

Minutes of Meeting
Lead H &S Officers' Network Meeting
On-line Meeting (via Teams)
Tuesday 8 September 2020

Present:

Sunderland CC (SCC) - Geoff Scrafton (GS) – Chair & Minute Taker
Newcastle City Council (NCC) – Katherine Chapman (KC)
Darlington Borough Council (DBC) – Joanne Skelton (JS)
Gateshead MBC (GMBC) – Susan Smith (SS)
Durham CC (DCC) – Lynne Swinney (LS)
South Tyneside MBC (STMBC) – Stephen Bell (SB)
Stockton BC (SBC) – Derek Macdonald (DM)
Northumberland County Council (NBCC) – John Froud (JF)
North Tyneside Council (NTC) – Anthony Laing (AL)

Item	Discussion	Action
1	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies received from John Armstrong (Middlesbrough Council) and Daniel Blake (Hartlepool Council).</p>	
2	<p>Minutes from meeting held on 11 May and Matters Arising</p> <p>The minutes were agreed, there were no matters arising.</p>	
3	<p>Torro 5 Mowers – LS</p> <p>LS advised that there was a couple of cases where the steering wheel had come off during alighting/dismount process using the wheel as part of the 3 points of contact. The machines in question are 3 years old. It would appear that it is a manufacturing fault and the manufacturer is to replace.</p> <p>Action: LS will monitor and provide update on progress at next meeting.</p>	LS

4 **RIDDOR Reporting Covid-19 – Update – KC**

KC noted that NCC had a small cluster outbreak and 27 people tested positive for Covid-19 through antigen testing. 5 cases were reported to HSE and there had been no follow up from HSE yet. KC advised that she is not sure if antibody testing has any value to work staff.

NB: Antigen testing identifies those currently positive and antibody is those historical.

SS reported 13 cases to HSE – they responded swiftly and carried out an investigation. No further action was taken and no material breach of legislation identified, therefore, no FFI – HSE complimented the Adult Social Care Service for their working practices.

JF informed that 1 case had been reported to HSE with regards to an RCV crew member – no feedback as yet.

Other colleagues had not reported any cases to HSE.

5 **Muslim Burials – KC**

KC advised that NCC had received enquiries from Muslim family members asking if they could enter the grave to correctly position the body and head for religious purposes – she had concerns in relation to the shoring equipment proposed by the manager for this purpose and sought feedback from other LAs about whether they were using proprietary grave shoring systems.

Teleshore was identified by some LAs as a potential supplier of proprietary grave shoring.

Action: LA's were asked to check and feedback on any other proprietary grave shoring suppliers/systems used for Muslim burials. **All**

6 **Internal Audits & Action Tracking – SS**

SS informed that GMBC do not have any kind of H&S audit tracking system in place and their internal audit section are querying why not – she, therefore, wondered whether other LA's were in the same boat or doing something different.

GS – Using similar system to SS (I-auditor) and do not specifically track audits – do report to senior managers quarterly on trends and themes, as well as undertaking interventions where areas score poorly.

KC – same as above and requested that this is raised as an agenda item for next meeting – KC is trying to develop an internal system that will piggy-back their internal audit system.

JS – do have an audit system but leave actions to senior managers – they have purchased Airs-web but was not using the audit module at present – JS to provide update on airs-web at the next meeting.

AL – informed that NTC use both Airs-web and I-auditor – schools use Airs-web and initial feedback was positive – maybe a potential issue with access levels.

SB – still using a paper-based system.

LS – just started using I-auditor and will feedback at next meeting on progress.

JF – updated the group on TABLO.

Action: Audit System Updates to be added to next meeting agenda **All** and all to provide.

7 **Fees for Intervention**

None reported.

8 **Staffing Issues:**

- Sunderland CC – *recruited a H&S Advisor who started on 1 September – challenging induction due to Covid-19 and social distancing
- Darlington BC – recruiting an H&S Officer but struggling to get good quality candidates
- STMBC – recruited H&S Officer in August but is recruiting again
- Gateshead MBC – SS advised that she is to retire at the end of December and her post will be advertised in due course
- NTC/Engie – apprentice has left for a permanent position. AL informed that Engie H&S will be brought back in-house to NTC
- NCC – just recruited an Assistant Adviser and now looking to recruit a fixed term Adviser – the induction process was via rota

*Sunderland CC confirmed they explored software options to assist with recruitment – used MS Teams that worked extremely well – it is likely that, even when Covid-19 restrictions are fully lifted, this virtual process will be adopted wherever possible.

The group discussed recruitment using video conferencing as another option. Difficulties in delivering a satisfactory induction process were discussed.

9 **Exchange of Information**

SB – as part of Covid-19 measures, looking to install screens/curtains within RCVs as per those already in operation at GMBC- 2 curtains can mean 3 people can travel in the cab – if it is successful they will install in more vehicles.

Potential issues were discussed ranging from cleaning and driver visibility to insurers' approval and TU agreement.

Action: SS to email group with date for viewing/demo of GMBC **SS** vehicles which have them installed.

7 **Any Other Business/GDPR**

LS raised an issue with regards to catering staff wearing surgical masks during food service – discussion included pro's and con's as well as RA requirements.

8 **Date of Next Meeting** – Tuesday 10 November 2020

AL to chair next on-line meeting – via MS Teams. **AL**