

Asbestos Network - Meeting Notes – 13th May 2020

Meeting held via Zoom

Attending:

Chris Lucas (CL) – Chair - HSE Head of CD Health Unit	Graham Warren (GW) – TICA-ACAD
Robert Bogie - DCA	Helen Ratcliffe (HR) – HSE Asbestos Policy
Tim Shambrook (TS) – HSE	Chris Bishop - UKATA
Archie Mitchell (AM) – HSE, Head of ALU	John Richards (JR) – RICS
Steve Sadley (SS) – ARCA	Alan Willoughby - BOHS
Jonathan Grant (JG) – NORAC	Louise Wainwright - UKAS
Martin Gibson (MG) – HSE Occupational Hygiene Specialist and joint asbestos technical lead	Daniel Barrowcliffe (DB) – HSE Science Directorate
Rose Bricis (RB) – HSE, ALU	Paul Beaumont (PB) – IATP
David Tucker (DT) – CCG	

Apologies:

Colette Willoughby (CW) – FAAM/ BOHS	Craig Evans (CE) – UKATA
Judith McNulty-Green - IOSH	

Summary of actions:

- **All:** Members were given a week to raise any further issues by email regarding the draft terms of reference to the secretariat.
- **All:** Members to raise any other topics or concerns not covered during the meeting by email to Secretariat (TS tim.shambrook@hse.gov.uk).
- **AM:** To send out options for a suitable date and time of the next meeting to be held virtually.

1. Welcome and Administration

- CL lead introductions and thanked Steve Sadley from ARCA for hosting our first virtual meeting via Zoom.
- As this was the first virtual meeting being held, it was agreed that anything discussed would have to be treated as 'open' given potential cyber security concerns. It was agreed to keep the meeting to an hour and cover key topics only with nothing that could be considered as a sensitive nature.
- CL stated that this was likely to be his last meeting as Chair due to re-organisation within Construction Division's Sector teams. Archie Mitchel (AM) will take over as Chair for the next meeting and this will also provide continuity for members.

2. Actions/Minutes of last meeting (22nd January 2020)

2a. *Agreement / Amendments:*

- Draft minutes were accepted and finalised. These will be circulated with the papers for the next meeting.

2b. *Actions Update:*

- **CL:** These were covered by the Chair:
 - It was confirmed that Alan Willoughby would chair the Duty to Manage (DTM) working group.
 - Reconstitution consensus (covered later in 3 below)
 - The Chair suggested that a number of action items from the previous meeting should be deferred. This was because this was the first on-line meeting and these items would need some detailed consideration. This was agreed in relation to:
 - Circulation and discussion of the duty to manage flow-chart
 - Discussion on the development of a draft risk assessment for significant non-asbestos health and safety risks associated with licensed work
 - An update on HSE's licensed asbestos intervention activities

3. Draft Terms of Reference

- CL outlined that, as agreed at the last meeting, the reconstitution consensus was taken back to HSE to advance the next steps. These were outlined to members.
- Draft terms of reference were agreed by HSE's Construction Division Senior Leadership Team. A copy of these were emailed to members on 7th May 2020. There were no significant objections. The only issue raised by members was in relation to publication of guidance. CL explained that given HSE were chairing this was the best compromise that can be currently offered.

ACTION: Members were given a week to raise any further issues by email to the secretariat (TS tim.shambrook@hse.gov.uk)

- Members were informed of the proposal to now close the existing ALG web community. All documents from this site have now been copied for archiving should access be subsequently needed. CL informed members that the intention is to replace this with a specific page(s) on HSE's website. This would promote the work of the group and list members - in a similar way to that already in place for the [Healthy Lung Partnership](#).
- Given HSE's continued role as Chair HSE's Construction Division Senior Leadership Team felt that a more neutral name would be appropriate moving forward that reflects other similar work done by the organisation. The group will therefore now be known as the 'Asbestos Network'.

4. **Emerging Issues:**

- CL advised that members need to keep a close eye daily on the [HSE website](#). As the COVID-19 situation evolves, so may the advice given. Members should also consider [subscribing](#) to HSE's free email update bulletins if they have not already.
- Given the current circumstances around COVID-19, the Chair wanted to get an indication from members of any significant impact on routine asbestos-related issues
 - JG suggested anecdotally that some dutyholders may be taking a more relaxed view on the dangers from asbestos. COVID-19 may be seen as a more immediate risk and that if they had been provided with some form of mask, individuals might think they will be protected against both. CL responded by saying that there is no relaxation of the normal standards of protection required for asbestos related activities due to the current situation.
 - Potential shortages of PPE and RPE were discussed. The shortage of a specific particulate half-mask filter was the only matter identified. There was general consensus that while some distributors were running low, employers have enough initially for their expected needs. There was some uncertainty about what would happen when work activity significantly increased.
 - CL alerted members of the need to be vigilant about the standard of PPE being purchased. Some less reputable suppliers may use the opportunity to place non-CE marked or fake items on the marketplace (either intentionally or unintentionally). It is still the case that only CE marked equipment to the right standard can be used for asbestos work.
 - CB raised a concern regarding face fit test renewals, specifically if the retest date has expired. CL advised that there is guidance on HSE's [website](#)
 - CB raised an issue with regards to asbestos training and the extent to which this can be done remotely. CL advised that this needs to be considered alongside the government's latest COVID-19 guidance. Currently those elements that can be delivered effectively and appropriately remotely (e.g. online) should be done in this manner. In accordance with the ACOP to the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 some training will have to be practical (e.g. decontamination). In these instances the arrangements will need to consider the current safer workplaces guidelines and the measures identified as part of a COVID-19 risk assessment.

ACTION: Members to raise any other topics or concerns not covered during the meeting by email to Secretariat (TS tim.shambrook@hse.gov.uk).

5. **AOB and Dates for 2020 meetings:**

- The next planned meeting was to take place Wednesday 16th September 2020. Given the likely need to continue with virtual meetings for some time it, AM suggested that shorter, more regular meetings might work better. This was agreed. The month of July or August was proposed.

ACTION: AM as the new Chair will send out options for a suitable date and time.

- As this is likely to be last meeting Chaired by CL, he took the opportunity to thank everyone for their valuable contributions and commitment to the work of the group and wished them all the best for the future.