

A Brief History of IEH Consulting Ltd

Professor Paul T C Harrison, Director



The Early Years

'IEH' began life in 1993 as the Medical Research Council (MRC) Institute for Environment and Health in Leicester. The Institute was linked to the MRC Toxicology Unit, then also based at Leicester University, with Dr Lewis Smith as Director of both establishments. Day to day management of the Institute was by Dr Paul Harrison, who had been seconded to the MRC from the Toxic Substances Division of the then Department of Environment (DoE) to help set up the new unit.

The principal aim of IEH at that time was to facilitate cooperation between DoE and DH, and their agencies, on issues of joint interest concerning the environment and human health and to provide advice and expertise on the impacts of environmental toxicants on health and the environment. These activities led to the publication of a large number of authoritative reports and assessments on a wide range of subjects, including waste incineration, endocrine disruption and indoor air quality.

Initial funding for the Institute came from government departments, notably DoE and DH, with additional support from HSE and the Environment Agency. In due course the range of clients was extended to include industry associations, individual companies and NGO's, as well as the traditional government departments and agencies.

Shortly after the Institute was set up the team was joined by Philip Holmes (who, together with Paul Harrison, later became a Director of IEH Consulting Ltd).

In 1999 Lewis Smith left the MRC and Paul was appointed Acting Director of the Institute.

IEH at Cranfield

After 12 highly successful years at Leicester, during which time the number of staff employed at the Institute rose to over 30, the MRC decided to close the unit to focus resources on more clinically relevant activities. Paul Harrison and Phil Holmes, together with Dr Len Levy and a number of other key staff, then made the decision to re-establish the Institute at another location, and in 2005 a new 'Institute of Environment and Health' was established at Cranfield University, with Paul as Director, Phil as Deputy Director and Len Levy as Academic Director.

It was during this time that Dr Ruth Bevan (the third original Director of IEH Consulting Ltd) joined IEH. In 2008 Paul left to set up his own independent consultancy, retaining the role of Visiting Professor in Environment and Health, and Phil became the Director. After a few years Phil took up employment elsewhere, and Dr Derrick Crump was appointed Director.

The Creation of IEH Consulting

Following a re-organisation at Cranfield University in 2013 the Cranfield Health School was closed and, in a short-sighted move by the university, the Institute's name and principal activities were lost. This led to Paul, Phil and Ruth deciding to set up a consultancy with the name 'IEH Consulting' to carry on the traditions of the former Institutes. Their goal was to build on and expand the impartial critical assessment work, advice and training that had previously been offered by the MRC Institute for Environment and Health and Cranfield University Institute of Environment and Health.

IEH Consulting was established in 2014, initially as a partnership and then, in May 2015 after a successful test year, as a registered UK Limited Company - with Paul, Phil and Ruth as Directors.



The aims of the newly established IEH Consulting company were “To provide the best available information, independent advice and opinion on the hazards and risks posed by exposure to environmental and workplace chemicals, dusts and fibres, and in relation to European chemicals policy and regulation, and provide client-focused, high quality advice and assistance tailored to meet client needs in the fields of environmental and human health hazard and risk assessment”.

In 2016 the Directors appointed Dr Paul Rumsby (ex MRC IEH), Dr Derrick Crump (ex Cranfield IEH) and subsequently Prof Jason Weeks (ex Cranfield) and Dr Franziska Matthies as Associate Directors.

In 2018, Philip Holmes retired as a Director of IEH Consulting Ltd and his place was filled by Jason Weeks.

Looking Forward

IEH Consulting Ltd has had an extremely successful first five years, with an expanding portfolio of work, new clients and healthy finances. With the assistance of our highly experienced Associates – of which there are now 30 – we have diversified into important new key areas including antimicrobial resistance and microplastics in the environment, in addition to our traditional activities in the fields of toxicology, epidemiology, chemical regulation and human and environmental risk assessment.

We have an established ‘living’ business plan, streamlined documented working procedures and an enthusiastic Board of Directors to move us forward into an exciting new phase. Our aim is for continued growth, key involvement in important upcoming issues, and increased flexibility to respond to future client needs.