

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE			
CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CONIAC)			
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The Leadership and Worker Engagement Toolkit

A paper by Gordon Crick, Construction Sector

Purpose of the paper

For information and action to support the launch

1. To inform members of CONIAC of the development of the Leadership and Worker Engagement Toolkit and of the arrangements to place this on the HSE Construction website.
2. To request the help of CONIAC members in promoting and disseminating the toolkit and the principles and information it contains.

Background

3. In November 2007 a paper was presented to CONIAC which detailed the work of the Behavioural Change and Worker Engagement Forum. This Forum brought together a group of clients and contractors with an interest in developing best practice in the field of leadership and worker engagement. These businesses included Morgan Sindall, Laing O'Rourke, Bovis Lendlease, Carillion, Kier Group, British Nuclear Group, Mace, Kelloggs, Bovis Homes, William Hare Ltd and the British Airports Authority.

4. The Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) were subsequently engaged to carry out a study of the practise of worker engagement and behavioural change in these companies. The report of this project was published as HSE Research Report RR660, 'Behaviour change and worker engagement practices within the construction sector'. This report is available on the HSE website. A major insight gained from this study was that in the modern construction industry, worker engagement was always initiated and sustained through good leadership, and every initiative studied, to be effective, had to combine both a top down, and bottom up approach.

5. A second phase of research was initiated with HSL to develop a toolkit of ideas which could be used to transfer the learning from the top tier contractors and clients involved in the Forum to the rest of the construction industry, in particular, to smaller and medium (SME) sized organisations. This toolkit was developed, and a proposal accepted to use the material to develop a Web

based resource to help construction businesses develop their own good practice in leadership and worker engagement.

6. In 2009 the Forum was renamed as the Leadership and Worker Engagement Forum. Its members have continued to provide support to HSL in the trialling and testing of the toolkit which has recently been completed. Working with the HSE webteam, a contractor, CIMEX was appointed to build the Leadership and Worker Engagement Toolkit. The product is now 95% complete, and the toolkit can be demonstrated.

Argument

7. The improvement of leadership and worker engagement practices, including the training of supervisors and line managers in communication skills, has become a cornerstone of the current drive by the construction industry towards improved performance in health and safety. This includes an emphasis on taking forward both technical innovation and the development of effective working procedures in preventing accidents and ill health. The Leadership and Worker Engagement Toolkit captures this, and presents a seven step process to help employers understand how to develop their health and safety management.

8. The primary target audience for the Toolkit are SME owners, managers, supervisors and those responsible for providing advice to medium sized and smaller construction businesses. The toolkit does not target micro businesses, managing less than 5, although some information contained within it will be helpful to them. The secondary audience is workers who are seeking to influence their workplaces, perhaps by taking on a role as a safety representative.

9. The aim of the Leadership and Worker Engagement Toolkit is to motivate and provide assistance to those either in control of construction work or who are in a position to exercise leadership. The toolkit provides a range of information and interactive learning exercises in order to help employers understand how to reduce accidents, incidents and ill health.

Action

10. Following the demonstration of the Toolkit at the November 2010 CONIAC meeting, members are invited to consider how they can support the public launch of the Toolkit, expected in February 2011, and how they can promote the use of the toolkit through their respective federations or organisations.

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