

3rd International Conference and Exhibition on **Occupational Health & Safety**

June 24-25, 2014 Valencia Conference Centre, Valencia, Spain

Professional ethics in occupational safety and health practice

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This paper provides a critical evaluation of a real world project involving the review and subsequent development of a new Code of Conduct for the world's largest health and safety body, the Institution of Occupational Safety Health (IOSH, 2011). The project was conducted as action research and was divided into 4 cycles or stages. Stage 1 involved the critical review and benchmarking of the existing code against other codes using an adaptation of the Professional Associations Research Network (PARN) criteria. Stage 2 involved the consultation process for the development of a new code. This included the researcher's role as leader of the project and an evaluation of misconduct cases reviewed by the PC. Stage 3 involved semi-structured interviews of practitioners to explore experiential accounts of ethical issues from practice to inform the guidance on the code. Finally, stage 4 involved the concluding consultation and consolidation of all the stages for presentation of the revised code to IOSH council for approval. The outcome of the project has been positively received by IOSH. A new code was produced with guidance and a revised disciplinary procedure that is fit for purpose and adaptable to change through the use of robust development and broad consultation processes. It is anticipated that these changes will make a significant contribution to the wider profession and practice. An ethical decision making model was developed from the findings and included a dissemination strategy.

Biography

Shaun Lundy has over 25 years experience as both an academic and practitioner in the field of health and safety. He is currently the Academic Portfolio Leader for BSc and MSc programs in Safety, Health, and Environment at the University of Greenwich. He currently sits on the Health and Safety Executives Myth Busters Challenge Panel set up by the UK Government to scrutinize dubious health and safety decisions in the public interest. He is also the technical editor for Agora business publications, the Health and Safety Advisor and Health and Safety in Schools and Colleges. He has a keen interest in education, competence and ethics in relation to health and safety practice.

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