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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CONIAC)

A Brief Review of the Activities of CONIAC Sub - Groups April 2007 –March 2008 and Current Programmes of Work

Summary

This paper summarises the activities carried out by CONIAC’s sub-groups for the period April 2007 – March 2008 and provides information on current Programmes of Work.

Issue

1. CONIAC sub-group activities during 2007 – 2008 and current Programmes of Work.

Timing

2. Routine.

Recommendation

3. That CONIAC members note the activities of its sub-groups during 2007 – 2008 and current Programmes of Work.

Background

4. CONIAC is currently supported by the following sub-groups:
 - The Working Well Together Steering Group (WWT WG)
 - The Occupational Health Working Group (Occupational Health WG)
 - The Safety Working Group (Safety WG)
 - The SME Working Group (SME WG)
 - The Vulnerable Workers Working Group (Vulnerable Workers’ WG).
5. At its meeting on 25 June 2007, under Item 7 (“HSE Construction Programme and Priorities” and “Proposed CONIAC Workplan April 2007 – December 2008”) CONIAC was asked to:
 - agree how it would support the priorities and activities for inclusion in its Workplan for the period April 2007 – December 2008; and
 - the method of that support e.g. through “task and finish” Working Groups.

6. CONIAC had agreed that:

- the Safety WG, the Occupational Health WG and WWT WG should continue;
- the CDM Review WG should reconvene at an appropriate point to review implementation of the Regulations¹;
- the CDM Industry Guidance WG should reconvene at an appropriate point to review the industry guidance; and
- two new WGs should be established: one to deal with SMEs and one with vulnerable workers (which included migrant workers and young people). CONIAC had felt that the establishment of these new WGs would be useful additions in the current construction industry climate and could support the Construction Division in delivering its Business Group Delivery Plan.

7. CONIAC had also agreed that all WGs should have 2-3 clear priorities which could be demonstrably delivered, Terms of Reference and defined timescales. CONIAC would also support WGs by taking on the role of a Programme Board (by endorsing work programmes and monitoring progress) and inviting WG Chairs to report at meetings as requested.

8. Objectives, a report of activities 2007 – 2008² and current Programmes of Work for each WG can be found at Annex 1. For completion, this paper includes and supplements the information provided in papers M1/2007/3³ and M2/2007/1⁴ (taken at CONIAC's 25 June and 22 November 2007 meetings: see <http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/hsc/iacs/coniac/index.htm>).

Consultation

9. Chairs of Working Groups have contributed to and agreed the paper.

Action

10. CONIAC Members are asked to note the activities undertaken by CONIAC WGs during 2007 – 2008 and current Programmes of Work at Annex 1. Members may wish to raise issues in the light of the discussion at CONIAC's meeting on 25 June 2007, when they expressed a wish to monitor more proactively the activities of its Working Groups.

Contact

Michael Ryan: Construction Division; 375 West George Street; Glasgow. G2 4LW Tel: 0141 275 3107. Email: michael.ryan@hse.gsi.gov.uk

¹ Members will know that the timing of the reconvening of the CDM Regulations Review Working Group is currently being considered in the light of discussion at CONIAC's 22 November 2007 meeting (see paragraph 5.2 of the draft minutes) The outcome of Members' comments will be reported at CONIAC's 4 March 2008 meeting.

² Members should note that the period intended to cover this report is specifically 1 April 2007 – 31 March 2008. Because the circulation deadline and meeting date to which the paper is submitted is prior to 31 March, some information has been anticipated.

³ "A Brief Review of the Activities of CONIAC Sub - Groups April 2006 –March 2007": summarising the activities carried out by the sub-groups and providing information on activities planned for 2007/08 (submitted to June 2007 CONIAC meeting).

⁴ "CONIAC's Working Groups: Programmes of work 2007 onwards": informing CONIAC of the Programmes of Work currently being undertaken by its Working Groups.

CONIAC Working Groups

Terms of Reference, Activities undertaken 2007/08 and current Programmes of Work.

Working Well Together (WWT)

The aim of the Campaign is to provide an opportunity for all with an interest in construction health and safety to work together to provide support to micro and small construction businesses to improve their health and safety performance.

The key success of the WWT Campaign remains the leadership and commitment given by a relatively small number of individuals, in particular the regional chairs and committee members. CONIAC's WWT Steering Group is chaired by HSE and the Secretariat is provided by HSE's WWT Campaign Manager. Its objectives are to:

- provide an opportunity for the chair's of WWT Regional Groups and key stakeholders to discuss and debate priority issues and resourcing for the WWT Campaign
- discuss and develop more effective initiatives and ways of working to support micro and small construction businesses to improve their health and safety performance
- ensure that WWT activities target the key causes of occupational ill-health and fatal and other causes of injuries
- provide an opportunity for sharing good practice and knowledge.

Activities undertaken during 2007/08

- The Steering Group met on 17th April 2007 and 11th Sept 2007. The realigned timings for the meetings had enabled the Steering Group to input more effectively into HSE's communication planning and budget cycles. These were also the first meetings where a new protocol was followed for agreeing meeting agendas and submitting meeting papers. This helped the timely dissemination of key information, the streamlining of the meetings and to free up time for more strategic discussions on priorities and resourcing.
- The network of Groups organising WWT activities around the country was maintained at 16. The Groups have continued to look for and try new ways of reaching the target audience, as well as continuing to run already established initiatives, such as SHADs. A breakdown of key activities during 2007/08 is as follows:
 - 14 Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs) (a further four are scheduled for before 31 March 2008) - attended by 1350 delegates
 - Eight Designer Awareness Days (DADs) – attended by 659 delegates
 - Although 2007/08 numbers seem down compared with previous years, some Groups have taken the decision to run other events this year instead of SHADs, ie, White Van Roadshows or run smaller events aimed at 30-40 delegates in particular trades e.g. Birmingham have run three such events aimed at trades related to Mechanical Engineering, Groundworks and Refurbishment.
 - South Wales Group has run a suite of events during the period e.g. a four-week White Van Roadshow - 545 workers seen; two drop-in advice evenings - 45 delegates seen; two Builders Merchants "High 5" events - 165 actively engaged with; four "High 5" evening workshops in November - 21 delegates attended;
 - South West has run a Building Control Officer's (BCO) event where an HSE Health and Safety Awareness Officer joint-visited with a BCO to promote a day's training.

The training covered the “High 5” topics in the morning and Risk Assessment and Method Statements in the afternoon. Delegates were then eligible to register for CHAS (Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme). 13 delegates attended;

- Anglia has run two “Mock Trials”, events where a Construction Company/Director was put on “trial” for a fatality on site. It was carried out under courtroom conditions with three Magistrates (two acting and one real). 110 delegates attended. Anglia also ran three CDM breakfast events where 80 delegates attended.
- The North Wales WWT Group will also be running five BCO events in Gwynedd, North Wales in late February/early March and South Wales will be running a “Mock Trial” event in March.
- WWT was once again an integral part in Building Magazine's Health and Safety Awards, the only awards dedicated to health and safety in the construction industry. As well as the WWT Site Worker of the Year and WWT Small Firms Awards, a new WWT Campaign Award has been introduced. This rewards the WWT Group, organisation or individual(s) who had made an outstanding contribution to the WWT Campaign. It was won by the by the WWT Group responsible for the Haydock Park Health and Safety Awareness Day, the Group responsible for developing this initiative in the construction sector. This was the final year of the partnership with Building Magazine and the Steering Group decided that WWT should also explore other options for improving the effectiveness and coverage of the WWT Awards.
- Redesigning the WWT website has been challenging due to unforeseen logistical and contractual issues. However, these are now being overcome and we are about to work with the Anglia WWT Group to pilot newly developed regional pages to the website, as well as the revamped main WWT site.
- HSE has engaged a research contractor via the Government's Central Office of Information (COI) to undertake a qualitative evaluation of the WWT Campaign. This work is expected to be completed by the end of the financial year.

Current Programme of work

- The Steering Group is scheduled to meet April 2008 and October 2008 to discuss priorities and resourcing for the Campaign, and to provide an opportunity to share good practice and knowledge
- To maintain support for the regional groups and their various initiatives. Focus, and HSE resource, will be given to those activities which align with the priorities of the Construction Programme
- Review, dissemination and, as necessary, work to take forward the findings of the COI qualitative evaluation research
- Piloting options for the WWT Awards - this is likely to include (i) WWT Awards being held by a number of Construction Excellence Regions prior to an eventual winner being decided at the Construction Excellence National Awards later in the year; and (ii) WWT sponsoring the Building Magazine Small Firms Award
- A “revamp” of the WWT website and, if successful, roll out of the regional pages pilot
- Encouraging Groups to adopt a 'model' constitution to enable more effective procurement of goods and services using HSE financial resource.

The Occupational Health Working Group

Terms of Reference

The Occupational Health WG provides a forum in which health risks common to the construction industry can be identified and ways found for removing and minimizing them. The Group contributes to projects to increase the awareness of occupational health issues and sets an agenda for change in the industry.

Activities undertaken during 2007/08

- The OHWG considered and advised on a variety of topics over the period and was kept informed of initiatives relevant to occupational health in construction. Frequently discussed topics were *Construction occupational health management essentials* (COHME), the Supply Chain project and Constructing Better Health (CBH).
- Presentations were made by the Injuries Reduction/Noise and Vibration and Disease Reduction/Respirable Risks and Asbestos Programmes. These resulted in invitations for HSE staff to speak at Members' events.
- *COHME*: OHWP members have been kept informed of developments and members have participated in industry focus groups which have reviewed drafts of the content. Members agreed to play an active role in the launch of the model, ensure its successful roll out in their respective constituencies and produce practical relevant material to supplement the existing material.
- *Supply Chain Project*: This project, targeting all parts of the supply chain to reduce risks from specific construction processes has received support from OHWP members.
- *Case studies*: Members have continued to assist with the review of content and presentation of good practice case studies.
- *CBH*: Members were kept informed of the development of the CBH national scheme. Michelle Aldous, Chief Executive has attended meetings to keep members informed of the rapid development of COHME. Members' input has helped to inform the development of national industry standards for health surveillance, fitness for work checks and the arrangements for the storage and communication of fitness for work and health information.

Current Programme of Work

- work to promulgate and promote *COHME*; Members have agreed to speak at promotional events and to focus on COHME at events in their parts of the sector
- support for the Construction Sector Supply chain project; Members will work with supply chain coordinators to take forward work on manual handling of panel products and drainage products, to develop further the work on kerb and paving handling and to begin a further strand of work on dermatitis in tilers.

- review and sourcing of good practice case studies on occupational health from member organisations. The Group has provided useful feedback on draft case studies and has agreed to source further examples.
- The Group is providing excellent information and feedback to other HSE programmes e.g. on the silica and asbestos work of the Disease Reduction Programme and the noise and vibration work of the Injuries Reduction Programme, who see them as an essential first point of call for accessing the views of construction stakeholders.

Safety Working Group

Terms of Reference

To contribute to a year on year reduction in the rate of injuries to workers in the construction industry by:

- providing support and a consultation mechanism for the safety-elements of the work plan being taken forward through the Construction Programme;
- assisting in evaluations initiatives and providing feedback to HSE
- sharing best practice and identifying successful initiatives
- identifying areas where safety initiatives are needed or where existing initiatives have not achieved the desired outcome

Activities undertaken during 2007/08

- The Group met on 28 November 2007 and will meet again in February 2008.
- Terms of reference have been agreed.

The Group:

- received updates on particular safety topics including progress on the tower crane investigations, the work underway by the Strategic Forum for Construction's Tower Crane group, and the preparation by the Construction Plant Hire Association in conjunction with HSE of various documents relating to crane operation and maintenance;
- discussed the recent fatal accidents involving quick hitches on excavators including HSE's publication of internal instructions to inspectors on the issue and press release. It was supportive of HSE's intention to issue a safety alert on the matter and was keen to ensure HSE promoted its enforcement position;
- considered the "Shattered Lives" Campaign <http://www.hse.gov.uk/shatteredlives/index.htm> in particular (i) the intended target audiences for the construction elements of the Campaign; (ii) guidance material; and (iii) sought case studies to support the Campaign;
- discussed HSE's progress with the safety elements of its work plan, in particular the report which had been prepared on *home building*, the progress with larger *commercial refurbishment* clients and outcome of the widely reported *Good Order Campaign* in summer 2007. It endorsed the intention to repeat the work in February 2008. HSE will provide an update at February 2008 meeting on the *Falls from Vehicles* campaign;
- discussed HSE's intention to convert the draft report on *major accident potential* submitted to its February 2007 meeting into a risk register and agreed to contribute to discussions about the assessment made against particular risks and consequent prioritisation of actions;
- HSE's proposed field activity in 2008/9 will be discussed at the February 2008 meeting.

Current Programme of Work

- Contributing to 2008/09 planning and priorities;
- Support of the Construction Programme's safety projects;
- Further consideration of major accident potential;
- Support for and information-sharing on specific safety topics e.g. tower cranes, quick hitches on excavators, emerging issues;
- Feedback on HSE's Campaign "Falls From Vehicles";
- Feedback on Construction Division's inspection initiative on refurbishment, falls and good order;
- Continuing support for the "Shattered Lives" campaign;
- Consideration of trends in underlying causes of fatal accidents.

SME Working Group

Terms of Reference

To help HSE's Construction Division develop and deliver a strategy for improving health and safety performance in construction SMEs.

To take ownership of identified problems and lead in delivering them in partnership with HSE's Construction Division.

Activities undertaken during 2007/08

The Group has met twice – on 9 October 2007 (inaugural meeting) and on 31 January 2008.

Meeting on 9 October 2007:

- At its first meeting, the Group had a detailed “baseline”, scene-setting discussion on construction SME issues during which each Member put forward their views on what they believed should be the purpose of the Group and what were the difficulties, the issues and the hurdles which would need to be overcome.
- It was agreed that
 - in order to facilitate its work to make recommendations on how construction SME health and safety issues should be addressed, the Group should gather information on SME-related initiatives (i.e. those which assisted construction SMEs in the management of their health and safety responsibilities) already underway, or which had been tried, in order to assess what had worked and what had not. This work would serve to “take stock” of the plethora of initiatives and to help identify gaps in coverage. Members were asked to send in contributions to this “mapping” document (which would be developed, with assistance from others in the industry over subsequent months) for discussion at its next meeting; and
 - the Group should consider how potential industry stakeholders might best participate in and contribute to the work of the Group e.g. by presentations at its meetings or liaison through correspondence;
- Draft Terms of Reference were proposed for agreement at the next meeting.
- The Group also elected the industry Chair – Phil Russell (FMB).

Meeting 31 January 2007:

- The Terms of Reference and Key Priorities were agreed. In particular, the Group emphasised that its key function was to make recommendations to CONIAC and not to undertake implementation work at this stage. Members were keen to focus on sectors that evidently needed to be targeted rather than on all SMEs;
- The Group considered the preliminary findings of the “mapping” exercise during which there was a useful exchange of information. The Group also identified:

- individuals, organisations and stakeholders which could usefully be approached to participate in, and contribute to the work of the Group e.g. Mike Harrison who was taking forward HSE's work on how LAs could influence the construction process, both as clients and enforcers. A major aspect of this work will be reviewing the potential for closer integration of Planning/Building Control/CDM regimes;
 - initiatives which it might recommend that CONIAC support;
 - gaps in the provision of advice to/support for/assistance to a number of SME sectors e.g. small clients.
 - Consolidation of many of the steps above was subject to clearance of the minutes at the next meeting (11 April 2008);
- The WG also discussed the relevance to construction SME Directors of the IoD/HSC Director's Guidance: *"Leading health and safety at work – Leadership actions for Directors and Board Members"*. Members thought that supplementary guidance specifically targeted at construction SME Directors would be useful and that such a proposal should be included in the list of recommendations to CONIAC in due course.

Current Programme of Work

Key priorities are:

- To undertake a mapping exercise of SME-related initiatives already underway or which have been tried; including feedback on their impact, i.e. what has worked and what has not;
- To identify gaps in SME coverage and consider how these might be addressed by the industry; and
- To make recommendations to CONIAC for future industry action to address construction SME health and safety issues.

Vulnerable Workers Working Group

Terms of Reference

1. To help HSE's Construction Division develop and deliver a strategy for improving health and safety protection of vulnerable workers.
2. To take ownership of identified problems and lead in delivering them in partnership with HSE's Construction Division. The Group will aim to:
 - increase the extent to which vulnerable workers are aware of the protection offered by health and safety law,
 - identify messages and specific interventions to improve vulnerable worker health and safety outcomes; and
 - Support and work in a co-ordinated way with other stakeholders to improve the impact of their work.

Activities undertaken during 2007/08

- The Group has met twice: November 2007 (inaugural meeting) and most recently on 17 January 2008. Kevin Fear (Construction Skills) was elected as Chair. The Group has spent some time reviewing current activity in the industry and formulating a workplan. It is developing its own activities to complement and help deliver Construction Division projects. Charly Clark (Chair of the ICE Migrant Workers Task Force) is a member of the Group, and has been careful to ensure that the work of the two Groups complement each other. The ICE Task Force will be concentrating its efforts on producing a signposting tool, probably an internet-based portal, which will aim to provide links to existing information in a range of languages.

Current Programme of Work

- Before defining the products it will produce, the Group has initially identified six areas on which to first gather information. These are::
 - the experience of HSE Inspectors in the field;
 - accident reports,
 - intelligence from sources known to Members;
 - work under development with Learning and Skills Council and Construction Skills to safeguard Young Apprentices on work experience;
 - guidance which the Group might usefully develop; and
 - the value of pursuing a code of good working practice which could be applied to Employment Agencies. This will be based, in part, on work already in hand in Engineering Construction.