

Minutes of Meeting
Lead Health & Safety Officers Network Meeting
On-line Meeting (via MS Teams)
Tuesday 12 September 2023, 10:00am

Present:

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| Newcastle City Council | Katherine Chapman (KC) – Chair |
| North Tyneside Council | Anthony Laing (AL) |
| Darlington Borough Council | Joanne Skelton (JS) |
| South Tyneside MBC | Joanne Woods (JW) |
| Stockton Borough Council | Stuart Crockett (SC) Minute taker |
| Northumberland County Council | John Froud (JF) |
| Sunderland City Council | Geoff Scrafton (GS) |
| Middlesbrough Council | Gary Welch (GW) |
| Gateshead MBC | Stephen Foggin (SF) |

Item Discussion

Action

1. Apologies

Durham County Council Kevin Lough (KL)
Hartlepool Borough Council David Blake (DB)
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council John Summers (JSu)

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 9 May 2023 agreed as accurate.

**3. Representation/Attendance on the National LGA H&S Panel –
Katherine Chapman**

Minutes of latest National LGA H&S Panel meeting (18.07.23) provided to group via email 20.07.23 by KC.

Key Points

Birmingham City Council has developed a Violent Warning Marker System App, which one of the catalysts for the work was that, like many local authorities, the council had numerous information systems which had developed in different ways over a number of years but did not speak to each other and so wanted to develop a comprehensive system to operate authority wide.

Key Benefits from the App

- System enabled manager to receive an alert when employee arrived at appointment and if employee failed to return from appointment.
- Marker for red alerts if employee needed assistance.

It's well known that many local authorities struggle with holding, sharing and making available employee protection based information due to significant variations on how such data is handled in each authority and what systems and processes they have to share it and keep it secure.

RAAC

Guest Speaker Mark Norris, Principal Advisor LGA Resilience

Notes from December survey request, 40% response rate from schools & a 60% partial response rate from schools.

No information at that time on funding available for schools in particular. LGA were keen to understand if RAAC builds were geographically concentrated. If so, local authorities would be well advised to look at wider property portfolio.

Additionally from this group meeting

Many local authorities have picked this up over the last few years, who have focussed their attention on maintained school stock, but where many academy trusts have had to handle the situation themselves.

HSE – Nick James

Touched on latest summary statistics for 2022 [here](#).

135 workers killed (2022/23)

High number associated to older workers.

Nick James presented feedback on national intervention for Asbestos in schools, which followed on from a DfE Asbestos Survey via capital portal.

HSE may have taken info from that data plus other known concerns to focus on particular schools to look at effectiveness of standards and controls as well as examples of good and bad practice.

Enforcement action where required – 2 prohibition notices issued for Asbestos Debris, 27 Improvement Notices & 112 schools received letters highlighting deficiencies.

HSE are Looking to carry out further inspections in secondary schools from October 23 onwards.

Intelligence led where schools are poor performers or still have large amounts of ACM present.

No end date to the intervention as yet.

HSE are keen for their report to be sent to schools as learning experience and to assist schools further.

HSE continue to target large commercial waste & recycling bins and their use and safety mechanisms – via [WISH guidance](#).

Update – Rachel Duke (Adviser, LGA Resilience, Safety & Regulation)

Draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill – Protect Duty. LGA helping to shape the new legislation – nowhere near on its final form, as many questions and concerns surround the bill.

- The sheer number of premises this may apply too.
- Resources available to manage to apply the legislation.
- Proportionality – may impact smaller businesses – which are low resource groups.
- Need for guidance.
- Sufficient time to implement.
- No budget for authorities to implement controls.

GW – MBC has done quite a lot of work on protect, such as rolling out mandatory training to the workforce – ACT (Action Counter Terrorism) & SCaN (See, Check and Notify) training with a 97% uptake See [here](#) & [here](#) for info

Council Health and Safety Audit/Peer review

Some LA's had discussed an audit/peer review process. KC got a sense that there was no current structure for that.

Some managers had a more informal approach and acted as a mentor to new H&S managers – more so than a peer challenge on local authorities' approach to safety and governance management.

A number of questions raised on resourcing it.

AL to attend next meeting – Tuesday 21 November 2023

4. Fees for Intervention

None noted.

5. Recruiting & Staffing

JF – currently covering H&S Manager post which is due to go out to advert and JF is currently covering existing post too, with a retired employee currently covering some back filling.

AL – 1 member of the team has given notice, currently about to advertise for H&S Advisor post (Construction).

GW – Advertised for H&S Advisor post, successful applicant however applicant has since withdrawn, so post due to go back out to advert.

SF – 1 Officer promoted within, 1 advert due out for H&S Officer / Culture Lead, with interviews mid September 2023.

SC – 1 Vacant H&S Advisor post on hold. SC successful in taking on Derek's H&S manager role who retired in June 2023, however the SBC H&S team are being reviewed in their approach and functions to incorporate H&S risk Management, so SC is currently covering the vacant role & H&S Manager role until decided if it can be filled or role spread across existing team of 4 advisors.

GS & JF – Discussed the difficulties local authorities are having with recruiting persons at higher levels, as private sector pay is much better. Both noted that strong is the ethos to grow your own, which JS noted having recruited a Safety Advisor with the NEBOSH Cert last year, who is developing very well. KS noted, some difficulty with advisors that appear to have academic limits on moving up the scale to achieve taking on more complex work, than presents issue for the structure and functions of the team.

6. Exchange of Information / Council Updates

Radon affected areas.

KC noted Newcastle have set up some monitoring around affected areas which will be in place for several months, and KC will then await the report findings around January/February 2024 to see if any actions arise.

7. Any Other Business

None.

8. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 14 November 2023, 10:00am, MS Teams

GW noted as volunteer to Chair.

KC noted as volunteer for Minutes.