also uses the data to develop appropriate policies and practices to enable greater reach and impact with under-represented groups in the profession.
- In terms of service users, Occupational Hygiene has a very significant impact on the health outcomes for older populations. Occupational exposure is also the cause of significant levels of disability in the UK. These groups are therefore likely to be particularly impacted positively by accreditation.

Impacts on groups with protected characteristics.

Age

Type of impact	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified
Positive	Older people	Occupational Hygiene has a very significant impact on the health outcomes for older populations. A specific concern of Occupational Hygiene practice is the prevention of long latency diseases, such as respiratory illnesses, cancers and progressive hearing loss. The most notable achievement of occupational hygiene is the identification, prevention and ongoing management of exposure to asbestos within the workplace. Declining figures over the years, as a direct result of the work of occupational hygiene scientists have reduced occupational cancer deaths in this area significantly. Asbestosis,		

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		mesothelioma, asbestos related lung cancer and non-malignant pleural disease in Great Britain 2021 (hse.gov.uk). The burden of long latency occupational disease is only controlled by the implementation of occupational hygiene practice at a preventative stage because many long latency diseases, such as silicosis are not yet susceptible to effective treatment.		
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Disability

Type of impact	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified
Positive	In particular, people at risk of muscular-skeletal conditions (MSC) and respiratory illnesses from their work environments.	Occupational exposure is the cause of significant levels of disability in the UK Statistics - Noise-induced hearing loss in Great Britain (hse.gov.uk) . Occupational hygiene practice aims to prevent the temporary or permanent physical and toxicological causes of hearing loss, as an example. Whether it be noise alleviation strategies, noise surveys, through to hearing PPE and the restriction and control of ototoxic substances, just in this one area of disability, Occupational Hygiene practice impacts on disability risk and the increased vulnerability of those with already diminished hearing. Similar impacts are relevant to those who suffer muscular-skeletal disorders, respiratory illnesses etc.		

Gender reassignment

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Type of impact	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified
<i>Marriage and civil partnership</i>				
<i>Pregnancy and maternity</i>				
Type of impact	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified
Positive	Pregnant individuals and their children	Reprotoxicity has been a significantly overlooked issue in the control of occupational exposures through legislation. Inequalities in the control of the occupational exposure in France to carcinogenic, mutagenic and reprotoxic chemicals European Journal of Public Health Oxford Academic (oup.com) Occupational Hygienists work to support changes to recognise the need to prevent exposures that have reprotoxic effects. This includes the identification, control and management of reprotoxins in the UK workplace.		
<i>Race</i>				
Type of impact	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified
Positive		Protection of racial groups who may be less well served by PPE is an example of where occupational hygiene practice impacts race. The development of physiological knowledge around the creation of appropriately fitting respiratory protective equipment is at the heart of good occupational hygiene		

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		practice. The most accessed research paper by occupational hygienists of the 2020 related to facial shape because of the need to develop PPE that was effective for different racial and gender types. Occupational Hygienists have already developed and promote solutions to health protection which overcome such problems.		
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Religion or belief

Type of impact	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified
Positive	People who wear hair and headgear because of religious observance	PPE issues above impact particularly on those who wear hair and headgear because of religious observance. Occupational hygiene research and practice has developed protective solutions such as powered respirator hoods which enable health protection for those who need to continue religious observance.		

Sex

Type of impact	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified
Positive		Occupational risks tend to pattern on occupational gender trends. Certain long latency illnesses, such as cancers caused by silica impact significantly on the health outcomes of males, rather than females. Conversely, certain sectors have largely female workers and higher vulnerabilities. The aim is always to ensure the lowest possible levels of		

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		exposures and to aim at controls which will ensure that sex does not impact protection or health outcomes.		
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Sexual orientation

Type of impact	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified

Cost and market impacts – summary

- Individual workers do not bear the costs of occupational hygiene services. Compliance with occupational hygiene standards are a statutory requirement under the Health and Safety at Work Act
- Accreditation is not anticipated to have associated costs for registrants or employers and so should not have a negative market impact.

Social and environmental impacts – summary

- Given the focus on occupational hygiene on protecting the health of workers, there is likely to be a positive impact on societal factors such as employment.
- BOHS also undertakes work to support environmental and social sustainability, such as its guidance for how companies and organisations can link their worker health protection standards directly to sustainable development goals.

Decision

Occupational hygiene affects a significant proportion of the UK population – and most of the 32 million UK workers. The Accreditation Panel thought that accreditation would have a positive impact, by providing independent assurance of BOHS' Professional Register of Occupational Hygienists. This should give employers confidence in the expertise and professional behaviours of an Occupational hygienist they appoint from the Register to help them meet their responsibilities under the HSWA to protect the health and wellbeing of their workers. We did not identify any potential negative impacts arising from accrediting BOHS in terms of equalities, social or cost/market impacts. We therefore decided to accredit BOHS.

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