

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Lead H&S Officers Network Meeting**  
**On-line Meeting (via Teams)**  
**Tuesday 9 February 2021**

**Present:**

Darlington Council	Joanne Skelton (JS)
Gateshead Council	Stephen Foggin (SF)
Middlesbrough Council	John Armstrong (JA)
Newcastle City Council	Katherine Chapman (KC)
North Tyneside Council	Anthony Laing (AL)
Northumberland CC	John Froud (JF)
South Tyneside Council	Stephen Bell (SB)
Stockton Council	Derek Macdonald (Chair & Minutes) (GM)
Sunderland City Council	Geoff Scrafton (GS)

Item	Discussion	Action
	Welcome to Stephen Foggin from Gateshead Council, Susan's replacement.	
1	<b>Apologies for Absence:</b>  Durham FRS - Paul Burlison Durham County Council - Kevin Lough	
2	<b>Minutes from 10 November 2020 meeting and Matters Arising</b>  No matters arising.  Action for JS re incident reporting element of new system, on the agenda.	
3	<b>RIDDOR Reporting Covid 19</b>  <b>GS, Sunderland</b>  Discussed Covid RIDDOR reporting requirements and future prospective litigation.  Experienced examples of educational establishments resistant to reporting.  Workplace cases balanced against community transmission with little direct evidence other than cluster group bias.  Discussed HSE examples for reporting, other cases or outbreaks to consider as another factor, whether or not cause could be established to influence reporting.  Breakdown of procedures or close contact transmission to consider.  1 <sup>st</sup> case may not be reported as the introduced vector for onset workplace transmission, if domestic or family contacts rules out.	<b>ALL</b>

	<p>F2508's contains bullet point precautions stated to prevent transmission and summary of control measures put in place.</p> <p>One example provided of substantial follow-up by the HSE up from a mis-reported fatality.</p> <p>Further examples of an Academy school not wishing to report a case.</p> <p>One Academy expressed concern from future civil litigation – likely to escalate.</p> <p>GS referenced a recent DAC Beachcroft seminar on this topic.</p> <p>GS to share any learning from seminar.</p> <p>Discussed prioritisation of key staff within teaching and emergency services. Teaching community not always required to wear face coverings.</p> <p><b>JF, Northumberland</b></p> <p>Public Health leading investigations in schools' investigations.</p> <p>Discussed view on prioritised vaccinations for special schools where spare vaccination capacity exists</p> <p>Special schools fully open for multiple and complex needs, highlighting the contradiction between mainstream populations and the additionally vulnerable population in special and complex needs schools.</p> <p><b>KC, Newcastle</b></p> <p>Discussed reporting with HSE Inspectors - legal duty to report - AA &amp; VW of the HSE.</p> <p>Questionable added value of multiple investigations incurring extensive resources without cause being determined.</p> <p>Discussed effectiveness of social distancing in schools.</p> <p>Further discussion on benefit of vaccination to teaching staff balanced against other vulnerable front-line staff, ie, Police.</p> <p><b>AL, North Tyneside</b></p> <p>HSE follow up of one school outbreak - late reported by school.</p> <p>Rolling infection rate in the week cases occurred included in F2508 narrative - welcomed by the HSE.</p> <p><b>SB, South Tyneside.</b></p> <p>HSE process and purpose.</p> <p>Caveat on F2508's, transmission rates and positive cases in locality, balanced against little evidence.</p>	<p><b>GS</b></p>
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	<p><b>DM, Stockton</b></p> <p>DM shared intended meeting with the HSE on Friday 12 February in the light of a substantial number of prospective reportable cases.</p> <p>GS requested an update to group following Stockton's meeting with the HSE meeting.</p>	<p><b>DM</b></p>
<p>4</p>	<p><b>Audit Systems Update</b></p> <p><b>JA, Middlesbrough</b></p> <p>Purchasing a MyCompliance system featuring incident reporting and investigation, audits, risk assessment, action tracker and other elements.</p> <p>Easy to make bespoke to organisational needs.</p> <p>JA to provide another update at next meeting.</p> <p>Similar regular structural changes to feature within procured products. MyCompliance enable users to make changes to structural records.</p> <p><b>KC, Newcastle</b></p> <p>6000 employees and constantly being reorganised creating administrative structural difficulties to keep track.</p> <p>Interested to know if MyCompliance functions without hierarchical structures.</p> <p>Discussed FFP3 respirators used by enforcement officers, beyond recognised and established current guidance.</p> <p><b>SB, South Tyneside</b></p> <p>Sticking to government guidance despite requests for FFP3 by staff, other than for asbestos/construction work.</p> <p><b>SF, Gateshead</b></p> <p>SF Systnet, being developed inhouse by ICT team for internal communication systems, incident reporting and other activities.</p> <p><b>JF, Northumberland</b></p> <p>Discussed further organisational changes.</p> <p>Microsoft or Tableau solution being looked at, enabling effective control of organisational structures within various data source systems.</p> <p>No suitable auditing system available to meet the organisation's very specific needs. 4000 emp &amp; 165 schools to accommodate.</p> <p>Interested in the apparent control offered by MyCompliance.</p>	<p><b>JA</b></p>

Difficulty to cascade information to external organisations due to digital security.

**AL, North Tyneside**

North Tyneside Council use Airsweb Env H&S software.

Looking to introduce an improved employee protection register [EPR] across all services.

Airsweb resistant to making structural changes.

**JS, Darlington**

Darlington BC also using Airsweb, but further work required to develop the audit function, but resources limitations prohibit this for time being.

Darlington BC have developed an internal EPR resource in partnership with Stockton BC.

**DM, Stockton**

Stockton BC launched the new EPR several weeks ago and this is proving very successful, it's easy to use and customers tells us it is intuitive, accessible and does what we require.

**AL, North Tyneside – Face Coverings**

North Tyneside is under pressure from responsive co-ordinating group around wearing face coverings when walking around internal premises. Views on this sought from other Councils.

**DM** - Stockton's risk assessment states that face coverings are recommended when moving around buildings or mixing with people that you do not usually mix with. Face coverings may be removed at socially distanced desks - marked up.

**JA** - Stated that MBC have a similar approach to Stockton BC.

**SB** - STC External visitors, contractors and staff expected to wear face coverings in the reception areas, but not necessary for staff to wear at desk or when moving around building.

**SF** - Gateshead recently changed stance to make mandatory for face covering to be worn in communal areas or when moving around buildings.

**KC** - Newcastle have a slightly blended approach to face coverings.

Contractors and visitors to buildings expected to wear face coverings, staff expected to wear face covering in areas open to the public during times open to public.

No expectation to wear face covering in staff only areas of building.

**JS** - In Darlington staff wear face coverings in public facing customer service.,

	<p>Staff are not expected to wear face coverings in their covid secure workplace environments.</p> <p><b>GS</b> - Sunderland CC are looking to review their position in the light of recent advice from Public Health follow an outbreak, to wear face covering in certain parts of the building.</p>	
5	<p><b>Fees For Intervention</b></p> <p><b>JF, Northumberland</b></p> <p>No FFE's but numerous visits by the HSE's COVID spot-check inspectors.</p> <p>No interventions, generally satisfied with all arrangements.</p> <p>School construction site visit by the HSE to look at ACM's. No FFI following.</p> <p><b>AL, North Tyneside</b></p> <p>As Northumberland above. Generally light touch visits and all positive and satisfactory. Tier 3 Manager notified of prospective visits.</p> <p><b>SB – South Tyneside</b></p> <p>A few visits from the HSE spot-check inspectors.</p> <p>Recommendations following one construction site visits around ACM's but no FFI.</p>	
6	<p><b>Recruitment/Staffing Issues</b></p> <p><b>GS, Sunderland</b></p> <p>Recent recruitment has proven difficult, further interview taking place this week. Considering recruiting via agency for Fire Risk Assessor for 6 months, TBC.</p> <p>Awaiting agency CVs.</p> <p><b>SF, Gateshead</b></p> <p>Secured two new posts, H&amp;S Officer, 12 month contracts post secured via COVID funding, and a Health and Safety Support Officer role.</p> <p>One further post to advertise shortly.</p> <p><b>KC, Newcastle</b></p> <p>Facing a number of retirement posts to be replaced.</p> <p>Permanent post going out to advert</p> <p>1 x fixed term Fire Safety post to be advertised.</p> <p>Mirroring GS comments on recruitment challenges.</p>	

	<p><b>JF, Northumberland</b></p> <p>Also facing a retiring team to be replaced and restructured.</p> <p>Acknowledged market-place challenges in recruiting suitable candidates.</p> <p><b>SB, South Tyneside</b></p> <p>Recruited a suitable candidate from Saudi, shortage of strong candidates.</p>	
7	<p><b>Exchange of Information/Council Updates</b></p> <p>No items.</p>	
8	<p><b>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</b></p> <p>To remove as a standing item.</p> <p><b>KC, Newcastle</b></p> <p>Discussed implications for Academy Trust and Council's response to dealing with H&amp;S complaints received by Environmental Health being re-routed to the Corporate H&amp;S team, rather than being raised directly with the school. Matter currently being addressed.</p> <p><b>JF, Northumberland</b></p> <p>Discussed means of receiving COVID reporting via changing accident reporting system to collect cases.</p> <p>Highlighted difficulties communicating with Academy Trusts and the identification of relevant duty holders</p>	

9	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>SF – Gateshead – Hand Sanitisers, view on alternatives to alcohol-based products?</b></p> <p><b>SB</b> - Academy Trusts buying back elements of services from varying Councils causing conflict and confusion around duty holder responsibilities.</p> <p><b>JA</b> - Middlesbrough use 70% alcohol gel.</p> <p><b>JF</b> - Recognised conflicting commercial advice balanced against current WHO advice on alcohol gels.</p> <p><b>GS</b> - Discussed a non-alcohol product guaranteed to eliminate viruses.</p> <p><b>KC - Newcastle</b></p> <p>NCC's Public Health Team raised concerns about the effectiveness of fogging machines and they advised that the use of fogging machines shouldn't replace deep cleaning in situations where surfaces required cleaning as a result of contact from an infected individual.</p>	
10	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Tuesday 11 May 2021, 10am via Microsoft Teams</p>	
11	<p><b>Dates of Future Meetings</b></p> <p>Tuesday 7 September 2021  Tuesday 9 November 2021</p>	