

Our strategic direction: what we will do and what we want to achieve

Strategic aim 1 - Member support

Our goal: Continuing professional development, developing knowledge, and improving practice through education

Intended outcome: by 2026, we will have grown SOM membership to 2,100. We will have enhanced SOM's educational offering, contributed to the delivery of better OH by developing and sharing tools, guidance and examples which enable healthcare professionals to improve their practice.

Priorities: We will:

- a. communicate what good OH looks like and develop and share resources to support leadership of OH professionals
- b. strengthen the voice and impact of Regional Groups
- c. develop special interest groups so they can share new and updated tools, guidance, and examples to help improve practice, promoting and communicating outputs in an accessible way
- d. provide high-quality meetings, webinars, e-learning, and resources to meet the needs of members and others. We will evolve and expand our offer to take account of the realities of working lives, providing high-quality online, hybrid and face-to-face experiences and the ability to digest content live or later.
- e. expand SOM's educational and professional development for health professionals generally, with a particular focus on leadership
- f. develop a mentoring scheme for members
- h. be the "go-to" place for medical members for quality appraisals
- h. stay abreast of emerging developments, collaborating with others such as the Faculty of Occupational Medicine, The Royal Society of Medicine, and Royal College of Nurses to enable access to and availability of high-quality education

Strategic Aim 2 Workforce development

Our goal: to support recruitment, retention and developments that increase the OH workforce and support existing staff to have the appropriate skills and support to deliver good OH.

Intended outcome: by 2026, we will have worked with others to increase the size and skill base of the workforce delivering OH.

Priorities: We will:

- a. enable an understanding of gaps and shortages in the workforce to inform national, regional, and local workforce planning through an OH census
- b. support increased recruitment and retention to all professions delivering OH and seek to attract health professionals into the specialty through an annual careers fair
- c. promote the expansion of roles and responsibilities e.g. through Occupational Therapists, Physician Associates and OH Technicians, through accredited training, and other emerging roles
- d. share innovative and integrated approaches to overcoming workforce shortages in different settings
- e. highlight different career pathways and progression opportunities from early to later stage and inspire young people from school age to aspire for a career in OH
- f. liaise with and seek to influence national and regional bodies with responsibility for planning, implementation, and funding of the workforce
- g. support retired members to contribute

“Our goal is to facilitate increased Regional Group engagement both internationally and, in the UK”

Strategic Aim 3 Sector representation through policy and communications

Our goal: to be the voice of OH and influence the decisions, programmes and implementation of policymakers, commissioners, and health professionals relating to occupational health.

Intended outcome: By 2026, we will have increased our profile and voice, and will be successfully influencing the development, design and implementation of national and regional programmes and policy for OH

Priorities: We will

- a. support members to represent the OH Commercial Sector
- b. influence the UK and devolved Governments, business, and NHS to ensure that OH is part of healthcare
- c. develop our corporate supporter offer, and aim to offer sector leadership for occupational health commercial providers
- d. use our expert voice through reports, media, SOM's PR agency and OH Awareness week to advocate, explain, critique, and illustrate in pursuit of better workplace health, experience and return to work outcomes
- e. work with other organisations such as the Council for Work and Health and FOM on key issues affecting workplace health, such as the need for a focus on sustainability
- f. amplify the innovations and good practice of our members across the UK, sharing their stories through annual Awards, our website, blogs, and social media
- g. develop international OH through hosting the International Occupational Medicine Society Collaborative and bilateral work with WHO and specific partner countries

Strategic Aim 4 Research and evidence

Our goal: to promote research into workplace health and the application of evidence-based knowledge to clinical practice

Intended outcome: By 2026, we will have strengthened research opportunities, skills, and impact through the OH research community and through the reputation and reach of our journal

Priorities: We will:

- a. drive the research agenda related to OH, working with the Academic Forum for Work and Health, research councils and other research commissioners to secure funding and opportunities for research that addresses key research gaps
- b. promote and disseminate research findings and evidence via an improved new website area to improve quality and practice and to influence policy and commissioning
- c. maintain the global reputation and high quality of our journal, ensuring its business model is fit for purpose and that its relevance, editorial support, and responsiveness make it the journal of choice for authors and readers working in OH. We will aim to increase the Journal's social media impact and maintain its impact factor
- d. help to build research expertise among multidisciplinary healthcare professionals and promote academic career pathways
- e. work with partners to support fellowships and research funding opportunities, seeking to enhance understanding of the importance and value of research and to add to the evidence base

“We will continue to report annually on our environment sustainability goals and implement a plan to achieve carbon neutrality”.

How we will deliver the Plan

- a. Through members: SOM depends on member's willingness to be active in the SOM - something they do on top of busy day jobs. Members act as office-bearers, taking on roles on Regional Groups, Special Interest Groups, the editorial board, SOM Council, or the Board of Trustees. They contribute by sharing resources, speaking at scientific meetings, commenting on consultations, and acting as media spokespeople. They provide the SOM's legitimacy, and their engagement is fundamental to SOM achieving its mission.
- b. Through diversifying SOM's income sources further to make our business model more sustainable over the long term. The SOM has a solid financial reserve, and we will further develop this to ensure our investments are working in pursuit of our mission. Given the current uncertain financial climate, we will retain a careful approach to cost control, and be aware of how the cost of living affects our members.
- c. By strengthening our governance: The SOM is a charity and a company limited by guarantee. We will observe the Charity Commission's principles of good governance and ensure members of the Board and Council are well-supported with clear terms of reference, evaluation, inductions, and support from the staff team. The priorities set out in this Plan will inform annual business plans and budgets.
- d. Through our staff team: who will continue to provide coordination and support to members. We will benchmark our approach to diversity and inclusion with peers.
- e. By modernising our infrastructure: we will continue to enhance the functionality of our website and its associated tools, to strengthen the SOM's learning community and position as the go-to place for resources, information, and training.
- f. Through partners such as the Faculty of Occupational Medicine and the Faculty of Occupational Health Nursing.

SOM will be an inclusive place for members and staff

Join us – at www.som.org.uk