

**PARTNERSHIP ON HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SCOTLAND
NOTE OF THE 4th MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE
ON 18th SEPTEMBER 2006**

In attendance:

Margaret Burns, HSC (Chair)
Stewart Campbell, HSE Director, Scotland
Linda Shanahan, STUC & FBU
Heather Meldrum, Community – co-presenting item 5
Harry Frew, UCATT and STUC
Douglas Greig, Scottish Executive, Department of Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning, Enterprise and Industry Division
Prof Russel Griggs, CBI Scotland
Ian Lavery, Glasgow City Council (Local Authorities as employers)
Rory Mackail, Scottish Federation of Small Businesses
Dr Karen McDonnell, representing Occupational Health and Safety professionals
Ian Tasker, STUC
Tom Young, COSLA
Jackie Wood, GNN Scotland
Sarah Jones, HSE, Director's Office, Scotland (Secretary)

Apologies:

Alistair Dodds, Highland Council (Local Authorities as employers)
James Fowlie, COSLA
Steve Bell, SCHWL

Welcome and introductions

1. Margaret Burns welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Tom Young representing COSLA in place of James, and Heather Meldrum co-presenting agenda item 5 with Linda.

Minutes

2. These were agreed as published on the HSE website.

Matters arising

Closer working between HSE and LAs

3.1 Members noted the paper updating them on action under HSE/LA partnership working. The Annex describing the links between various LA and HSC/E committees was helpful in trying to convey a fairly complex picture of interaction at several levels. In discussion, members noted that duty-holders and workers often do not understand the allocation of enforcement responsibilities for different types of premises between LAs and HSE and in this respect the efforts to work more closely were helpful.

Establishing a sub-group on the Scottish evidence base

3.2 A draft note of the first meeting had not yet been cleared by the representatives who had attended. It would be finalised and circulated to PHASS members as soon as it had been cleared. Stewart reported that the group had decided to focus on the evidence and indicators for evaluation of the 'workability' strand of the work of Healthy Working Lives as their expertise was generally concentrated on the 'in work' dimension of health and safety. It would be necessary however to understand the framework for evaluation being prepared by Health

Scotland before defining the contribution that could be made by the group in more detail. The meeting had gained some appreciation of the wide range of statistical evidence and data that could be relevant and particular areas of interest of each representative.

Action: Stewart to finalise the draft and issue to sub-group members for comment.

Producing a directory of the activities of OHS bodies

3.3 Karen McDonnell presented the paper produced by POOSH Scotland and invited comments on the next steps. In discussion, it was agreed that:

- the document should be published on appropriate websites with a launch to promote POOSH Scotland and the Partnership and raise awareness of OHS bodies across Scotland
- that it should first be verified and amended for publication to include a little more explanation of each body and to remove the maps and tables
- that the report as it stood should be subject to consultation and comment about whether the resources it identified in Scotland were likely to meet current and future demand and to identify gaps. Russel agreed to ask IOM to review the document in the first instance.

On behalf of the Partnership, Margaret thanked POOSH Scotland for a very useful and interesting piece of work.

Action: Members to let Karen have comments by mid-October. Sarah and Karen to discuss arrangements for a launch and publication.

Worker involvement

3.4 Ian tabled a paper which set out the STUC response to HSE's consultation on improving worker involvement. Safety reps were still experiencing local line management barriers to taking time off for training and to fulfill their duties even where there was corporate and senior level sign up. Some sectors were lacking in safety representation and advice. For example, the STUC was still receiving calls from the voluntary sector long after the project under the Workers' Safety Adviser Challenge Fund had ended. Calls were being referred to Healthy Working Lives. The WSACF funding had been too short term to establish sustainable improvement. Harry reported some good experience with businesses affiliated to trade bodies who had signed up to worker involvement; whereas other sections of the construction industry were still very hostile. Non-unionised small businesses were missing out on the expertise that trade unions could offer. The STUC was disappointed that the concept of roving safety reps and provision for improvement notices to be issued by safety reps had been omitted from the consultation document. They supported fresh legislation to give safety reps the right to be consulted on risk assessment. Other members felt that more regulation would not necessarily change attitudes. The consultation had ended on 8 September; HSC would be considering the responses at a future meeting.

Action: Members of the Partnership to continue to promote the conditions for, and characteristics of good worker involvement.

Small businesses

3.5 Rory Mackail reported that the results of the FSB pilot of a new survey tool were being analysed. Jackie Woods reported GNN's success in reaching agreement with Business Gateway to include more and better presented health and safety information on its website.

Good neighbour scheme with businesses and colleges

3.6 Russel reported that the pilot exercise between Dumfries and Galloway college and the health and safety officer at Faslane naval base to share experience and best practice had now produced a report. There were some useful generic lessons that could be extracted. The learning had not been all one way. Russel would produce a shortened paper for the next meeting.

Action: Russel to consult Stewart on the findings before the next meeting.

Action to integrate 'sensible health and safety'

3.7 The paper (PHASS/04/06) asked for early warning of events at which the Partnership might seek to speak. Jackie Woods said that GNN would be making contact with member organisations' press offices and agreed to circulate Scottish HSE press notices of interest. Partnership members also agreed to share relevant press notices from their organisations.

Action: Members to provide comments and ideas to Sarah including feedback on the need for a speaking note. Members to share press notices.

Better regulation agenda

3.8 The paper (PHASS/04/07) was based on a note of a fledgling better regulators' forum in Scotland. In discussion the Partnership noted other Better Regulation developments. Douglas emphasised that Scotland was aiming for a less mechanistic approach than England and Wales, based on consultation with businesses about what could improve their experience of the regulatory regime. Reservations were expressed about a Local Better Regulation Office for Scotland. Tom Young reported that COSLA had strong concerns about the model being proposed by DTI. COSLA had commissioned the Local Government Improvement Service to scope what a world class regulatory environment might look like in Scotland.

Action: Members would be kept abreast of development via PHASS. Margaret to send Douglas the recent HSC paper proposing a response to DTI.

Possible changes to HSC/E governance

4 Margaret announced the intention to develop proposals for consultation on the model for a possible merger of the two bodies. The decision to review the current structure had been driven by evidence that the separation between the Commission and Executive was not well understood by stakeholders, and the need to strengthen accountability for HSC and HSE activity. In discussion, members agreed the underlying principles of any new structure, that it should not affect frontline services, and that there should be explicit reference to the need to take devolution and Scottish representation into account.

Action: Members to consider the appropriate mechanism for consultation in Scotland in due course. Margaret to feedback these initial thoughts from PHASS to the HSC working group.

Protecting workers serving the public: Scottish Executive campaign to reduce violence and aggression

5 Linda introduced the paper summarising the aims and activity of the campaign which was due to end next April. She invited comments on continuing support, for example through embedding the campaign into other organisations' activities. Heather presented evidence of the risks of violence and aggression to workers in the betting shop sector and proposed some solutions. She welcomed support from the Partnership for taking forward action on risk reduction. Members found the presentation thought provoking. Initial responses focused on drawing the serious concerns it raised to the attention of local authority enforcement community, as LAs had health and safety enforcement responsibility for this particular sector. Margaret also agreed to consider how the Partnership could support the Scottish Executive's campaign and identify on-going support for the work it had started.

Action: Stewart to consider raising betting shop violence as an item for a future HASCOG (Scottish Health and Safety Co-ordinating Group) meeting and Scottish HELA (Health and Safety Local Authority Liaison Committee). Sarah to consult HSE's programme and policy colleagues on violence as to contribute to Margaret's consideration of framing the Partnership's support.

Corporate killing

6 The paper brought members up to date on the current position now that legislation for Scotland was being brought within the scope of the Bill for England and Wales. In addition, Karen Gillon MSP had proposed her own Bill and was in discussion with the Lord Advocate about Scottish Parliament's competence to take it forward.

Scottish health and safety statistics: an update

7 Members noted the new fatal injury statistics for Scotland for 2005/06 and the new analysis of existing ill health data. Members were invited to provide feedback on the format of the wealth of statistics published by HSE.

Action: Members to visit www.hse.gov.co.uk/statistics and offer feedback on its user-friendliness in terms of the evidence for Scotland.

Future Partnership business

8 Margaret reminded members of the commitment to report on the Partnership's activity via HSC to UK and Scottish Ministers. She asked for suggestions on the scope of, and issues to be covered in, a report and its format. Timing would need to meet the deadline before the run up to the Scottish elections in May – when public business needed to be curtailed. This would be 6 weeks before the date of the election.

Action: Members to suggest issues for the report. Sarah to seek an item on the HSC agenda probably in March for clearance before submission to Ministers.

Date of the next meeting

9 Members would be consulted on dates in early February. The meeting would include discussion and agreement on a draft report.

Action: Sarah to canvass for dates and preferred location via e-mail.

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