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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CONIAC)

REPORT FROM CONIAC SMALL FIRMS ADVISORY GROUP (SFAG)

Summary

This paper reports on the SFAG meeting held on 23 October 2003

Issue

1 This paper updates CONIAC members on discussions at SFAG meeting M2/2003 held on 23 October 2003. This was the last meeting of the group before reconstitution and was well attended.

Temporary Work at Height Regulations

2 The Secretary gave an update on the progress of Temporary Working at Height Regulations. With HSC approval, the consultative document will be published in late November/early December and will be subject to a 4 month consultation period.

3 Members expressed concern that these new regulations may allow for subjective interpretation by some parts of the industry, causing a lowering of standards. The Chair urged members to make their views during the consultative period.

4 Some members commented that there may be a need for sector specific guidance. The Secretary replied that if such guidance were to be necessary that it would have to wait until the final form of the regulations and associated guidance were available for a decision to be made.

Worker Engagement & Consultation

5 The Secretary updated members on:

- Workers Safety Advisors: HSE is going to the HSC in November to set out various work streams on how to get more workers involved in health & safety and would include the workplace safety advice Challenge Fund. There will be an update of this at the next CONIAC;

- CONIAC Best Practice Working Group: this group met for the first time in August. The group is made up of Martin Thurgood (Chair, HSE), Alex Cattan (Secretary, HSE), Bob Blackman (representing trade unions), Andrew Large (representing small firms), Andy Sneddon (representing contractors). The group set aims & objectives, terms of reference, a skeleton Best Practice Note and agreed the way forward.

- CD Workplan on Worker Engagement: the key messages and the general approach was explained, including media promotion and press releases

6 Members commented that they believed that the possible move away from more regulation was to be welcomed and that working in partnership is a better way forward.

Working Well Together

7 Joy Jones informed members on current WWT issues.

Website:

8 Members were informed that HSE had taken over the management of the WWT website and that a consultant had been engaged to make the site more user friendly. She informed members that the HSE were considering setting up web-based 'communities' where community members could exchange information.

SHADs

9 Members were informed that SHADs were gaining popularity and that so far this year there had been 25 events with greater than 4000 individuals attending overall which equates to circa 2000-2500 separate SMEs. Evaluation of SHADs are showing that they are extremely successful and reaching their target audience of micro-SMEs (<15 workers). She commented further that senior HSE officials are seeing SHADs as a 'HSE success story'.

10 Joy Jones told members that in Glasgow half day workshops suggested locally were developed from the SHADs on risk assessments & method statements. The members were supportive of this initiative and were of the opinion that this was a useful way for the SHADs to develop.

Roadshow

11 Members were informed that this years Roadshow had been a great success and had reached over 10,000 workers in the 5 weeks over September/October. There was a change from previous years as an interactive trailer was used which allowed workers to see the various presentations and try out some equipment under cover.

12 Joy Jones informed members that funds had been secured to take the Roadshow to smaller sites during Spring next year as 'The White Van Roadshow'. She asked members for support to make this as successful as possible, for suggested venues and local support. The members thought that this was a very good initiative and should reach a further untapped group of SMEs.

Awards

13 Members were informed that there had been a large increase in high quality applications with more than 50% of applicants from SMEs. The prize winners have been decided and there was a tie for the 'No1 Worker' and the members wish to thank DMS Ltd for increasing their sponsorship of this particular award such that both companies would receive a substantial cash prize. The awards will take place at the Awards Dinner in November.

14 Members praised WWT and SHAD initiatives and passed their congratulations on to all who are involved.

CONIAC

15 Members received a report from the Chair on the last CONIAC and were interested to learn that 'Designer initiative' was continuing and that a Working Party on a Workforce Consultation Best Practice Note had been set up.

CONIAC Reconstitution

16 The Secretary presented outline details of the reconstitution process and likely timescale for reconstitution. One member expressed his regret that WGs, like SFAG had not been asked directly for their views and went to comment that he hoped the new CONIAC would not just be a delivery body. The Secretary replied that organizations and individuals representing SMEs had been consulted and that CONIAC would need to be a working partnership with the HSE if industry is to delivery RHS targets.

Miscellaneous

17 Members wished to congratulate the HSE on producing the useful leaflet, 'Amazing Asbestos'.

18 Members were informed at the meeting that a HAVS working group had been set up by the Construction Confederation with industry to provide a 'traffic light' system as indication of the inherent vibration of different tools. It was hoped that tool hire shops would take up this red, amber, green notation.

19 Members gave a vote of thanks to the retiring Chair and praised the usefulness of SFAG.

Action

20 CONIAC members are asked to note the above report.

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