

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Health & Safety Lead Officers Network Meeting**  
**On-line Meeting (via Teams)**  
**Tuesday 13 February 2024**

**Present:**

Newcastle City Council (NCC) – Katherine Chapman (KC)  
 Darlington Borough Council (DBC) – Joanne Skelton (JS)  
 Gateshead MBC (GMBC) – Stephen Foggin (SF)  
 Sunderland City Council (SCC) - Geoff Scrafton (GS) – **Chair**  
 Middlesbrough Council (MC) – Gary Welch (GW)  
 Durham County Council (DCC) – Lynn Swinney (LS)  
 South Tyneside MBC (STMBC) – Stephen Bell (SB)  
 Stockton Borough Council (SBC) – Stuart Crockett (SC)  
 Redcar and Cleveland Council (RCC) – John Summers (JS)  
 Redcar and Cleveland Council (RCC) – Joe Moutter  
 Northumberland County Council (NBCC) – John Froud (JF)  
 North Tyneside Council (NTC) – Anthony Laing (AL) – **Minute Taker**

Item	Discussion	Action
1	<p><b>Apologies:</b></p> <p>None.</p>	
2	<p><b>Minutes from the meeting held on 14 November 2023 and matters arising:</b></p> <p>Minutes agreed.</p>	
3	<p><b>LGA Practitioner Panel Meetings – volunteers required – (KC) (NCC)</b></p> <p>Confirmed attendance:                      Stephen Foggin – Tuesday 12 March 2024                      Geoff Scrafton – Tuesday 16 July 2024                      Anthony Laing – Tuesday 19 November 2024</p>	
4	<p><b>Benchmarking – incident categories – (SF) (GMBC)</b></p> <p>The group discussed their respective experiences of accident and incident trends with a common theme around high levels of sickness absence due to mental health, violence and aggression across all organisations. All members reported an increase in the number and severity of incidents involving violence, aggression and anti-social behaviour. It would be useful to benchmark the top 5 incident causes.</p>	

	<p>Referenced the LGS/HSE item from Novembers Practitioner Panel meeting.</p> <p><b>GS</b> advised of a number of FOIs in relation to incident categories and absence, particularly for schools.</p> <p><b>SF</b> – to pull something together to circulate around the group with a request for data/questions that can be reported against from the regional local authorities.</p> <p><b>KC</b> – Willing to share some of the measures NCC have come up with/implemented in some areas/situations.</p>	<p><b>SF</b></p> <p><b>KC</b></p>
5	<p><b>Health and safety arrangements for child car seats – (KC) (NCC)</b></p> <p><b>KC</b> – discussed training and maintenance in relation to car seats used in various parts of the organisation, i.e. social care and early years settings. Use of e-learning for Driving at Work and adding car seats to transport young children. Need to ensure car seats are appropriate to the size, height, weight and age of the child and are fitted correctly. Proportionate checks re condition and formally recorded on a routine basis.</p> <p><b>GW</b> – advised of MIDAS training, weekly checks on chare seats being built into the weekly before and after use checks for buses and cars. In the process of getting MIDAS train the trainer in place.</p> <p><b>JS</b> – initiated an internal audit of car seat use and management as the extent of car seats is sporadic across the organisation. JS will share the results of this audit with the group.</p> <p><b>GW</b> – to circulate checklist.</p>	<p><b>JS</b></p> <p><b>GW</b></p>
6	<p><b>Fees for Intervention</b></p> <p>HSE’s Plant Protection Products Regulations team visited SBC, DBC and NBCC to review use and storage of chemicals.</p> <p>Other local authorities expecting visits. Local authorities already having been visited commented on short notice of the visits.</p> <p>Noted findings of visits were around pedestrian and vehicle segregation, record keeping, bunding.</p>	
7	<p><b>Recruitment and Staffing</b></p> <p><b>NTC</b> – recruiting for a Health and Safety Adviser replacing a vacant post following the departure of a Health and Safety Partner working on construction and housing.</p>	

	<p><b>GMBC</b> – appointed a Health and Safety Support Officer to work on schools. Additional funding another Support Officer role. Recruitment to follow. Culture Change Lead appointed but withdrew just prior to commencement so going back out to advert.</p> <p><b>MC</b> – missing 0.6fte Fire Risk Assessor.</p> <p><b>SBC</b> – advisor post on hold – unable to fill. Looking to fill a Fire Safety Advisor role. Anticipated Health and Safety post within a couple of months due to upcoming retirement.</p> <p><b>RCC</b> – JS retirement. Restructured and won't be replacing the role immediately. Joseph Moulter to take over.</p> <p><b>DCC</b> – static at the moment however due to sickness there may be a vacancy arising. No recruitment at the moment.</p>	
8	<p><b>Exchange of Information/Updates</b></p> <p><b>D1 Driving Licence Requirements:</b></p> <p><b>GS</b> – discussed minibus drivers and D1 licence requirements. Transport Manager has reviewed policies and procedures and discovered that D1 licence requirement wasn't being enforced in relation to minibus drivers. This has far-reaching implications for schools. Consensus is to go above and beyond but practicalities are enormous and, if that is the aspiration, there needs to be a plan and not an immediate ask. Concerned that HSE/Police/Insurance may look at why one local authority used the D1 approach, and another didn't. Concerned insurance may be void.</p> <p><b>KC</b> – advised that NCC haven't applied D1 across the board and pointed to exemption from the Department for Transport which remains on their website. Haven't advised schools to move to D1, left up to schools. Looked at DfE and Insurers and their insurers have said they do not need the driver to hold the D1 licence. Clean driving licence, &gt;25 years old and have been driving for 3 years. Type B licence.</p> <p><b>GS</b> – to share response from Transport Manager when he has received it.</p> <p><b>Life Vac Devices:</b></p> <p>JF – discussed Life Vac devices (vacuum pump) used for elderly people for removal of choking obstructions. Devices accepted for use with children? Charity has approached schools, (£70 per device). Query around training and competence. Any information to JF.</p> <p><b>Allergic reactions in school meal provision:</b></p>	<p><b>GS</b></p> <p><b>ALL</b></p>

	<p>Any feedback where contractors delivering school meals have resulted in near misses due to allergies and reactions?</p> <p><b>Fire Authority inspections – compartmentation:</b></p> <p><b>SC</b> advised that, following a Cleveland Fire Authority inspection, a significant amount of work was highlighted relating to compartmentation. Does anyone issue a compartmentation permit prior to works?</p> <p><b>KC</b> advised no permit but ongoing conversations with Property Services and ICT where they are commissioning works. Lag between work being carried out and fire stopping being put back is an issue.</p> <p><b>JS</b> advised found issues during FRAs after maintenance works had been carried out. Making good afterwards is captured in pre-start meetings.</p> <p><b>Refuse vehicles – Bin lifts:</b></p> <p><b>KC</b> – asked what other LA’s were doing around retrospective sensors being fitted to bin lifts (Turberg) which doesn’t give 100% assurance that lift will not operate where no bin is present with potential consequences to members of the public or operatives. WISH guidance solutions are only interim. Looking at other solutions as a complimentary system. National eye on this. Waiting for manufacturers to retro fit, dealing with demand issue.</p> <p>Are other LA’s doing the same?</p> <p>Discussion around the wider implications on vehicles of food waste collections and trade waste.</p> <p>Lynn Swinney to circulate to the group the invite to the Food Waste Working Group.</p> <p><b>JS</b> – discussed the gap analysis required relating to the November LGA call and the presentation given by the HSE about legacy and tourist infrastructure, i.e. tramways / mines etc.</p> <p><b>North Tyneside Schools Closures</b></p> <p><b>AL</b> – discussed recent media coverage of schools in the borough that had closed due to structural issues. Confirmed this was not related to RAAC. Due to ongoing investigations the DfE would not allow NTC to break cover on what the full nature and extent of the issues were at this time.</p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>LS</b></p>
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9	<p><b>Any other Business</b></p> <p><b>JS Retirement:</b></p> <p>John Summers is retiring and as such this was his last meeting. Members thanked John for his valuable contributions to the group and wished him all the very best for a long and happy retirement.</p>	
10	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b> – Tuesday 14 May 2024, 10am via MS Teams.</p> <p>Stephen Foggin – Chair Stuart Crockett – Minutes</p>	