

# RESEARCH WORKING GROUP of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council

**Minutes of the meeting**  
**Thursday 15 September 2016**

**Present:**

Professor Paul Cullinan (Chairperson)	RWG
Dr Ira Madan	RWG
Professor Damien McElvenny	RWG
Professor Keith Palmer	RWG
Professor Neil Pearce	RWG
Mr Hugh Robertson	RWG
Professor Karen Walker-Bone	RWG
Dr Emily Tucker	DWP
Mr Andrew Darnton	HSE
Ms Catherine Hegarty	IIAC Secretariat
Ms Hazel Norton-Hale	IIAC Secretariat

**Apologies:** Dr Anne Braidwood and Mr Richard Exell

## **1 Announcements and Conflict of interest statements**

- 1.1 Secretariat staff changes – Marianne’s replacement has been appointed, **Ian Chetland** starts 26 September.
- 1.2 Congratulations – Karen Walker-Bone has been awarded a personal chair and is now Professor Karen Walker-Bone.
- 1.3 IIDB reform – The Green Paper is currently being drafted, with the intention that it will be published before the end of the year. Neil Walker will come to the October IIAC and provide an update of its status at that stage.
- 1.4 Publications – The following Information Note was published on [www.gov.uk/iiac](http://www.gov.uk/iiac) on 12 September 2016  
– ‘Noise Induced Hearing Loss and work with nailing and stapling guns’.
- 1.5 Conflicts of interest – No conflicts of interest were raised.

## **2 Minutes of the last meeting**

- 2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were cleared with minor amendments. The Secretariat will circulate the final minutes to all RWG members ahead of publication on the gov.uk website.
- 2.2 All action points have been cleared or are in progress.

## **3 Depression and anxiety in teachers and healthcare workers**

- 3.1 The paper has been considerably revised since the last version and will therefore be circulated at the next IIAC for final sign-off. The three experts consulted were broadly happy with the summary of evidence and that there was no other evidence available. They found the conclusions reasonable in the context of the Industrial Injuries Scheme.
- 3.2 RWG members made some suggestions for amendments, which will be considered in the draft at the next IIAC meeting.
- 3.3 Members agreed that the usual prevention section should include support.

## **4 Medical Assessments**

- 4.1 IIAC have been reviewing medical assessments to ensure they adequately reflect current scientific knowledge, focusing on off-sets for multiple risk factors and historical injuries under the II Scheme.
- 4.2 The RWG agreed to defer this item for consideration by the full Council. The Council will need to agree the way forward – perhaps a Position Paper illustrating the challenge and recommending to commissioners only to make off-sets in situations where they can apply certainty.

## **5 Occupational cancer and exposure to trichloroethylene**

- 5.1 A member has been looking at the cancers which were classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) as part of a horizon-scanning exercise, to see if there were any diseases or exposures the Council should be considering.
- 5.2 He initially considered that exposure to TRIKE and PCBs might warrant a review by the Council. The evidence in relation to PCBs did not suggest a greater than doubled risk for any cancers, but further consideration of the evidence is required in relation to exposure to TRIKE.
- 5.3 Parkinson's disease has been considered in relation to exposure to TRIKE and should be included in the review.

## **6 Noise induced hearing loss (NIHL) – IIAC’s approach to prescription**

- 6.1 The Council has considered whether there is potential for prescription for NIHL based on clinical features alone, namely the presence of the 4KHz notch. For this to be possible the the 4 KHz notch would have to be diagnostically specific and only occur as a result of occupational noise exposure, neither of which are the case.
- 6.2 However, this area merits further discussion. A Green Paper consultation on prescription for occupational deafness was proposed. This might be circulated to stakeholders and followed by a round-table discussion, perhaps at the IIAC public meeting.

## **7 Rheumatoid arthritis and cadmium**

- 7.1 A paper highlighting an association between cadmium exposure and rheumatoid arthritis in steel workers had been brought to the attention of the Council. A member considered whether the association was sufficient to warrant further investigation.
- 7.2 It was decided that there were several outcomes with several exposures and the member was to update the evidence for the next RWG meeting.

## **8 Pesticide exposure and cancer**

- 8.1 The Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) commissioned a review on pesticides and their neurological effects. A member contributed to this review and provided a summary for information on the long term effects of low-level exposure to organophosphates in adults.
- 8.2 Adverse health effects are already known to follow high levels of exposure, and this is already covered by the accident provisions of the Industrial Injuries Scheme. The COT review did not cover cancers.
- 8.3 The RWG thought that it would be worth looking at the research on cancer in relation to exposure to specific pesticides.

## **9 AOB**

- 9.1 A member of the Council has submitted an article on IIAC for Occupational Health at Work magazine. It is being considered for publication.

**Date of next meeting: 24 November 2016**