

LOCAL AUTHORITIES HEALTH AND SAFETY FORUM (LA FORUM)

Minutes of the 15th meeting of the LA Forum held on Wednesday
16 November 2005, Rose Room, Rose Court, 2 Southwark Bridge,
London SE1 9HS

<u>Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Apologies Received</u>
John Cullen (Chair)	HSE	
Robert Parkes	HSE	Joyce Edmond-Smith HSC
Ian Lavery	SoPD	Steve Sumner EO (Employers Organisation)
Marion Johnstone	IOSH	Alistair Dodds SoPD
Janet Price	HSE (Observer)	
John McClean	GMB	
Allan Parry	TGWU	
Jonathan Lloyd	WLGA	
Nikki Hughes	HSE	
Philippa Mann (Mins. Secretary)	HSE	
Hope Daley	UNISON	
Tony Almond	HSE	
Nicholas Booker	HSE	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 John Cullen welcomed Tony Almond (HSE Falls from Height programme) and Nicholas Booker (HSE Stress Programme) for agenda items, and Janet Price (Public Services Programme) as an observer, to the meeting. Apologies were received from Joyce Edmond-Smith, Alistair Dodds and Steve Sumner.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Occupational Health provision within LA's – to be covered as an agenda item.

2.2 Stocktake questionnaire – Agenda item for the next meeting as EO not present. EO to provide update.

ACTION: EO

2.3 Green Book Guidance – Progress meeting has been postponed. An update will be provided at next meeting

ACTION: EO/ WLGA

2.4 Newly Elected Members – Draft article for LG First needs to be reviewed in light of CE views expressed at SOLACE conference and forthcoming Ministerial Taskforce (MTF) meeting in January.

ACTION: SECRETARIAT

2.5 Asbestos in Schools – A note was circulated to members explaining the current position of this work. The issue is to be taken forward through DfES in England. In Wales, informal discussions have been taking place between WLGA, WAG and HSE.

2.6 Benchmarking Tool – Update provided on progress. The criteria produced by HSL are useful, although further guidance is required in some areas. Secretariat is attending Safety Practitioner's Forum to appraise practitioners of the tool, and seek LAs to pilot the tool. Consideration now needs to be given to implementing the tool. WG will next meet 6 December 2005.

ACTION: WORKING GROUP

2.7 UNISON Research on sickness absence – The questionnaire is currently being drafted by Bradford University. The research is being expanded to include an evaluation of reward.

2.8 LA Strategic Intervention Project – Further consideration is being given to yield the greatest impact for the work.

2.9 Stress at work programme within LA's – Agenda item.

2.10 Interactive whiteboards – In Scotland, the BECTA website refers to HSE guidance. HSE is currently canvassing manufacturers and suppliers to sit on BS/EU committees. Item discharged.

3. PUBLIC SERVICES PROGRAMME

3.1 Members were updated on recent events including the SOLACE breakfast meeting. Lord Hunt recorded a speech for the meeting. His key messages were those of the MTF report, and included in particular, the need for good occupational health provision. CEs at the meeting were keen to tackle sickness absence, but are looking for tools to be able to make a difference. They recognise that Social Services departments pose a challenge.

3.2 The MTF Stakeholder Summit chaired by Lord Hunt was held on 15 November. Des Browne (Treasury) and John Hutton (DWP) also attended to lend their support to the message that the public sector needs to be better at attendance management; there are huge savings to be made. LAs, DWP, Prison Service, MOD, and the Police were represented.

3.3 The MTF provides an opportunity to refresh the LA Forum. Members agreed that it is right to review the LA Forum and its current position, and future work. A new Chair will be needed in April 2006; the vacancy does not need to be filled an HSE member. Secretariat agreed to produce a submission for the minister setting out the position, and the LA Forum's future position.

ACTION: SECRETARIAT

3.4 Stress – Members were updated on progress of the stress programme. HSE is currently working with 24 LAs who are implementing the stress management standards. This programme will run until 2007. Under phase 2 of the programme, organisations will be provided a three-tier support system: an information service, a visit to provide advice, and support via consultants (this support will need to be

paid for the by the organisation itself).

3.4.i The Stress team is looking to identify examples of good practice to use as case studies.

3.4.ii HSE's website will be regularly updated -

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/index.htm>

3.5 Occupational Health – A draft document setting the standard for Occupational Health services for the 21st century. The document has been developed for use in Higher Education. Members are asked to consider the suitability of this document for OH provision within LAs, and to make suggestion for any revision which will be required for the sector. Comments are requested by 16 January 2006.

ACTION: ALL MEMBERS

4. HSE's FALLS PROGRAMME

4.1 Members were given an update on the Falls programme. Support and comments on the approach of the programme was sought from members.

4.2 There has been a steady drop in the number of major accidents within the sector over a 3-year period.

4.3 Members were alerted to guidance which has been produced for the sector, including that produced by the SW Safety Practitioners group <http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/schools/index.htm>, and that produced by school caretakers <http://www.thecaretakers.org>

Members agreed to forward information to head teachers through their networks.

ACTION: ALL MEMBERS

5. AOB

5.1 WLGA updated members on the Manual Handling Passport Scheme. Accreditation is currently being explored. The scheme is currently being rolled across the NHS in Wales, and wider.

5.2 Members were asked to consider if the LA forum should have its own branded identity. Members agreed that joint badging was more effective than a separate LA Forum brand.

ACTION: ALL MEMBERS

6. NEXT MEETING

29 March 2006, 11.00am, Fortune Room, Rose Court