

MINUTES OF SERVICE HEALTH SAFETY & WELFARE COMMITTEE

Wednesday 19th December 2007 – 10:00 hours
Winsford Fire Station

Present:	DCO K Foreman	KF	Chair
	Ms J Morrison	JM	Sr H S & W Adviser
	Mrs H Pether	HP	CFP
	Miss T Collett	AE	CRR
	SM P MacGugan	PM	ER
	WM S Devereux	SD	ER
	SM M Anderson	MA	F & G
	Mrs S Proctor	SP	AM
	Mrs J Beasley	JBe	HR
	Mrs M Goodrich	MG	OHU
	FF A Price	AP	FBU Chair
	CM D Williams	DW	FBU Sec
	SM L Parkes	LP	FOA
	Ms J Boardman	JB	Secretary

07/42 Apologies for absence

GM J Salt (CRR), SM D Dickson (FOA), Mr P Morgan (Unison), SM I Kay (CFP), Mr P Mobbs (HR), Ms E Fulton (CC), Mr I Chapman (FBU)

07/43 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of Tuesday 16th October 2007 were agreed. FBU enquired about a previous minute concerning workplace transport and were advised that this was now part of the action plan following the audit of Workplace Transport.

FBU objected to the removal of an agenda item they had requested regarding CCTV cameras on appliances. KF advised that this could not be discussed at SHSWC due to an on-going investigation and that JCNP was the correct forum to discuss this issue.

Matters arising

07/36 (06/26) – It was noted that further to all departments having had the opportunity to comment, this policy had now been approved by CFA. JCP will discuss how to implement the policy and the impact of multiple jobs on working time and the implementation will be robustly monitored by SHSWC through quarterly feedbacks. FBU commented they were not happy with the policy as there seemed to be an expectation on Area Managers to opt out of the working time directive. KF advised that the comments received from the FBU had been considered and in some instances the policy amended. JBe will discuss conducting quality assurance checks of time sheets at JCP.

(06/39) – HSE's draft protocol on working with Fire Services has been received and will be considered in the review of the accident investigation policy. A draft protocol on accidental death in the workplace has been received from Mid & North West Wales and will be considered by H & S and legal colleagues.

(06/64) – discussed under item 07/45 – complete.

(07/06) (a) Outstanding until permanent appointment of Senior Health Safety & Well-being Advisor.

(c) Reminder article in the Green regarding 6 monthly test results being brought to medicals – complete. OHU reported that this is still not happening. FBU queried the possibility of emailing results, which will be investigated.

MG confirmed that a PTI is not necessary to complete the test and that OHU nurses can demonstrate how to use Lifescan if necessary. A further Green item will insist test results are brought to medicals.

(d) The green book flexi system has been reviewed and approved by CFA and will commence 01/04/08 – complete.

(07/10) (a) A Green item had been issued about better driving. It was decided to issue a further Green item to remind people about drinking and not driving the next morning.

(07/16) (d) TC advised that CRR had decided that a TV promotion or storyline within a TV drama would be too difficult to achieve and this issue would be addressed instead through Joe Allen's work in building a Tool Box for addressing 'Attacks of Fire fighters' (project 517). To be reported to SHSWC following Regional CFOA discussion in February 2008. FBU have a national draft report which they will share with the committee (after checking with the author), regarding attacks on fire fighters. KF undertook to make a budget bid - £10,000 – for preventative action if necessary.

PM advised that CCTV, mobile phones on appliances and direct links to CATS are working at station level, and that if PDG's reduce small nuisance fires, then attacks are also reduced. PM gave the committee some details about the Police's Bonfire Night Trojan Horse initiative and will distribute further information. FBU were concerned about the Fire Service remaining neutral.

(e) Reinforcing key messages with KS2 children is part of a fundamental review, to be in pace by September 2008. Currently all youth programs including KS2 contain an educational message that raises awareness of 'Attacks on Fire fighters' – complete.

(07/17) - Noise Working Group have identified an action plan for implementation of the SIS guidance and procedures. Further feedback to next meeting.

(07/18) (c) Outstanding – DSE information to next meeting.

(07/26) (a) (i) and (ii) - discussed under minute 07/45 – complete.

- (b) Discussed under minute 07/45 – complete.
- (e) PTSD group to discuss Devon who are pro-active in their post traumatic stress processes.

(07/27) – Violence at Work action plan has been passed to Evan Morris, CRR to present to AM's as GM Chair.

(07/29) – CHI 2008 – next Corporate Health Initiative in partnership with Police, County, Probation Service and North West Ambulance to commence 11/01/2008, finishing in April with Health Conference hosted by the Police. Winners of CFRS CHI 2007 announced – 1st team CRR, 2nd team Finance, 1st individual N Guise, 2nd individual G Cross. Presentation to be in the New Year - complete.

(07/32) (a) & (b) – discussed under minute 07/45 – complete.

(07/37) – CFRS Events Calendar for all employees to use was distributed to all staff on 11/12/08 – complete.

(07/38) – historically, all incidents – near misses, accidents and RTC's have been recorded, with H & S recording all personal injuries including if from an RTC. JM has recently discussed with P Walsh and H Day to clarify the procedure - complete. It was noted that there has been an increase in the last few months of RTC's, especially with CRR employees. The quarterly RTC management board has recently been revitalised with H Day's RTC database becoming an organisational tool with risk profiling being carried out on drivers and a protocol established for refresher training if involved in an accident. PM is currently preparing a paper on the corporate risk of employees with points on their licences.

(07/39) – no comments were received on the MSD posters and they have been distributed – complete.

(07/40) (a) JM had distributed the LRFS Noise study to the committee – complete.

- (b) Maintenance of compressor room ear defenders is part of standard tests – complete.

07/44 Calendar of departmental events/exercises

PM distributed an update of planned off-site exercises. PM advised that R Gorst's team was currently reviewing the exercises process and suggested SHSWC members be invited to future exercises. A Corporate Events Calendar listing all events and meetings was now available to all staff.

07/45 Statistics

OHU - MG had joined the meeting late and OHU stats, matters arising 06/64, 07/26 (a) & (b) and 07/32 (a) & (b) were discussed together.

OHU stats were distributed and the high referral rate for backs and knees at Chester, of backs at Warrington and of anxiety/depression at HQ, Runcorn and Northwich was noted.

The recent high number of RTC fatalities attended by Northwich was also noted, which could have an impact on the Northwich figures. OHU had offered counselling services but there had been no uptake. These areas will be investigated further for the next meeting and a review of the uptake of OHU counselling following traumatic events will be undertaken in 6 months. Anxiety/depression of support staff had already been investigated and no trend was found.

There was a discussion about the link between Control and GM's informing OHU of PTSD and the ensuing procedure which should be formalised. The impact of traumatic fatalities on younger staff and the support network available as well as post retirement support was also discussed. It was suggested that reminders about the Ben Fund support should be sent with annual pension statements.

JM had reviewed a Stress DVD and is looking at a licence for all staff to use on the intranet. It was agreed for a sample of SHSWC to review this DVD and report to the next meeting along with ideas of implementation.

It was noted that a new trend of "medium term sickness" has emerged and will be investigated further at Resources Forum, although short and long term sickness remains reduced.

It was noted that the high incidence of repeat step tests continues at Widnes, but that there is an older workforce there.

MG reported that no other OHU or Fire Service had given feedback on stress statistics to compare with. HR to follow up with HR Practitioners. MG had however, done a comparison with Cheshire County Council and found the Fire Service to have a higher incidence of stress (graphs attached to OHU referral stats). There was a discussion on change within the fire service, stress, performance management, staff being valued, reward, workload increase, new tasks in current work roles, poor management styles, bullying and harassment, insight days and the staff attitude survey. JM reported that further to the staff attitude survey, AM's were looking at areas of high levels of dissatisfaction and had produced an action plan in response to these.

MG also reported that OHU had investigated the number of back referrals following the introduction of recliner chairs and found that some already had existing back problems and that there were no issues if the chairs were used correctly, which managers need to enforce. It was recognised that 15 hours is a long shift and that if necessary, managers should do an individual risk assessment with any individual having issues with using the chairs.

H & S - Statistics were distributed and it was noted that there were 18 incidents in November, no duty days lost, 8 attacks over the Bonfire Season and an increase in youth and contractor related incidents. The annual target for incidents is 66 with 62 to the end of November. The problem with the boiler at Crewe causing scalding will be checked to ensure the problem has been rectified.

07/46 Incident Reporting

A written report will be presented at the next meeting (19/02/08).

07/47 HSE Inspection Protocol

Discussed under minute 07/43 – Matters Arising 07/36 (06/39).

07/48 Manual handling – training dvd

To be shown at the next meeting – 19/02/08.

07/49 Rise in the trend of fire fighter deaths

FBU noted that although the number of fire deaths had improved over recent years, the number of fire fighter deaths has increased. DW distributed a copy of Appendix E of an FBU document detailing operational deaths since 1997. It was suggested that following the deaths in Warwickshire, a review on fire fighter training would be called for. KF advised that a response will be given to any reports or causes found. A special SMT meeting had already discussed the issue but no further action can be taken until there is more known about the causes of the deaths. LP requested information on serious accidents and injuries and it was noted that CFOA Health & Safety will debate post modernisation statistics in the future.

07/50 Detrimental effect on individuals' health by discipline, suspension and grievance

FBU noted the recent high number of suspensions and disciplinaries and the negative impact on employees' health, in some cases the suspension being worse than the sanction by causing isolation, sleep problems, health problems and the impact on families. FBU's analysis of station shifts revealed 329 shifts lost to suspension in 2007, costing £49k, 8 suspensions in the current quarter and 5 in September. FBU questioned the need for suspension until after an investigation's findings. MG advised that OHU always indicate to management to resolve such cases as soon as possible. KF reminded the committee that employees are only suspended where either:

1. gross misconduct is suspected; or
2. the employee's continued presence at place of work would impede an investigation

In terms of the length of time from suspension to hearing, HR had been set a performance indicator to seek to speed up this process as far as possible.

07/51 Working time regulations SIS

Discussed under minute 07/43 – Matters Arising 07/36 (06/26).

07/52 Safety training – Vector, Managing Safely, Risk Assessment

FBU advised that this is connected to minute 07/49 above and that they were concerned about the adequacy of the level, amount and type of fire fighter training, noting particularly that Vector was initially for training and is now used as an assessment tool and that doing well on Vector does not mean a fire fighter would do as well on a fire ground. FBU emphasised the need for more practical exams and training on managing people safely and commented that a number of new WM's have not received practical training on

Managing Safely, risk assessment methodology, DORA and accident investigation. It was agreed that FBU would write to KF with full details and a further meeting will discuss this issue in depth and will include FOA.

07/53 Date of next meeting

A calendar of proposed meeting dates for 2008 had been presented to the committee. The next meeting will on Tuesday 19th February 2008 at 10:00 hours in the Lecture Theatre, FSHQ.

The meeting finished at 13.30 pm.

ACTIONS

Agenda item	Action required	By whom	Completion date
07/43 (06/26)	Working Time policy to be discussed at JCP re action plan to implement and monitor working time as well as quality assurance checks on time sheets.	JBe / PMo	19/02/08
(06/39)	HSE protocol on working with Fire Services to be considered in the review of the AI policy.	JM	15/04/08
07/06 (a)	Set up Working Group after appointment of permanent Senior Health Safety & Welfare Adviser to investigate impact of sports related injuries on operational activities, high risk contact sports and fitness standards applying to all ages.	MG	19/02/08
(c)	Further reminder article in the Green about personal responsibility to be fit for duty and that bringing 6 monthly test results was not negotiable and would be enforced.	PMo	19/02/08
07/10 (a)	Further article in the Green about drinking and not driving the next morning.	CRR	19/02/08
07/16 (d)	i) Attacks of Fire fighters to be addressed through Joe Allen's work in building a Tool Box. Report due after February CFOA meeting. ii) Make budget bid for £10,000 for preventative action for attacks on fire fighters iii) Information on Police Trojan Horse initiative to be shared	CRR KF PM	19/02/08 19/02/08 19/02/08
07/17 (b)	Further feedback on noise levels from Noise Working Group.	MG/JM	19/02/08
07/18 (c)	i) Ensure all DSE assessments have been completed, conduct audit and review of SIS. ii) Compile list of DSE assessors	JM/JB	19/02/08
07/26 (b)	ii) Draft Corporate Health Strategy to SMT for discussion	JM	01/03/08
(e)	PTDS group to discuss Devon Fire & Rescue processes and report to next meeting.	JM/L & D/BR	19/02/08
07/44	Review of ER exercises SIS including time lines and including SHSWC in consultation.	PM	15/04/08

ACTIONS

Agenda item	Action required	By whom	Completion date
07/45 (a)	OHU stats: i) investigate backs/knees referrals with SM – 09 II) investigate anxiety/depression referrals with SM – 05 & SM – 25 iii) investigate back referrals with SM – 01 iv) review uptake of offered post traumatic counselling v) Reminders of PTSD support from Ben Fund to be sent retired staff with annual pension statement. v) Sample SHSWC to review Stress DVD and report to next meeting with ideas for implementation vi) Follow up stress statistics with HR practitioners	i) – iii) MG/JM MG JBe/ PMo JM JBe/PMo	 19/02/08 25/06/08 19/02/08 19/02/08 19/02/08
07/45 (b)	H & S stats - Ensure boiler thermostat at Crewe has been corrected.	SP	31/01/08
07/46	Written report on incident reporting to next meeting.	JM	19/02/08
07/48	Manual handling dvd (Napo) to be shown at next meeting.	JM	19/02/08
07/52	Write with full details about safety training (Vector, Managing Safely, Risk Assessment) to KF for future discussion.	FBU	31/01/08