

Securing access to competent advice,

Dr Luise Vassie, Institution of Occupational Safety and Health

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Scope

- Competence – what is it and what does it look like?
- Problems, issues and consequences
- What needs to change
- What we're doing to help

Competence

- The ability to perform to the standards required in employment across a wide range of circumstances and to meet changing demands (QCA)
- Three main building blocks - knowledge, skills and experience
- But what does competence look like...and how does an employer or recruiter recognise it?

Competence

- Individual competence is a necessary but not sufficient input for organisational competence
- Organisational competence requires interchange between individuals and organisational structures

Problems and issues

- Bosses and recruiters don't know what to look for when recruiting an OSH adviser or hiring a consultant
- No real recognition of the development of the discipline over the last 30 years – many professionals are qualified at first or Master's degree level
- Lack of integration of OSH into the curricula of other disciplines

Consequences

- Lack of clarity about competence is causing damage to:
 - people, whose lives and long term health are put at risk
 - businesses, who waste time and money and potentially risk their futures with no or poor advice (reckless or over-cautious)
 - the public, whose understanding of health and safety is constantly tainted by negative media stories
 - national prosperity, through lost productivity and increased demands on health and social services

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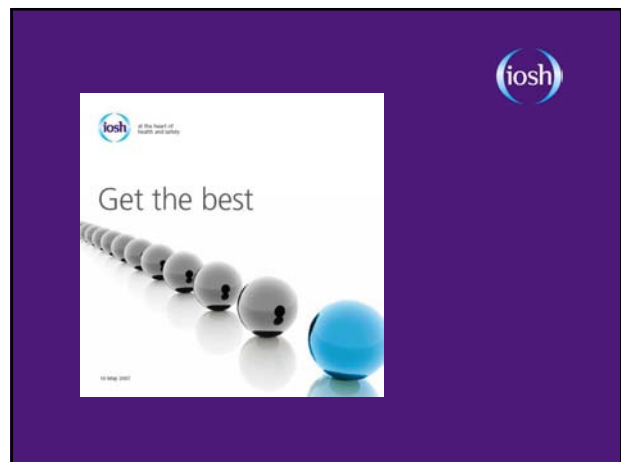


What needs to happen?

- Government to define competence - make sure that those without the right qualifications skills and experience cannot practise.
- Promote the specific national standards on the different qualifications, experience and skills necessary for health and safety advice - so that employers, from owner manager to multinational are clear about what type of advice they need.

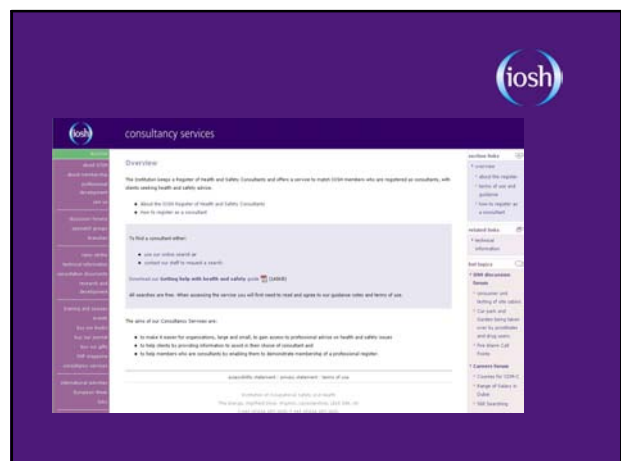
What needs to happen?

- Regulation of the profession would show that the qualifications, experience and skills of health and safety professionals are just as vital to protecting people as they are on other professions (medicine, structural surveying and gas and electrical fitting)
- Include health and safety in vocational disciplines, particularly MBA programmes.



Consultancy guidance

- Offering clear guidance to companies looking for a competent, credible health and safety consultant
- Offering free access to the IOSH Register of Health and Safety Consultants www.iosh.co.uk/consultancy
- Offering clear guidance to those working as competent health and safety consultants



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Examining the evidence-base

- Glasgow Caledonian University examined the impact of health and safety advice on performance in the construction sector
- Loughborough University examined the impact of health and safety management on organisations and their employees
- Cardiff University examined and compared the relative contributions that organisational culture and competent advice make to performance

Training and competence guidance

- Providing a framework on requirements for both health and safety professionals and the people they work with from the board room to the shop floor.

Coming soon....



Thank you

on behalf of
Institution of Occupational Safety and Health

Any questions?

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