

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Lead H&S Officers Network Meeting**  
**On-line Meeting (via Teams)**  
**Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

**Present:**

Newcastle City Council (NCC) – Katherine Chapman (KC) – Chair & minute taker  
 Darlington Borough Council (DBC) – Joanne Skelton (JS)  
 Gateshead MBC (GMBC) – Susan Smith (SS)  
 Sunderland CC (SCC) - Geoff Scrafton (GS)  
 Middlesbrough Council (MC) – John Armstrong (JA)  
 Durham CC (DCC) – Kevin Lough (KL)  
 South Tyneside MBC (STMBC) – Stephen Bell (SB)  
 Stockton BC (SBC) – Derek Macdonald (DM)  
 Northumberland County Council (NBCC) – John Froud (JF)  
 NEREO – Mick Brodie (MB) - Director  
 North Tyneside Council (NTC) – Anthony Laing (AL)

Item	Discussion	Action
1	<p><b>Apologies:</b></p> <p>Durham FRS – Paul Burlison,            Hartlepool - Daniel Blake</p>	
2	<p><b>Minutes from 11<sup>th</sup> February and matters arising</b></p> <p>Minutes agreed.</p> <p>No matters arising</p>	
3	<p><b>RIDDOR Reporting Covid 19</b></p> <p>MB from NEREO explained RIDDOR reporting Covid 19 (C19) had been discussed in a meeting of regional LA HR Heads. He explained that clarity had been sought from the HSE by Nigel Carruthers and Kelvin Scorer, senior officers from the LGA, on C19 RIDDOR reporting requirements and what constituted ‘reasonable evidence’ for determining an occupational causal link for high and low risk worker groups.</p> <p>HSE’s response was that a considered view should take account of: the view of a medical practitioner, presence of workplace clusters, contact with a confirmed case, and other factors such as contact with C19 positive family members and level of community transmission in the workplace.</p>	

	<p>HSE noted concerns raised and will feed back into their decision-making structure.</p> <p>The group noted that the criteria being developed for contact tracing to identify high risk contacts and the need for self-isolation, could potentially inform the reasonable evidence threshold, however this criteria isn't currently available.</p> <p>All present were in agreement that the HSE's current guidance on C19 reporting requirements requires further clarity in relation to what is meant by 'reasonable evidence.'</p> <p>MB confirmed he would be taking this back to the regional HR managers meeting for a decision about a further approach to push the HSE for reporting clarity.</p> <p>KL also stated that guidance from the HSE on relaxing the rules around timing of statutory inspections would be useful and supported the need for the HSE to move to a more advisory rather enforcement footing during these exceptional times. Those present were in full support.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Council's with C19 RIDDOR investigation forms to circulate to the group for information.</p>	ALL
4	<p><b>Fees for Intervention</b></p> <p>GS – provided an update on the fees currently charged for an FFI following an F10 visit. HMI visited a site being refurbished at a time when it was moving from a construction site based manual fire alarm system to a wired building system and also noted an RPE issue. GS noted they were waiting to see if any further fees were levied during the next invoicing period.</p>	
5	<p><b>Staffing Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sunderland CC – recruiting an H&amp;S Officer</li> <li>• Darlington BC – recruiting an H&amp;S Officer to cover maternity leave.</li> <li>• STMBC and NCC – Both on hold for an Assistant H&amp;S Officer</li> <li>• Gateshead MBC - have recently recruited a new H&amp;S Adviser, an OH Advisor and a fire risk assessor. Interview process carried out by phone.</li> </ul> <p>Sunderland CC confirmed they were exploring software options to assist with recruitment.</p> <p>Group discussed recruitment using video conferencing as another option. Difficulties in delivering a satisfactory induction process were discussed.</p>	

6	<p><b>Exchange of Information</b></p> <p>GS – outlined an incident in which the wheels of a refuse vehicle had gone over a sleeping bag and injured the ankle of someone in it.</p> <p>A&amp;D testing carried out for driver, no issues identified. TBT delivered to drivers. Cautioned that during the current situation there may be more instances of rough sleeping and the need for driver vigilance for debris and rubbish etc</p> <p>GS – outlined a finger crush injury to a child, playing on an unlocked metal gate on a bridle path. Fingers caught in hinge side of gate. RIDDOR reported.</p>	
7	<p><b>Any Other Business/GDPR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group debated approach to C19 Risk assessments and agreed to share risk assessments where available. Those present typically had a mix of Corporate/generic risk assessments, supplemented by service specific RAs where required.</li> <li>• All recognised that there was the potential for it to become an exercise in paperwork generation, simply regurgitating government sector specific advice.</li> <li>• Concerns were expressed around the availability of resources to support the process.</li> <li>• Concerns were also raised about the quality of risk assessment carried out by service/team managers, without input from H&amp;S Advisors, some Council's had put measures in place to ensure quality oversight.</li> <li>• Use of face masks in shared vehicles was discussed. WISH guidance at the time of the meeting doesn't currently recommend the use of face masks in shared vehicles.</li> <li>• Absence of guidance on the frequency of C19 testing for care staff was touched on. Agreed that advice from Public Health Team should be sought.</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions:</b> - Councils agreed to share by email risk assessments where present, with the group.</p>	ALL
8	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b> – Tuesday 8th September 2020 GS to chair next on-line meeting – via Teams.</p>	GS