



South Cumbria &  
North Lancashire Branch

## Joint meeting 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019



South Cumbria Occupational  
Health & Safety Group

**Topic:** *The future of the health and safety profession: attracting the next generation.*

**Speaker:** James Quinn, Vice President, *IOSH* & HS&E Manager, *Bouygues Construction*

**Venue:** The Netherwood Hotel, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 6ET

Jim Tongue, Chairman, *South Cumbria & North Lancashire IOSH Branch*, welcomed members to the branch's joint February meeting with *SCOHS*. He then introduced our speaker, Jimmy Quinn, to the group.

Jimmy explained that he was one of a nine-member *IOSH Presidential Team* who had been appointed to ensure that *IOSH Branches* were given the opportunity to meet senior members of *IOSH's* executive, at least once a year, to help improve communication between *IOSH* centrally and its grassroots members.

He then gave members a brief summary of *IOSH's* history, and statistics:

- The *Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)* is the world's largest membership body for health and safety professionals.
- Founded in 1945 *IOSH* has been supporting health and safety professionals and promoting safer and healthier work environments for over 70 years.
- It is the only body that can award *Chartered Safety and Health Practitioner* status.
- *IOSH's* 47,000+ members live and work in around 130 countries worldwide.

Followed by a summary of *IOSH's* key aims:

- Working to achieve a safer and healthier world of work.
- Campaigning for improvements in workplace health and safety by working with Government bodies and *HSE*.
- Setting standards for health and safety professionals.
- Providing support, resources, guidance, events and training for *IOSH* members.

Before focusing on the main topic of the meeting: *The future of the health and safety profession: attracting the next generation*. Jimmy invited members to ask questions as he went through his presentation because he hoped that this approach would generate some interesting discussions and ideas that he might be able to incorporate in an *IOSH* young persons' initiative. He said that he thought that it was important to show young people that there are wide range of opportunities in the health and safety profession and that choosing to work in H & S can result in a worthwhile and fulfilling career.

He explained that one of the biggest challenges faced by the H&S profession is its ageing demographic and that this was likely to impact on the future of the profession. He said that *IOSH's* 2016 membership survey, showed that only 8% of members actively chose *OSH* as a first career; this confirmed the widely held belief that most health and safety professionals gravitated into health and safety as a second career.

This led to an interesting discussion about whether, or not, it was important that health and safety professionals had 'real life' work experience in the industries or work areas where they took on responsibility for providing advice on workplace health and safety procedures. There was general agreement that practical work experience was needed as well as a knowledge of health and safety law and an understanding of the psychological human factors that affect workplace safety cultures.

Jimmy suggested that one of the reasons that young people are not attracted into the *OSH* profession can be attributed to the negative perceptions surrounding H&S in the UK. He said that this prejudice is less prevalent outside the UK, where H&S is often seen as a well-respected and attractive career.

He said that *IOSH* has recognised that the negative public perception is a major issue and they are seeking to tackle this as part of their *WORK 2022* strategy that has three broad aims:

1. Enhance the occupational safety and health profession by:
  - Developing its competence, capability and range of skills.
  - Consolidating its central role to the success of organisations.
  - Promoting positive public perceptions of health and safety.
2. Collaborate to build strategic partnerships by:
  - Forging mutually-beneficial relationships with like-minded organisations.
  - Delivering practical and valuable outcomes for businesses to succeed.
  - Supporting a shared vision of a safe and healthy world of work.
3. Influence and strengthen impact globally:
  - Empowering health and safety professionals and businesses around the world.
  - Working with them to address local health and safety issues.
  - Enabling worldwide sharing of knowledge and learning.

Jimmy asked members if they were aware of *IOSH's WORK 2022* strategy and what they thought about it. The response was muted. Those members who had looked at information about the strategy agreed with its broad aims but were disappointed that there were no examples showing how these objectives would be achieved. For instance, how do they plan to promote positive perceptions of health and safety to the public?

Some members felt that the wording of *IOSH's WORK 2022* strategy is slipping into the trap of health and safety 'speak'. For instance, what is meant by the aim: "...*Consolidating its central role to the success of organisations...*" and that this kind of language is unlikely to help promote positive public perceptions of health and safety.

Jimmy explained that *IOSH's Enhance* programme will include a series of initiatives to promote H&S as a career of choice for younger people. It will start with the introduction of an *IOSH Future Leaders Programme* that will encourage four main training routes to help people become competent and enthusiastic health and safety professionals:

1. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
  - Liaise with education institutions to create an H & S talent pipeline.
  - Encourage students studying relevant H&S qualifications by supporting them through their studies.
2. Apprenticeships
  - New *Level 3 Safety, Health and Environment Technician 'Trailblazer'* apprenticeship developed by a consortium of employers with input from construction, manufacturing, healthcare, public services, arts and charity sectors and support from a range of professional bodies including *IOSH*.
  - The *Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan* has been developed and approved by the *Institute for Apprenticeships* - available on their website: <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/safety-health-and-environment-technician>
  - It is a 24 months apprenticeship leading to a *QCF Level 3 /EQF Level 4* (Comparable to A level grades A-E)
  - The first 300 Apprentices are eligible for free *IOSH Student Membership*.
3. Employer-led management development programmes,

#### 4. New Professionals Network.

- Currently in development – it will be aimed at new *IOSH* professionals and will provide specialised support and mentoring for student/apprentice members during their transition to other *IOSH* membership categories.
- It will allow them to form new connections in the industry and will support their professional development through tailor-made workshops, site visits and networking events.

Jimmy explained that these training opportunities will be complemented by use of *IOSH Blueprint*, a self-assessment computer programme, that allows individuals to assess their level of competence and to identify their training needs. Alongside this maintenance of IPD or CPD records will also be integrated into the programme, as appropriate, and the *IOSH Business Leaders Forum* will be planning to support the programme.

This led to some more useful discussion. Members agreed that *IOSH's* support for H & S apprenticeships schemes was worthwhile but there was some concern that *IOSH* is not giving accreditation to worthwhile H & S apprentice schemes that are already being run by some colleges and universities. Members suggested that *IOSH* should consider collaborating with other organisations to improve and support existing H & S apprentice training courses. As a result of this discussion Jimmy asked members to send him information about their ideas and examples of local H & S apprenticeship schemes that they felt were worthwhile

Jimmy then explained that *IOSH* had introduced a new category of student membership in September 2018. Student membership includes careers support, networking opportunities and mentoring. Members asked Jimmy whether there was an age limit for student membership and whether clear guidance would be given about eligible accredited *IOSH* courses for *IOSH* student membership.

They queried the need for a *New IOSH Professionals Network* because they felt that attendance at *IOSH Branch* and *Group* meetings already provided useful networking opportunities for young safety practitioners. They also felt that it was important that *IOSH* encouraged an inter-generational exchange of workplace health and safety ideas and skills – older members had valuable workplace experience while younger members usually had a better understanding of the opportunities presented by new technologies.

They then told Jimmy about some recent initiatives, for young people, that had been organised by *South Cumbria & North Lancashire IOSH Branch* in collaboration with *South Cumbria Occupational Health & Safety Group*. These included:

- Training sessions given by committee volunteers for work experience pupils at *Kirkbie Kendal School*, Kendal and at *Queen Catherine School*, Kirkby Lonsdale and
- *SCOHSG's* sponsorship of 20 agricultural apprentices at a day conference *Grass, Trees and Caterpillars* that was jointly organised by *South Cumbria & North Lancashire IOSH Branch*, the *IOSH Rural Group* and *SCOHSG* with some sponsorship from rural industries.

Jimmy suggested that there are four ways that employers and managers can encourage young people to consider the health and safety profession as a worthwhile career option by:

1. Developing a workplace health and safety culture that supports young people and encourages all employees to take 'ownership' of their health and safety responsibilities.
2. Providing young health and safety professionals with appropriate training and resources.
3. Providing opportunities for young people's personal and professional development in the workplace.
4. Encouraging more experienced workers to mentor young safety practitioners.

Jimmy is an enthusiastic advocate of health and safety as a worthwhile career choice for young people who want to help other people and to improve workplace standards of health, safety and wellbeing. He emphasised that a career in health and safety offers a wide range of work opportunities including: extensive travel, different work environments, being a

'generalist' – knowing about a lot of health and safety topics, or a 'specialist' – becoming an 'expert' on a technical aspect of health and safety such as asbestos, dangerous substances, working at height etc....

He concluded by saying that we need to show the next generation the fantastic opportunities a career in H&S provides, and to help them become inspiring future H&S leaders.

Gary McAteer, Vice Chairman, *South Cumbria & North Lancashire IOSH Branch*, thanked Jimmy for leading such a useful and interesting discussion about encouraging young people to become professional health and safety practitioners and presented him with a small token of the group's appreciation.

Attendees then had an opportunity to network with one another and Jimmy over tea or coffee and biscuits.

Jimmy can be contacted at: [James.quinn@iosh.com](mailto:James.quinn@iosh.com)

Related HSE web site links:

Young people at work: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/index.htm>

Training and supervision of young people: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/training.htm> m

Apprentices: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/apprentices.htm>

Young people and the law: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/law/index.htm>