

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

**On-Line Meeting (via Teams)
Tuesday 12 November 2024, 10:00am**

Present:

Gateshead Council (GC)	Stephen Foggin (SF) - Chair
Newcastle City Council (NCC)	Katherine Chapman (KC) – Minute Taker
Northumberland County Council (NBCC)	John Froud (JF)
South Tyneside MBC (STMBC)	Joanne Woods (JW)
North Tyneside Council (NTC)	Adrian Blakey (AB)
Redcar & Cleveland (RCC)	Joseph Moutter (JM)
Sunderland City Council (SCC)	Geoff Scrafton (GS)
Middlesbrough Borough Council (MBC)	Gary Welch (GW)
Darlington Borough Council (DBC)	Joanne Skelton (JS)

Item	Discussion	Action				
1.	<p>Apologies:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Stockton Borough Council</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Stuart Crockett</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Middlesbrough Council</td> <td>Anne Pennock</td> </tr> </table>	Stockton Borough Council	Stuart Crockett	Middlesbrough Council	Anne Pennock	
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2.	<p>Minutes from the Meeting held on 10 September 2024</p> <p>CLEAPSS Schools Science training covered by KC under Exchange of information.</p> <p>GS – reported Sunderland have a school used as a leading Opal Play school. H&S Officers from Sunderland are meeting with the school and reps from Opal to discuss risk assessments for play.</p> <p>JM confirmed he'd written to Opal with concerns about the quality and safety of materials being provided for play, but was still waiting for a response.</p> <p>KL has previously raised the same concerns with Opal.</p> <p>GS offered to raise concerns raised by JM with the Opal representatives in the meeting with the school previously.</p> <p>Minutes agreed.</p>	GS				

<p>3.</p>	<p>Fees for Intervention</p> <p>GS – reported an incident involving a contractor who had fallen down a manhole cover had been investigated by the HSE, with multiple FFI invoiced received. Sunderland is disputing there was a material breach requiring an FFI and are taking legal advice in respect of the continuing FFI invoices. Once the investigation has completed GS will share the detail, particularly relating to the implications for CDM duty holders, contractor vetting and monitoring.</p> <p>KL – Durham have carried out radon monitoring in 650 buildings. Radon levels in 5 exceeded the action level threshold of 300bq m⁻³. Of which, 1 building required affected persons to be informed their personal exposure levels exceeded exposure thresholds. This notification triggered an FFI on the basis of a material breach. Remedial works since carried to improve ventilation and fit basement has significantly reduced radon levels.</p> <p>SF - HSE visited a non- notifiable F10 project. Asked various questions including Face Fit testing and competency. No further action.</p> <p>KC – Outlined an ad hoc intervention by an off duty inappropriately dressed (wearing flip flops) HSE inspector on an arbor site. Staff asked to see his warrant card, which he provided, and satisfactorily answered all his questions. No further action.</p>	<p>GS</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Recruitment / Staffing Issues</p> <p>AB – recruiting 1 H&S Assistant. Trying to establish additional H&S resource required to support 180 Capita staff who will be TUPE transferred back in-house. These staff support highways management.</p> <p>JW – trying to recruit an H&S assistant. Gone out twice, lots of applications, but no one appointable. Reviewing JD to exploring whether an internal H&S apprentice can be progressed.</p> <p>GS – Senior H&S Adviser recently retired. Informed they can't replace him. Trying to allocate resource across the remaining team has been tricky resulting in some demotivation. Both GS and KL have written reports to their Directors explaining the consequences and risks of not replacing staff.</p>	

	<p>JF – new H&S Manager (Andrew McKenna) starts at Northumberland on 2 December.</p> <p>KC - Fire Safety Officer currently being recruited.</p> <p>SF - Gateshead are currently undergoing a recruitment review to modernise the recruitment process.</p>	
6.	<p>Exchange of Information</p> <p>GS - Sunderland – Team of Sunderland refuse staff who dismantle bonfires in unauthorised locations, accompanied by police, subjected to abuse and missiles. Police couldn't control the crowds and staff retreated to their vehicle shaken. LAs not aware of this practice but offered to check.</p> <p>Regional Fire Safety Officer's meeting – KC reported good engagement with some useful discussions. Agreed 3 meetings per year. NCC Officer who was going to chair the meeting is leaving. GW volunteered Anne Pennock to chair the next meeting.</p> <p>KC confirmed that a CLEAPSS Auditing School Science Departments & H&S Management for H&S Officers one day course has been arranged for 9am-4pm Wednesday 26 February 2025, at Jesmond Park Academy School, Newcastle. Course cost is £165 + VAT and includes lunch and refreshments. Please contact Katherine Chapman if you wish to book a place. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis.</p> <p>KC – asked whether other LAs develop their own H&S elearning products for access by schools or purchase access to a library from an external provider.</p> <p>GS – confirmed that they develop in-house eLearning products by importing condensed (through CHATGPT) training content into a product (Pictory) which uses AI, to produce short, animated videos. Feedback confirms it has been very successful. See example Lone Working and Violence and Aggression.</p> <p>SF – use Learning Hub, Workforce & Development are currently converting a Fire Safety Awareness elearning course into a video, not yet ready for evaluation.</p> <p>JF – agreed elearning offered flexibility to access training.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p>

	<p>GW – have an elearning hub which all schools have access and will circulate the name.</p> <p>GW – A&D Policy – reported that TUs (UNISON and UNITE) are supporting their A&D (encompassing with cause testing) Policy, which is supportive and intends to keep people at work. GS reported the same feedback from their TUs on the basis of supportive policy.</p> <p>KL – introduced the Worker Protection Act 2024 – preventing sexual harassment. Confirmed he provided some collaborative support with the risk assessment process/template, but that this was an HR issue, to be led by HR. The group agreed.</p> <p>KL - made the group aware that the RNLI who previously carried out RAs of coastal areas, have ceased this process. This requires technical knowledge of wave heights, rip tides, coastal erosion etc. He is looking to re-commission the RNLI to carry out this RA review. KL GS and JF agreed to liaise and share relevant information.</p>	GW
7.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>JF is retiring early next year. Everyone thanked him for his contributions to the groups over the previous years and wished him an enjoyable retirement.</p>	
8.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Tuesday 11 February 2025 10:00am MS Teams</p> <p>Chair - GS Minute taker – GW</p> <p>Consider volunteers to chair etc the following meeting.</p>	All