

Minutes of Meeting  
Lead H&S Officers Network Meeting  
On-line Meeting (via Teams)  
Tuesday 7 September 2021

Present:

|                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Darlington Borough Council | Joanne Skelton - Minutes (JS) |
| Durham County Council      | David Gray (DG)               |
| Gateshead Council          | Stephen Foggin (SF)           |
| North Tyneside Council     | Anthony Laing (AL)            |
| South Tyneside Council     | Stephen Bell (SB)             |
| Stockton Brough Council    | Stuart Crockett (SC)          |
| Sunderland City Council    | Geoff Scrafton – Chair (GS)   |

| Item | Discussion  | Action                         |
|------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1.   | <b>Apologies for Absence:</b><br><br>Derek MacDonald (DM) – Stuart Crockett attending<br>Katherine Chapman – Newcastle City Council   |                                |
| 2.   | <b>Minutes from 11 May 2021 and Matters Arising</b><br><br>GS explained he’s unfortunately unable to get a copy DAC Beachcroft webinar notes to share.<br><br>JA not in attendance to provide an update on My Compliance. Defer to next meeting.<br><br>GS provided an update on the improvement to iAuditor, which have been tested and received positive feedback, improvement in the action notification e-mail. GS will provide a further update at the next meeting.<br><br>Feedback provided by councils in response to JA’s request to share warning alert arrangements. JA to update the group on the overall response. | <br><br>JA<br><br>GS<br><br>JA |
| 3.   | <b>Events and COVID Precautions</b><br><br>Sunderland maintaining current position with the COVID restrictions.<br><br>North Tyneside moved to a return to work for most people most of the time, decision CE and PH, with a focus on personal responsibility.<br><br>Gateshead also continuing current approach until further notice.<br><br>South Tyneside not changed much, however, some minor changes with schools following Government guidance.  |                                |

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|    | <p>Darlington continuing with current approach through September to see impact of schools returning before making any revisions to arrangements.</p> <p>Durham moving to a hybrid model, half capacity.</p> <p>Stockton, from Sept, moved to a 40/60 split home and office working and signage changed, face coverings wear if you want message.</p> <p>Discussed council meetings arrangements, the majority of LA's continuing to hold council meetings in alternative venues with measures including 2m and face coverings, however, some meetings taking place in Council Chambers.</p> <p>Ventilation – Sunderland managers are risk assessing each venue/room to identify adequate natural/mechanical ventilation.</p> <p>Gateshead due to take delivery of monitors this week, however, need to ensure schools understand how to use them. Checklist issued to schools to assist in the checking adequacy of ventilation.</p> <p>CO2 monitors used to check level in rooms of concern, a tool not a solution to the problem.</p> <p>GS has good guidance document from Joint Union safety checklist for schools, which he'll circulate.</p> | GS |
| 4. | <p><b>Draft Building Safety Bill</b></p> <p>SF updated the group on the work being carried out in Gateshead in response to the draft Bill. Gateshead has a number of high-rise properties and there are implications from a health and safety management point of view, and the Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed to include specific roles and responsibilities in relation to building safety. The Housing Regulator is encouraging Gateshead to be prepared for the introduction of requirements.</p> <p>Sunderland don't have high-rise, however, acknowledge the impact of the Bill on Fire Risk Assessments.</p> <p>SB stated South Tyneside Homes are doing good work in relation.</p> <p>North Tyneside have set up a working group.</p>   |    |
| 5. | <p><b>Lone Working - duty of care for home workers</b></p> <p>SF asked what other authorities are doing in relation to lone working for home workers and duty of care. Gateshead are looking at changing guidance and categorising lone workers.</p> <p>Sunderland have recently introduced an agile working policy lead by HR with H&amp;S input, which included key messages to managers i.e. checking in with staff and other measures including EPR and lone working systems.</p>  |    |

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| 6.  | <p><b>Fees for Intervention</b></p> <p>North Tyneside – reported HAVS resulting in a HSE visit which went well, however, issues picked up with wood dust in maintenance resulting in an investigation.</p> <p>South Tyneside – recent accident in waste, refuse collector suffered fractured ribs, reported to the HSE, awaiting further action.</p> <p>GS – raised the issue of problems with agency drivers at Sunderland.</p> <p>JS – discussed the impact of a HSE investigation into a serious accident in Darlington, and offered support to talk through key learning, both from an organisational and a personal perspective, if anyone finds themselves in the situation.</p> <p>Gateshead has had a number of fires in the back of refuse wagons, resulting in targeted comms to the public.</p> |  |
| 7.  | <p><b>Recruitment/Staffing Issues</b></p> <p>Sunderland – employed a dedicated fire risk assessor, which is working well.</p> <p>South Tyneside – looking to employ an apprentice.</p> <p>North Tyneside – soon advertising for a H&amp;S Advisor (construction).</p> <p>Durham – Advertising for a H&amp;S Advisor and a temporary 2-year fixed term contract post</p>  |  |
| 8.  | <p><b>Exchange of Information/Council Updates</b></p> <p>N/A.</p>  |  |
| 9.  | <p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>N/A.</p>   |  |
| 10. | <p><b>GDPR</b></p> <p>SB - issue of holding staff vaccination information. LA's confirmed information gathered in relation to staff working/visiting care homes.</p>   |  |
| 11. | <p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Tuesday 9 November 2021, Stephen Bell to Chair and Stephen Foggin to take the minutes.</p>   |  |
| 12. | <p><b>Future Meetings</b></p> <p>TBC.</p>  |  |

