

LOCAL AUTHORITIES HEALTH AND SAFETY FORUM (LA FORUM)

Minutes of the 16th meeting of the LA Forum held on Wednesday
29 March 2006, Fortune Room, Rose Court, 2 Southwark Bridge,
London SE1 9HS

| <u>Present</u> | <u>Representing</u> | <u>Apologies Received</u> | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| John Cullen (Chair) | HSE | Allan Parry | TGWU |
| Robert Parkes | HSE | Marion Johnstone | IOSH |
| Ian Lavery | SoPD | Hope Daley | UNISON |
| John McClean | GMB | Alistair Dodds | SoPD |
| Jonathan Lloyd | WLGA | | |
| Nikki Hughes | HSE | | |
| Philippa Mann (Mins. Secretary) | HSE | | |
| Steve Sumner | Local Government Employers (LGE) | | |
| Emmie Galilee | HSE | | |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Apologies were received from Alistair Dodds, Allan Parry, Hope Daley and Marion Johnstone.

John Cullen informed members of his imminent retirement; this being the last meeting he would chair.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Stocktake questionnaire – Steve Sumner advised members that work should be concluded by the end of May. The questionnaire will be available on the LGA website. Item to be left on agenda.

ACTION: LGE

2.2 Green Book Guidance – A meeting, to take forward development of guidance, had taken place in February. The next meeting will be held in May. This will allow guidance to be available during summer 06. Item to be left on agenda.

ACTION: LGE

2.3 Newly Elected Members – Item would need to be revisited following May elections.

ACTION: HSE

2.4 Asbestos in Schools – Update paper and information note (05/01/06). Member's attention was drawn to the HSE press release giving updated information on managing asbestos in schools. It states that the potential exposure of teachers and pupils to asbestos remains low, however the guidance is re-issued to remind those responsible of their duties relating to the management of asbestos. Secretariat to inform members when details are available on the website. Members to consider case studies that can be fed back to the asbestos team.

ACTION:

MEMBERS/SECRETARIAT

2.5 Review of Forum – Members felt they were not in a position at this time to make any recommendations for the future of the Forum. A decision as to who will chair the Forum will need to be made at a later date (possibilities included Rosalind Roberts (John Cullen's successor) and Sandy Blair (LA Commissioner HSC). Secretariat will prepare a position paper to appraise Rosalind which will be copied to members, and aid discussion at the next meeting.

ACTION: SECRETARIAT

3. PUBLIC SERVICES PROGRAMME (PSP)

3.1 The Ministerial Taskforce (MTF) met on 31/1/06. Sickness absence in Local Government was discussed. The LGE will provide members with a copy of the presentation which covered the extent of the sickness absence problem within LAs and work to address the issue.

ACTION: LGE

3.2 Members heard of the programme for 06/07 - some 67 workshops will be held in the LA, Health, Education and Finance sectors to deliver the stress management standards within these sectors. Two workshops, for LAs in Wales and Scotland, are to be held in September, and seven for the English LAs in January 07

3.3 Prior to these, high level events aimed at Chief Executives and Elected Members in England will be held in September. The aim is to ensure Chief Executives' understand the impact of SA on productive time, and to gain their commitment to send representatives to the workshops. These high level events will be held in four locations - London, York, Grantham and Taunton. Details have yet to be finalised.

3.4 LASIP 2006/7 – Members have received a copy of the information that will form the basis for work over the coming year. Local Authorities identified for support work will be those for whom the biggest impact on reducing sickness absence can be made. A package will appear on the intranet during April. Members will be informed when this is available on the web.

ACTION: SECRETARIAT

3.5 Members also discussed ways of communicating the key sickness absence messages to those smaller LAs who may have high sickness absence levels, but, because of their size, fall outside the scope of the project. To be considered IDC.

ACTION: MEMBERS/HSE

4. BENCHMARKING

4.1 Lord Hunt is keen to encourage organisations, including LAs to use the Corporate Health and Safety Performance Index (CHaSPI). To date, 38 LAs have registered to use the tool, although only 5 have completed it.

4.2 The latest version of the benchmarking tool was presented to the West Midlands group. They felt that HSE should promote a single tool. They were also keen to see a Direction of Travel (capacity to improve) to sit along side the index. Members agreed that the Working Group (WG) should consider how CHaSPI sits alongside the tool, and how best to develop the direction of travel. Secretariat agreed to involve the HSE team responsible for ChaSPI to the next WG meeting.

ACTION: SECRETARIAT

5. BACKS! 2006

5.1 Emmie Gallile from HSE MSD programme team provided members with details on the Backs! 2006 campaign for 2006/07. The campaign runs from 16 October- 5 November. It will focus on inspection, work with stakeholders and publicity campaigns. Information packs will be available on the HSE web site from late August/early September. The final report from last year's campaign will be copied to members

ACTION: SECRETARIAT

6. AOB

6.1 Future of LGE – The EO ceases to exist on Friday 31 March 2006. It will then become Local Government Employers (LGE). It will be 'business as usual' with HSE etc. The new Chief Executive will be Jan Parkinson who will report to John Ransford at the LGA. New web site address: www.lge.gov.uk.

6.2 It was pointed out that stakeholders are being called upon to work more closely with HSE to help deliver its programmes. Whilst this cooperation is to be welcomed members felt that innovative ways needed to be found to "spread the load". One way would be for members to seek a deputy who can take forward some of this work, and who may also need to attend the LA Forum in future. Secretariat agreed to raise this issue in the paper being prepared at item 2.5

ACTION:
MEMBERS/SECRETARIAT

6.3 'Buying for life' – Members heard of an event that took place recently aimed at construction services procurement within the public sector.

6.4 Slips & Trips in Education – As less than 2000 copies of the guidance note have been requested in the last two years, members views were sought on reprinting (due this year). They were content that the document should only be made available on the web, with appropriate links.

ACTION: SECRETARIAT

6.5 Swimming pools – A letter issued following an e-coli incident was brought to member's attention, and for distribution through their networks. Secretariat will send electronic version to members.

ACTION: MEMBERS/SECRETARIAT

6.6 Gas appliances within schools – Members attention was drawn to the HSE guidance and agreed that LAs need to look at their planned timetables for improvements to school kitchens and take appropriate action. HSE to consider re-issuing catering info sheet and give guidance on timescales.

ACTION: SECRETARIAT

6.7 Finally, members thanked John for chairing the Forum so skillfully, and cheerfully, since its inception. They presented him with an inscribed gift - a set of cut-glass tumblers - and wished him well for his retirement.

7. NEXT MEETING

Next meeting will be held on 19 July 2006 – Rose Court