

Minutes of Meeting

Lead Health & Safety Officers Network Meeting On-line Meeting (via MS Teams)

Tuesday 14 November 2023, 10:00am

Present:

North Tyneside Council	Adrian Blakey (AB)
Darlington Borough Council	Joanne Skelton (JSk)
South Tyneside MBC	Stephen Bell (SB)
Northumberland County Council	John Froud (JF)
Sunderland City Council	Geoff Scrafton (GS)
Newcastle City Council	Katherine Chapman (KC) Minutes
Middlesbrough Council	Gary Welch (GW) – Chair
Redcar & Cleveland Council	John Summers (JS)
Stockton Borough Council	Stuart Crockett (SC)
Stockton Borough Council	Lucinda Close (LC)

Item Discussion

1 Apologies:

North Tyneside – Anthony Laing (AL)
Kevin Lough – Durham County Council (KL)
Stephen Foggin- Gateshead Council (SF)

2 Minutes and Matters Arising

Minutes from the meeting on 12 September 2023 agreed as accurate.

3 Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points

GW outlined the review he was currently undertaking of fire safety measures in car parks used for EV

GS mentioned that a new car park has recently been constructed in Sunderland and has one floor EV charging points have been located in one place.

The group discussed challenges in converting older car parks to accommodate EVs.

Discussed possible fire safety standards for car parks accommodating EV charging points and the standards required for EV charging, measures identified included: EV charging points linked into the system, sprinklers, EV charging point maintenance.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/116899/car-parks-fire-safety-guidance-for-electric-vehicles.pdf

4 **Fees for Intervention**

None of the group members reported any FFI's.

SC reported a prohibition notice served on a contractor in respect of concerns around a lack of SSOW for ACM cement removal. However relevant arrangements were included in the SSOW and had potentially been overlooked by the HSE Inspector. The notice was lifted after some delay.

5. **Recruitment and Staffing**

GW – Middlesbrough – recruitment on hold until April. Looking at growing their own H&S officers and exploring the H&S apprenticeship programme.

AB – North Tyneside – looking to recruit one H&S Officer, ideally with a background in construction. The last recruitment round was unsuccessful, so will look for a general H&S Officer when they next go out to recruitment.

SC – Stockton – have one vacancy for a H&S Officer and also looking to grow their own.

JS - Redcar & Cleveland have now filled their H&S Officer vacancy.

SB – South Tyneside - experienced challenges trying to recruit someone with a construction background, but have now taken on a H&S Assistant Advisor. Also looking to recruit an Occupational Health Nurse.

JF – Northumberland – still experience difficulties recruiting someone to fill his post.

6 **Exchange of Information / Council Updates**

JSk – Darlington – successfully delivered the 1 day IOSH – Directing Safely Course to their senior executives. The trainer, Steve McClean, was very good and kept the directors engaged for the day. Cost £2000. Details circulated with the minutes.

SC – Stockton – flagged recent inspections by the fire service highlighted deficiencies in fire doors in two resource centres, resulting in large bills for the replacement of new door sets.

SB - South Tyneside stated that they had focused on care homes and residential high-rise buildings to ensure high standards in the management of fire.

GW – put their fire safety officers on a 1 day fire door inspection course and also put their two joiners on an accredited fire door maintenance course.

KC – Newcastle – confirmed that all fire risk assessors had completed an on line ½ day fire door inspection course. Joiners trained on an accredited fire door inspection course now carry out 6 monthly fire door inspections of buildings with sleeping accommodation. Minor defects are repaired by joiners who have attended an accredited fire door maintenance course, where doors can't be repaired they are replaced by new fire door sets. Fire doors in other locations are inspected for obvious defects by Premises Leads or caretakers.

JF – Northumberland - are looking to engage a competent contractor to carry out a technical contractor to conduct FRAs at appropriate frequencies, to review the physical fire safety standards in their buildings.

SB – South Tyneside – Asked group members if they would speak to their OHU departments to explore possible interest in establishing an OH nursing network meeting. GS mentioned that the OH Physicians had a regional network meeting.

All

KC – Newcastle - progressing deployment of radon monitors in buildings and reviewing Anti-Violence Policy.

GW – Middlesbrough – recent construction work in a care home revealed that all fire separation/compartimentation had previously been removed from the ground to the first floor. Fire service and building control had been informed. L1 automatic detection in place.

GW – Middlesbrough – abusive and vexatious calls, working to pull this information and PRI data from their Employee protection register into Power BI.

GS – Sunderland – Employee protection register – went live in Feb 2020 and following a review is working well. Number on the register increased from 130 to 200. Register also includes presence of dangerous dogs and environmental hazards such as needles. Have a board to agree inclusion and removal of persons on the register and an appeals process and separate appeals panel.

It was commented that some reorganisations resulted in incompatible services being sited alongside each other.

9 Any Other Business

AB – North Tyneside thanked the group for their responses to his questions on the use of power tools by apprentices.

10 Date of next meeting

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 13 February 2024, 10am via Teams

Stephen Bell – Chair
Anthony Laing – Minutes