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## **HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION**

### **CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CONIAC)**

#### **A Brief Review of the Activities of CONIAC Sub - Groups April 2006 –March 2007**

#### **Summary**

**This paper summarises the activities carried out by CONIAC's sub-groups for the period April 2006 – March 2007 and provides information on activities planned for 2007/08.**

#### **Issue**

1. CONIAC sub-group activities during 2006 – 2007.

#### **Timing**

2. Routine.

#### **Recommendation**

3. That CONIAC members note the activities of its sub-groups during 2006 – 2007 and the activities planned for 2007 - 2008.

#### **Background**

4. Since its reconstitution in April 2004, CONIAC has been supported by the following sub-groups:
  - The Working Well Together Steering Group (WWT)
  - The Worker Engagement Working Party
  - The Occupational Health Working Party (OHWP)
  - The Safety Working Party
  - The CDM Regulations<sup>1</sup> Review Working Group.

Objectives for each Group can be found at Annex 1, and details of their activities during 2006/07 and plans for 2007/08 can be found at paragraphs 5 – 34.

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<sup>1</sup> The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations

### Working Well Together (WWT) Steering Group

5. The Campaign has continued with the tried and tested activities, such as Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs) and High Risk/ High Influence events<sup>2</sup>, which are aimed to reach and engage with the target audience of the micro SMEs (those employing 1- 15 and sole traders, particularly the 1 - 5 category).
6. The network of Regional WWT Groups has now grown to 16 and continues to support and be an integral part of the Steering Group. The Groups continue to look for and try new ways of reaching the target audience and delivering HSE messages. These have included a series of Safe and Sustainable Awareness Days attracting designers, clients and contractors to the same event, and the first SHAD on a live construction site.
7. This has been the second year of partnering with Building Magazine to jointly run our WWT Awards with their health and safety awards. The WWT Awards consist of the No1 Worker, Small Firm Award and the Best of the Best from all categories.
8. The National Roadshow and White Van tours<sup>3</sup> have not taken place since it was considered that it would be more efficient and effective to concentrate resources on other WWT initiatives during the year. However, the contractors' consortium looking after the DWP Jobcentre Plus refurbishment contracts ran their own White Van roadshows in the South West and South Wales over a four-week period. The two main contractors involved with the project were ROK and MIDAS, who both contributed financially and with other resources to make the project a success. Talks have also taken place with ASDA and Sainsbury's about running their own "White Van" tours, across the country. These are likely to take place in 2007/08. Sainsbury's will have 180 sites this year where it is hoped the van will visit.
9. A snapshot of other activities undertaken in 2006/7 can be found at Annex 2.

### *Looking ahead to 2007/08*

#### 10. Activities for the period include:

- The Steering Group will now meet in April and Sept of each year to enable it more effectively to input into HSE's communication planning and budget cycle. It has also recently agreed on a new protocol for agreeing meeting agendas and submitting meeting papers, which should help streamline meetings and free up time for strategic issues to be discussed.
- A sub-group has been formed to look at the benefits of joining the WWT Campaign and what responsibilities fall to active members. The sub-group will report back at the September 2007 meeting.
- This is the third and final year of the Group's partnership with Building Magazine and its Awards. This year we are offering the Best Site Worker (formerly No1 Worker) and Small Firm Award, and are introducing the WWT Campaign Award (aimed at Regional Groups or individuals that have contributed most to the Campaign). The Awards evening will take place on the 21st June 2007 at the Hilton Hotel, Park Lane, London.
- We will continue to offer the programme of High 5 SHADs and High Risk/High Influence events across the country. The High 5 are the main areas of concern on

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<sup>2</sup> High Risk events can be trade specific, i.e., roofers, or topic, working at height etc. High Influence events are aimed at Designers, Clients, and Architects etc.

<sup>3</sup> An initiative taking key health and safety messages direct to the workforce at their place of work.

construction sites (Working at Height, Tidy Sites and Welfare, Manual Handling, Workplace Transport and Asbestos).

- Groups are looking at new and more creative ways of reaching their target audiences and making an impact. These include drop-in evenings, evening workshops and working with Building Control to reach the domestic sector.
- South Wales is funding a four-week “White Van” Roadshow across the whole of South Wales.
- ASDA and Sainsbury's will be running their own “White Van” roadshow across their sites.
- The programme of Risk Assessment workshops continues across the country.
- In conjunction with HSL, HSE will undertake an evaluation of elements of the WWT Campaign during 2007/08.

### Worker Engagement Working Party

11. During 2006/07, Working Party Members made significant progress on a number of matters and saw a marked rise in awareness of worker engagement in the industry. The Working Party maintained a broad overview of activities and its steering role, and in practice acted as a network to promote the benefits of worker engagement.
12. The key event of the year was a heavily over-subscribed Conference in Rose Court in September 2006, opened by HSC Commissioner Danny Carrigan. Nearly 120 delegates from the industry heard about and discussed the findings of research<sup>4</sup> carried out by Glasgow Caledonian University. The research itself was the culmination of twelve months' work by researchers from the University trialling different approaches.
13. The results in themselves were not conclusive in determining which methods of worker engagement are most effective, but valuable lessons were learned. The research has also proved very valuable in setting out the principles of worker engagement in construction, and has already proved an accessible reference for health and safety professionals. A summary of findings from the research has also been incorporated into the CDM 2007 suite of guidance as an appendix on worker engagement.
14. A follow-up event was held on Merseyside in December 2006, to disseminate the research findings to a regional audience and those unable to be accommodated at the September event. This half-day event ended with 28 of the 50 or so delegates from regional and national contractors completing and leaving copies of action plans for HSE to follow up with them. This event also provided the platform for Billy Baldwin, UCATT Health and Safety Adviser in the North West and member of the Working Party, to launch his report on “Worker Engagement in the Construction Industry”. The report makes a strong case for union involvement in health and safety training, and presents a positive and progressive account of how unions and employers can create effective partnerships.

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<sup>4</sup> The research findings are captured in research Report 516 “An investigation of approaches to worker engagement” published on the HSE Website at [www.hse.gov.uk/RESEARCH/rrpdf/rr516.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/RESEARCH/rrpdf/rr516.pdf)

15. The Worker Engagement Working Party devoted its February 2007 meeting to considering the outcome of the Worker Safety Adviser Challenge Fund<sup>5</sup> in construction. The overwhelming view was that the Challenge Fund had been successful in funding pilots which impact positively on small firms. In the small firm sector the evidence seems to point to the value of the WSA scheme as providing a basic level of competent health and safety advice, rather than developing worker involvement per se. In larger firms the benefit was often reversed, with worker involvement arrangements being enhanced. However, in spite of a high level of goodwill and desire to perpetuate the scheme, funding considerations have so far proved the major obstacle. The exception and bright spot in this is in the North East, where UCATT and NFB will be working with the Northern Counties Building Group to employ one Worker Safety Adviser in the region, through 2007/08.
16. One of the key indicators of the rise in awareness of worker engagement in the industry has been the number of press articles published in the last six months on the theme<sup>6</sup>. HSC Chair, Bill Callaghan, also highlighted the work of the Worker Engagement initiative in his Lowry Lecture on 20th March. The series of 12 Case Studies on the HSE Web site<sup>7</sup> received a total of 945 hits during January 2007 (up from 717 in October 2006). These case studies provide a varied and rounded account of how worker engagement is being applied in the industry, and highlight the benefits. A page is under preparation which will provide a link with CDM 2007, highlighting the potential for worker engagement to be used as a key indicator for businesses to assess how well they are implementing the new Regulations.
17. In early 2006, HSE's Construction Division broke new ground in involving safety representatives in its February "Good Order" Campaign. Letters or e-mails were sent to around 1,000 safety representatives, through the networks established by AMICUS, UCATT and TGWU. Safety Representatives were asked to carry out before and after inspections over the period of the campaign. Reports returned from safety representatives showed, for example, a consistent 25% improvement in standards between the before and after inspection on the topic of slips and trips. Construction Division has also been supporting the Worker Involvement Noise and Hand-Arm Vibration project. The aim of the project is to use worker involvement principles to enhance the control of risks relating to noise and vibration. The project is expected to be completed by September 2007, with a report and recommendations available by October.
18. At its meeting on 6 February, the Group agreed that the Working Party should be wound up. Members were satisfied that its objectives had been met (see Annex 1), and found no ongoing objectives to justify continuation. CDM 2007 implementation marks a point from which the industry needs to consolidate and build on what is already known and available in the public domain.

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<sup>5</sup> The Workers' Safety Adviser (WSA) Challenge Fund was launched on 26 March 2004. The fund supported partnerships to get more workers involved in occupational health and safety. The fund, operated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), ran for three years finishing in March 2007.

<sup>6</sup> The Health and Safety Bulletin has published a series of three, in numbers 354, 356 and 357. The ROSPA Magazine Occupational Safety and Health published a feature in its April 2007 magazine. British Safety Council and Construction Manager have also printed feature articles. The Glasgow Caledonian University team is preparing an article for the IOSH Health and Safety Practitioner.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/engagement/casestudies.htm>

### Occupational Health Working Party (OHWP)

19. The OHWP considered and advised on a variety of topics over the period and were kept informed of initiatives relevant to occupational health in construction. Frequently discussed topics were *Construction occupational health management essentials* (previously known as the OH management model), the Supply Chain project and Constructing Better Health.
20. Presentations were made to the Group from the Injuries Reduction/Noise and Vibration and Disease Reduction/Respirable Risks Programmes. Both resulted in invitations for HSE staff to attend members' events, to publicise wider FIT3 Programme activities.
21. *Construction Occupational Health Management Essentials (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 have agreed to play an active role in the launch of the model and ensure its successful roll out in their respective constituencies.
22. *Supply Chain Project*: This project targeted all parts of the supply chain to reduce risks from specific construction processes, including HAVS associated with the use of vibrating tools, and the manual handling of heavy blocks, kerbs and panel products. OHWP members have made a valuable contribution to the most recent strand of this project: the risk of silica exposure from cutting kerbs, paving and blocks. .
23. *Case studies*: Members have assisted with the review of content and presentation of good practice case studies.
24. *HSL stress research*: HSE's Construction Sector commissioned research by HSL into stress in construction<sup>8</sup>. Members were interviewed by the researchers and the results of these interviews informed the design of the postal questionnaire. Members also worked with the researchers to ensure a widespread distribution of questionnaires.
25. *Constructing Better Health (CBH)*: Members were kept informed of the CBH pilot project and its evaluation. Trevor Walker, Chair of the CBH Board made a presentation to OHWP outlining the plans for the development of CBH into a national occupational health support scheme for the construction industry. Members informed a scoping study being conducted by HSL which examined the feasibility of developing a national occupational health database for sharing worker health information. It is likely that CBH will draw on the results of this study in the development of the national scheme.

### *Looking ahead to 2007/08*

26. OHWP is drawing up plans for 2007/08 that will include:
  - work to promulgate and promote Construction occupational health management essentials;
  - work to support the development and use of Constructing Better Health;
  - support for the Construction Sector Supply chain project;
  - review and sourcing of good practice case studies on occupational health from member organisations.

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<sup>8</sup> The research report RR518 An analysis of the prevalence and distribution of stress in the construction industry (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr518.htm>) has been published on the HSE website.

## Safety Working

27. Key focuses of the Group have been to consider HSE's "Height Aware" Campaign, HSE's planning for 2007/08, falls from vehicles and "Fit-Out". The Group was also kept informed of developments in a number of areas e.g. new Fire Regulations<sup>9</sup>, the revision of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM2007) and tower crane safety.
28. *CDM Revision*: During a presentation on the CDM revision (which included the background, key changes, dutyholder requirements), Members were reminded that a step change in industry health and safety performance was sought through the revision. It was also an opportunity for general health and safety improvements and to refocus people on the Construction Health Safety and Welfare Regulations. The Group discussed ways of maximising the benefits of the revision and how to get messages across that were properly understood. A number of suggestions was put forward on targetted approaches and Members offered use of their communication channels. The importance of targetting SMEs and ensuring worker consultation was agreed.
29. Updates were given on a variety of safety topics including the "Height Aware" Campaign<sup>10</sup>, tower crane safety, fire and planned work on refurbishment.
30. *Major accident potential*: HSE's draft report on major accident potential in construction was presented and comments requested on content and priorities.
31. *Falls From Vehicles* was the subject of a presentation including statistics, the HSL report "Underlying Causes of Falls from Vehicles" and the aims of the HSE campaign scheduled for October 2007. HSE is looking into designs and alternative methods, management issues and areas such as large flat beds on construction sites. Members were asked to assist in producing and providing guidance, case studies on equipment and methods and organising and running stakeholder events.
32. *Planning 07/08*: Members were given an opportunity to influence the construction programme workplan for 2007/08 by proposing areas they would like to see addressed. HSE informed the Group of its then current thinking on topics for both inspection and wider remit. Members supported a focus on refurbishment (in particular, small refurbishment jobs) good order and falls. Topics raised in discussion included the need for HSE inspectors to see safety representatives, (although HSE advised that the worker engagement initiative would target 5,000 companies), providing health and safety information via the Building Control Authority route, behavioural safety; untidiness on construction sites and the need for a site manager to take responsibility for waste control.

## *Looking ahead to 2007/08*

33. Included in the Group's plans for the coming year are:

- Terms of Reference to be agreed;
- Contributing to 2008/09 planning and priorities;

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<sup>9</sup> New Fire Legislation - (the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (RRO) 2006 (implementation October 2006)) in England and Wales. Members were advised that complying with the new CDM Regulations would mean complying with the RRO.

<sup>10</sup> The HSE Height Aware Campaign took place during May and June 2006. The aim was to help people identify when they are working at height and where they may be at risk of falling.

- Work to support the Construction Programme's safety projects; and
- Further consideration of major accident potential.

#### The CDM Regulations Review Working Group

34. The Group met regularly during the period and continued to develop the detailed proposals for revised CDM Regulations and supporting ACoP. The package was considered by CONIAC at its meeting on 20 July 2006 and written comments were submitted by members in the weeks following. The Group met on 16 August to discuss CONIAC's comments prior to submission of the package to the Health and Safety Commission on 17 October 2006. At its last meeting in November 2007, Chair Andrew East reminded Members that now the development of the regulatory package was essentially completed, its objectives had been met and it was appropriate for the Group to be wound up. He thanked Members for their valuable contribution.

#### **Consultation**

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

#### **Action**

- CONIAC Members are asked to note the work done by CONIAC sub-groups during 2005 – 2006 and plans for 2007/08 at paragraphs 5 – 34.

#### **Contact**

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## **Objectives of the CONIAC sub-groups**

### **Working Well Together (WWT) Steering Group**

The aims of the WWT Campaign are to:

- Give information and raise awareness of key risks, particularly in HSE priority areas;
- Raise competence in health and safety management; and
- Promote / encourage people to take action.

### **The Worker Engagement Working Party**

The objectives of the Group are:

- To develop, establish and promote the CONIAC Declaration on Engaging the Workforce<sup>11</sup>
- To support the Worker Engagement Project and to provide a mechanism for consultation on and for directing the industry-wide Worker Engagement Initiative.

### **The Occupational Health Working Party (OHWP)**

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

### **Safety WG**

The main purposes of the Group are:

- to provide support and a consultation mechanism for the safety-related projects being taken forward through the Construction Programme;
- to share good practice, and
- to explore where new initiatives are needed.

### **The CDM Regulations Review Working Party**

The main purpose of the Group, which first met on 7 October 2003, was to help with development of the detailed proposals for revised CDM Regulations.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/engagement/coniac.htm>



**WWT ACTIVITIES 2006/07**

- 25 SHADs and 10 High Risk /High Influence events e.g. Working at Height events, Occupational Health Awareness Days, Designer Awareness Days, held across the country. These have attracted over 4,500 delegates, including the “hard-to-reach” and designers and architects.
- Two separate initiatives with Building Control officers, Cardiff and Somerset. Cardiff followed the Plymouth model in offering one venue over several weeks, where delegates attended a half day High 5 workshop and were then invited back to a further half-day on Risk Assessment and Method Statements. Somerset differed in offering the combined High 5 and Risk Assessment workshops on the same day but across four different locations in Somerset.
- The SHAD+ initiative (free half day Risk Assessment and Method Statement workshops offered by CITB Construction Skills) continues to be popular and was taken up at 17 different locations, most offering morning and afternoon workshops.
- The WWT website continued to attract visitors but a lack of resource during the year held back a much-needed update. We have now secured funding to update and rebuild the website in 2007/08 and work has already begun to put the build specifications together.