

Small Business Trade Association Forum Minutes

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Small Business Trade Association Forum	
Minutes of the Meeting of the Small Business Trade Association Forum, Held on 5 April 2005 in the Hope Room, Rose Court.	
<p>Present: Judith Donovan CBE, Chair British Chambers of Commerce British Wood Preserving & Damp Proofing Association Small Business Bureau Federation Of Master Builders National Hairdressers Federation Hair and Beauty Industry Association National Farmers Union Institute Of Directors Federation Of Small Business British Dental Association</p> <p>Apologies: Confederation of British Industry National Federation of Retail Newsagents Road Haulage Association British Woodworking Federation</p>	<p>Officials Present Colin Douglas (Director of Communications) Giles Denham (Director of Policy Programme) Elizabeth Hornsby Hani El-Sabbahy Louisa McNamara</p>

** indicates that a separate document is available – see list at end*

1.	Introductions and apologies
1.1	Judith Donovan welcomed members to the meeting.
2.	Members' opportunity to raise 'hot' topics
2.1	The Chair thanked members for their responses to the Secretariat's phone survey on the progress of the Forum. An anonymised table of the responses was circulated to members.
2.2	<p>The Forum held a brief discussion on the issue of common commencement dates and agreed that it would be useful to have prior notification of any new regulations coming into force.</p> <p>Giles confirmed that HSE's website contains details of forthcoming regulations. These can be found at (http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/regulations/).</p>
2.3	<p>Members of the Forum suggested that while issues like the Disability Discrimination Act were not in the remit of HSC/E they present the opportunity for joined up working. Small business do not distinguish between Government departments, they just see a mass of legislation which they have to wade through.</p> <p>Judith suggested that the Secretariat would see what they could do to provide contacts</p>

	<p>in other Government departments on specific issues for the Forum. They will also carry out a 'horizon scanning' exercise within HSE.</p> <p>Colin praised the businesslink.gov website as an example of joined up Government working, that was designed to be small business friendly. He invited comments to make the site as useful as possible (http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)</p> <p>Elizabeth mentioned that Businesslink.gov were looking to provide further services and that Forum members could feedback to the Secretariat issues which they would like to see the website cover.</p>
3	Health and Safety Performance Indicator
3.1	<p>Alan Morley gave an update on the Small Medium Enterprise (SME) indicator tool HSE has been developing. The indicator is a free, anonymous self-assessment web-based tool designed to help businesses assess how they are performing at health and safety. Although still under development, over 600 businesses have already registered and completed the assessment.</p> <p>Early discussions with insurance brokers show they support the development of the Indicator. Meetings are planned with insurers to discuss how they can use the indicator and increase its use amongst small businesses.</p> <p>Some improvements to the process of using the Indicator are planned for May. The completed version will be launched in autumn this year and there will be a publicity campaign then.</p> <p>Alan encouraged members to use the Indicator and feedback any comments. The indicator's web address is now: http://www.hspl.info-exchange.com/default.asp</p>
3.2	<p>Forum members commented that small businesses, particularly micros, are unlikely to have a dialogue with their insurers or brokers and that there is a need to support industry bodies within individual industries to negotiate with the insurance industry. Five of the industry sectors represented at the Forum have negotiated group insurance schemes for their members.</p> <p>The indicator itself is too generic and needs to be customised for different industries with, at the very least, the facility to ignore certain questions if they are not relevant to your particular business. This will help make the tool relevant to businesses themselves.</p> <p>Also, businesses are unlikely to do anything unless there is a tangible benefit. There was a general agreement that the insurance industry is very difficult to change. At the moment, it is unlikely that the indicator can deliver a tangible benefit in reducing Employers Liability Compulsory Insurance premiums but HSE should pursue the initiative.</p> <p>Some discussion around the fact that this is a web-based tool and as such will be inaccessible to some small businesses. Judith suggested that the team should consider producing a hard copy of the indicator.</p>
4	Feedback and discussion around Business Benefits campaign and Musculoskeletal Disorders campaign

4.1	<p>Colin updated the Forum on the progress of the Business Benefits campaign; HSE received more than 25000 website visits or calls as a result of the campaign.</p> <p>Frank Dolan talked about the back pain campaign, which starts on 13 June 2005; this is essentially an extension of the Business Benefits campaign but uses back pain examples. It is supported by both national advertising and an enforcement initiative and is aimed at both employers and employees.</p> <p>Forum members commented that this campaign provides an ideal platform to highlight employees' individual responsibilities. Members were concerned that this responsibility is not being sufficiently stressed by HSE. Colin confirmed that the campaign is aimed at both employers and employees, stressing joint responsibility. Forum members suggested that marketing of the campaign include trade journals, magazines etc to increase impact amongst wider audiences.</p> <p>The Forum members thought that there should be more joined up working between HSE and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) around the issues of identifying and verifying occupational ill health. The current situation is that "if you tell your doctor the right story you automatically get signed off". DWP take the lead on the incapacity benefit initiative. Judith said that we could try to set up some top level dialogue with the DWP</p>
4.2	<p>Colin Douglas emphasised that HSE's inspectors take the issue of employee responsibility into account when investigating accidents / ill health and before taking enforcement action. Forum members thought it would be useful to publish the number of investigations carried out contrasted with the number of reportable accident / incidents offset against the number of enforcement actions. Forum members were also concerned that many civil claims against employers for injury at work were unsuccessful, but went unreported.</p>
5	Review of Reporting of injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) – future consultation
5.1	<p>Francis McGuigan gave a presentation regarding the recently published Discussion Document (DD). HSE are reviewing the Regulations following a commitment made by the HSC in the Revitalising Health and Safety Strategy Statement to undertake a fundamental review of the health and safety incident reporting regulations. The DD contains four proposals where changes might be made to RIDDOR. The discussion period ends on 30 June 2005.</p> <p>Francis explained that his team are willing to visit organisations to discuss the proposals and asked Forum members to consider the DD and send in any comments. He also urged the Forum to encourage their members to respond to the DD and asked if members had any contacts which he could use to run focus groups.</p> <p>The Forum asked for sign posting to useful places on the website. Judith said that Forum members would be emailed the links. The DD can be found by visiting http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/disdocs/riddordd.htm.</p>
6	Local Authority Partnership

6.1	<p>Forum members received an update from The Hair and Beauty Industry Association (HABIA) on their Health and Safety Salon Awards Scheme. HABIA explained that they are hoping to extend this awards nationwide, across all industries.</p> <p>http://www.habia.org/salon/safety/Health&Safety_Salon_Award.htm</p> <p>The Forum discussed the need for consistency in setting criteria for judging entries if it were to become a national scheme and proposed breaking it down by sectors and not regions. Allan explained that the nature of Local Authorities is that they cannot be split into sectors. Allan also offered to meet with HABIA outside the Forum to discuss issues of consistency across Local Authorities.</p>
6.2	<p>Allan gave a brief synopsis of the strategic programme he is managing ie LAs and HSE working in partnership; he also explained that as part of the programme, research had been carried out looking at relevant interventions for small business. He is aware that most small businesses think they are complying until someone comes and tells them differently. He agreed with the point made by Forum members that there were certain issues, common to a sector, such as the issue of airborne chemicals in hairdressing where the issue could be more effectively addressed across the industry rather than by individual employers in isolation.</p>
7	AOB
7.1	<p>Request for talk on WSA.</p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 26 July in Rose Court,</p>
7.2 Actions:	<p>Secretariat to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue list of website addresses mentioned in meeting • Issue Forum minutes as soon as possible • Initiate a horizon scanning function for the Forum • Explore the potential for some top-level dialogue with the DWP about Occupational Health later in 2005. <p>Forum Members to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback to the Forum their opinions of the Businesslink.gov website and the SME Indicator which is linked to the site • Reply to the RIDDOR consultation if possible

Secretariat contacts:

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Documents circulated with these Minutes

- Table of responses about the development of Forum from members