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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CONIAC)

TRAINING AND EDUCATION NEEDS IN CONSTRUCTION WORKING PARTY

Summary

This paper reports on the 2 October 2002 meeting of TEWP

1. Education Website

This website (currently maintained by the Symonds Group) was launched on 12 September. It is the product of Part B of the research project: "Identification and Management of Risk in Undergraduate Construction Courses". The site contains a considerable amount of information on health and safety, relevant legislation, and case studies. It is designed as a reference for undergraduates and as a teaching aid to encourage lecturers to incorporate health and safety into their courses. Universities were notified of this website and a press notice issued on 12 September 2002. Initial responses suggest that the website has been well received. Part C of the research project (to commence in the next financial year) will verify the extent to which health and safety has been integrated into courses as a result of the website and other initiatives.

Members discussed the most appropriate home for the website after Symonds come to the end of the agreed maintenance period of one year. The preferred home was within the Education website currently being developed by SASD, though the CITB might also be an appropriate home now that it had been appointed as the Construction Sector Skills Council.

2. Heads of Civil Engineering Departments Conference

The opportunity is being taken at this conference (31 October - 1 November) to promote risk education, the website and the DD. Members suggested that similar opportunities be pursued with other professional bodies.

3. Architects Registration Board (ARB)

Following comments at the last CONIAC, the ARB was approached with a view to encouraging them to include health and safety and other relevant legislative issues in

their course validation. The letter was copied to all 3 relevant ARB committees, RIBA and Paul Overall at ODPM Building Regulations Department. RIBA responded by indicating that the Part 3 curriculum now includes specific reference to health and safety and other legislative requirements and, from next September, this will be extended to Part 1&2. A working group has been established to produce teaching aids. ARB intends to discuss this issue at their next validation meeting on 9 October. Assistance has been offered to both organisations to help incorporate health and safety into architectural schools

4. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Recent enquiries have revealed that the inclusion of health and safety in CPD is still not a mandatory requirement of any professional institution. TEWP members explained that trying to enforce health and safety CPD was likely to be unconstitutional and, despite encouragement from many institutions, risk management CPD did not command the interest of many professionals. TEWP agreed to the following mechanisms for encouraging the take up of health and safety CPD:

- Direction from institutions;
- Pressure from CIC;
- Pressure from MCG (eg on professional competence cards) and, through them, pressure from CCC;
- A CONIAC supported target of 10% health and safety in CPD courses by 2004.

5. Industry Champions

This would involve representatives from industry and the professions providing help and advice to heads of department on health and safety integration issues. CIC has already provided a list of potential champions and the Senior Safety Advisers Group and IOSH are intending to do the same. The mechanisms by which the champions make contact with universities have yet to be worked out, as there is some concern about “cold calling”. Although it is intended that names should be supplied to heads of department, it is unlikely that many would make the first move. Some sort of pro-active approach by the champions may be necessary to “kick-start” the process. The process would have to be managed to ensure no overlap of responsibilities or duplication of action, and to assist in developing communication between the parties involved.

6. Involvement of Ministers

TEWP members were disappointed with the progress being made on integrating health and safety into undergraduate construction-related courses, despite the research report (CRR 392). The Higher Education Funding Councils had not responded positively (though further approaches are planned by SASD). TEWP proposed that Ministerial pressure might be required to exert pressure on universities.

7. Action

CONIAC members are asked to note the above report.

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