

**Minutes of Meeting
Health & Safety Lead Officers Network Meeting**

**On-line Meeting (via Teams)
Tuesday 14 May 2024, 10.00am**

Present:

Newcastle City Council (NCC)	Katherine Chapman (KC)
Darlington Borough Council (DBC)	Vicki Lewis (VL)
Gateshead MBC (GMBC)	Stephen Foggin (SF) - Chair
Sunderland City Council (SCC)	Geoff Scrafton (GS)
South Tyneside MBC (STMBC)	Stephen Bell (SB)
South Tyneside MBC - (STMBC)	Joanne Woods (JW)
Stockton Borough Council (SBC)	Stuart Crockett (SC) – Minute Taker
Stockton Borough Council (SBC)	Tony Jones (TJ)
Redcar and Cleveland Council (RCC)	Joe Moutter (JM)
Northumberland County Council (NBCC)	John Froud (JF)
Durham County Council (DCC)	Kevin Lough (KL)

Item	Discussion	Action				
1	<p>Apologies:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Darlington Council</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Joanne Skelton</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Tyneside Council</td> <td>Anthony Laing</td> </tr> </table>	Darlington Council	Joanne Skelton	North Tyneside Council	Anthony Laing	
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2	<p>Minutes from the meeting held on 13 February/Matters Arising:</p> <p>Minutes agreed.</p>					
3	<p>Stress Management – KC, NCC</p> <p>The group discussed a recent HSE webinar that detailed that the HSE would be focussing on stress risk management possibly later in 2024 – early 2025. The group discussed what each LA is doing.</p> <p>KC noted that NCC are working on a Corporate draft risk assessment as individuals are currently supported through HR.</p> <p>JF noted building questions into staff surveys to draw out key information, data was useful in looking at hot spots, which has led to better training and communication.</p> <p>KL noted similar to JF, but noted difficulties with support from Corporate Management Team. Noted that they didn't want to use the terminology associated to "Stress at Work Policy" and opted for a broader context "Mental Wellbeing Policy" which</p>					

	<p>Unions didn't favour. Currently going for Ambassador status with Better Health at Work Award.</p> <p>SB noted similar with a Stress at Work Policy, which includes a process for individual risk assessments and counselling support.</p> <p>SC noted no Corporate Stress Risk Management Policy, just a Work life Balance & Attendance Policy which includes many strands for employee support. SC will pick up with SBC new Occupational Health Advisor.</p> <p>SF noted not having a Corporate Stress Risk Assessment, but have previously carried out specific staff surveys. Currently carrying out a stress audit to assess sickness absence and tie in with a review of creating a stress policy.</p> <p>GS noted that there can be a struggle to differentiate between different stress and causes, and how as an employer that can be targeted by dedicated meaningful resources. GS authority has a Code of Practice for stress and emotional resilience.</p> <p>Group noted, can they share each other's policies.</p>	<p>SC</p> <p>All, if possible</p>
4	<p>Fire Safety Officers Networking Opportunities – KC, NCC</p> <p>KC opened the discussion by asking the group if there was scope to create a Fire Safety Officers Network Group, to enable LA Safety Advisors/Key Responsible Persons to collaborate effectively, subject to arising Fire Authority Inspections and queries regards Fire Safety Risk Management. The Group agreed.</p> <p>GS noted that post release of the RRFSO, this group did exist originally.</p> <p>Send expressions of interest to KC/Andrew Dunne, NCC andrew.dunne@newcastle.gov.uk</p> <p>First Meeting due to take place 19 September 2024, 2pm – 3.30pm via MS Teams.</p>	<p>All who wish to be involved</p>
5	<p>Benchmarking for H&S Team Structures, Costs and Accident Data – KC, NCC</p> <p>KC has requested a fresh round of benchmarking to enable an assessment of H&S team activity for sharing between group members that provide feedback.</p>	<p>All who wish to participate</p>

	<p>KC is looking to provide shared intel to NCC Corporate Management Team as part of queries with Annual Corporate Report.</p> <p>KC will send round template document for comment before producing final version for circulation and voluntary participation.</p> <p>Responses will only be shared with those who participate.</p>	KC
6	<p>Fees for Intervention</p> <p>KL noted that the HSE had visited a primary school as part of their continued Asbestos Management Initiative. Head didn't accommodate the visit very well, failed to refresh Asbestos Awareness and was provided a notice of contravention.</p> <p>2nd primary received an improvement notice, however since rescinded. Schools require constant education in understanding their facility responsibilities and so this serves as a reminder to communicate to schools under LA/Consultancy remit to ensure they are following the correct processes first and foremost and are prepared for a visit from the HSE anytime.</p> <p>GS noted the HSE Chemical Regulations Division had visited to assess use of pesticides, observed minor issues, products not being in date, product labelling errors, however no improvement notice was served and a comprehensive action plan was provided for the service to follow through.</p>	
7	<p>Recruitment/Staffing Issues</p> <p>JF – 1 internal post recruited to Team Leader. JF – H&S Manager post regraded and to be re-advertised.</p>	

8	<p>Exchange of Information/Council Updates</p> <p>KC noted that they were undertaking an assessment of Electric Vehicle Charging Points from a Fire Risk Management Perspective.</p> <p>KL noted budget approved for a fresh approach to Radon testing. Out of 803 buildings, 400 results have been compiled so far and 3 are above the Radon becquerel thresholds.</p>	
9	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>SB noted due to leave post, to work as a Safety Manager within the NHS.</p> <p>The group thanked Stephen for his immense contribution to the group and wished him well.</p>	
10	<p>Next Meeting</p> <p>Tuesday 10 September 2024, 10am, MS Teams.</p> <p>Chair - KC Minute Taker – TBC</p>	All