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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CONIAC)

Report from CONIAC Occupational Health Working Party

Summary

1. This paper reports on the outcomes of the Occupational Health Working Party meeting of 8 October 2003.

'Workwell' Initiative

2. The working group welcomed Marie Carrol from the 'Workwell' initiative based in Sandwell, Birmingham. The initiative is involved in training young construction workers in the risks arising from construction work, particularly those affecting health. The initiative has pioneered training techniques which do not rely on literacy skills, and reported excellent progress in awareness raising amongst their target audience. Marie also shared with us their experience of creating local networks in construction, which will be invaluable to the provider selected for delivery of the Occupational Health Pilot.

Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome

3. Mike Webster from Bomel presented a summary of the findings from the recently published Research report 114, 'Hand Arm Vibration - Underlying causes and risk control in the construction Industry'. The research will be used to shape HSE's future activity in this area.

Progress with Occupational Health Pilot

4. Colleen Bowen from BWED updated the working group on progress with the Pilot. The pilot will be known as 'Constructing Better Health'. The Action Forum who has met twice so far, has made good progress. Two meetings of the Action Forum are planned for week commencing 10 November. At the first, it is hoped that the service provider will be selected. At the second meeting, the Action Forum will agree the fund raising strategy.

MCG Occupational Health Policy

5. Work continues on the development of support material for the MCG Occupational Health policy. The MCG plan a launch of the policy in April 2004.

Stress

6. Steve Lee from BWED gave a presentation on HSE's priority programme on stress. The working group discussed ways in which stress impacted on the construction industry. Research was referred to which shows that the construction industry has the highest incidence of suicide of any other industry. Problems are exacerbated by the peripatetic nature of the work and by the lack of easy access to primary health care facilities. It was agreed that the working party would return to this issue at a future meeting.

Updates

7. The working party received updates on progress with research; asbestos and with the preparation of guidance.

Action

8. CONIAC members are asked to note the above report.

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