

## **APSE Scotland Building & Housing advisory group meeting**

**Chatelherault Country Park, Hamilton**

**9 November 2018**

### **1. Introduction & Welcome**

Cllr George Paul, Chair of the group welcomed all to the meeting at Chatelherault Country Park in Hamilton and recommended that attendees take the tour of the building which showcases the history of the park.

### **2. Attendance & Apologies**

See attached.

### **3. Minutes from previous meeting 17 August 2018**

The minutes of the meeting on the 17 August 2018 were agreed as a true and accurate account.

### **4. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

### **5. Health risks in Construction including dust and asbestos**

Graeme McMinn, the HM Principal Inspector of Health and Safety (Construction) at the Health & Safety Executive delivered a presentation on occupational health risks in construction, particularly on asbestos, vibration, stone dust and wood dust. He explained that for every worker killed on site there are approximately 100 deaths from ill health due to past exposures (e.g. asbestos, 5000 deaths). There are 1.9 million working days lost per year due to ill health, nearly 3 times that of safety (0.4 million).

#### **Asbestos**

The section on asbestos covered the different types of asbestos, which staff members are currently at risk, the different regulations that apply, the need for a refurbishment and demolition survey and management survey, the different classes of asbestos containing materials (licensed, notifiable non-licensed and non-licensed). Graeme referenced the availability of the HSE illustrated guide 'Asbestos essentials – A task manual for building, maintenance and allied trades on non-licensed asbestos work' which takes the contractor step by step through a safe means of working with less hazardous ACMs. Graeme completed the section on asbestos by sharing some examples of bad working practices by different contractors to illustrate his points.

#### **Vibration**

Graeme told the group that hand arm vibration syndrome is serious, debilitating, costly incurable but preventable. He explained all of the employer duties around assessing risk and identifying exposure levels, and the need to provide information, instruction and training, consulting employees and union representatives, as well as the need to keep records of risk assessments, provide health surveillance and to review and update the RA regularly. While exposure action values of 2.5m/s and limit values of 5m/s show the levels above which employers are required to take action and is the maximum amount an employee may be exposed to on a single day respectively, Graeme reminded the group that vibration is to be made as low as reasonably practicable. Graeme showed the group the range of tools for estimating exposure such as the HAV Calculator (available at [www.hse.gov.uk/vibration](http://www.hse.gov.uk/vibration)). Graeme recommended that the group use the hierarchy of control: eliminate, substitutions, engineering controls, administrative controls and use of suitable PPE. HSE also suggests using a 5 tiered approach to health surveillance: tier 1 – initial screening questionnaire, tier 2

– annual screening questionnaire, tier 3 – HAVS health assessment by qualified person, tier 4 – formal diagnosis by doctor (OH), tier 5 – optional – includes tests. In summary, to control HAV at work you need to assess risks to develop an action plan, reduce risks for all employees, investigate and implement good practice and industry standards for control, prioritise higher risk cases with a programme of control measures and health surveillance to detect symptoms of HAVS and feedback to control measures.

### **Construction Dust**

Graeme explained that there are 3 main types of construction dust – silica (respirable crystalline silica), wood (hardwood, softwood, MDF) and low toxicity (gypsum, marble, limestone). Construction dust can cause serious lung issues, with some developing quickly but most taking a long time, with the regular breathing of small amounts adding up over the years. For this reason it is important to control every single exposure to construction dust. Graeme explained that you can do this by managing the risk; you should assess the risk, plan the work, undertake water suppression, use on-tool extraction and RPE. The key points to take away were that dust is dangerous to your lungs, safe levels of dust are very small and many construction tasks quickly exceed them, and the more dust you breathe in over the years the greater the risk.

Graeme gave the following round-up of all three sections:

- Managing health risks is no different to managing safety risks
- It is possible and practical to carry out construction work without causing ill health
- Everyone must take ownership of their part of the process
- Monitoring and health surveillance are not enough on their own
- Helping workers tackle lifestyle issues may be beneficial but is not a substitute for preventing work-related ill health

### **6. Roundtable discussion on recruitment and retention**

There was a discussion on recruitment and retention that covered topics such as employee pay compared to neighbouring authorities and the private sector, the recruitment of apprentices, differences in pay between trades, succession planning and use of agencies.

### **7. Roundtable discussion on local authority tenant home decorating schemes**

Due to limited time it was agreed that this agenda item was carried over to a future meeting.

### **8. Topics / suggestions for Scottish Building and Housing seminar 2019**

The group were given the opportunity to provide topic suggestions for the upcoming APSE Scotland Building and Housing seminar at the Hilton Dunblane Hydro next year. Suggestions were noted.

### **9. APSE Update**

Garry Lee from APSE gave a brief update on APSE's work relating to building and housing services since the last meeting. Colin McInnes also provided a reminder for the group that the Margo Blair Awards would be taking place again this year at the Scottish Building and Housing seminar 2019 and that entries would still be accepted up until the November deadline date.

### **10. AOCB**

There was no other competent business.

### **11. Date for next meeting**

7 and 8 February 2019 at the APSE Scottish Building and Housing seminar at the Hilton Dunblane Hydro.

### **12. Lunch**

### **13. Process benchmarking – multiskilling**

Colin McInnes from APSE Solutions led a discussion session after lunch on the process benchmarking of multiskilling. It was agreed following the discussion that Colin would look to start pulling together a survey for local authorities on bolt on skills and the types of additional skills and tasks that are being undertaken by being taken on by tradespeople.