

## Safe Start!

Bradford Area Occupational Health and Safety Forum organised a local European Health and Safety week event in October. The Forum helped Bradford Council, Bradford Vision, HSE, NHS, Bradford Area Safety Representatives Association, Learning and Skills Council, local businesses and Bradford Careers to work together to provide an event which was packed full of free workshops tailored to this year's 'Safe Start' theme - a campaign dedicated to young people to ensure a safe and healthy start to their working lives. The day was held at the Carlisle Business Centre.

Just under a hundred people attended the Sure Start day, which took place at the Carlisle Business Centre in Bradford. Most attending were employers and employees who are interested to know more about promoting safety and health of young people in the workplace.

Rory O'Neill, editor of the Hazards Magazine opened the event and gave a presentation entitled 'Too young to die', stating how big the problems is. In Britain, a worker aged between 16 and 24 years old suffers a reportable workplace injury every 12 minutes and a serious injury every 40 minutes, and it's getting worse!

Young workers have a low occupational ill-health rate, but this is expected as many occupational diseases, like noise induced hearing loss, back pain and respiratory diseases are the result of cumulative exposure and some, like occupational cancer, tend to have long latency periods.

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### H&S Minister visits

#### Forum

Lord Hunt came a leaping to visit Bradford Area Occupational Health and Safety Forum on Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> December to witness the signing of the Health, Work and Well-Being Charter by the Forum and speak about occupational health and safety. Forum Chair, Carol Duerden, said, "This was a great opportunity for Lord Hunt to find out more about the good occupational health and safety leadership and partnership working that is going on locally".

The forum was pleased Lord Hunt, Minister for the Department for Works and Pensions, came to speak with its members. Lord Hunt found out about how the Forum is making new links with major partners including the Local Area Agreements and Jobcentre Plus, and how the Forum is joining-up working with public, private, voluntary and trade union organisations to help provide good jobs and healthy work for the people of Bradford.

Jane Howie, Forum Development Worker said, "We feel very honoured that the Health and Safety Minister, Lord Hunt is impressed with the work of the Forum. His visit was an early Christmas present for us, it will surely help to raise the profile of our work and help with current plans to develop a local occupational health and safety advice service, free of charge, to local businesses and workers."

Lord Hunt spared ten minutes to address a free Fire Safety Order Seminar the Forum organised, where 100 local businesses were informed about how to carry out fire risk assessments. He then meet with Carol Duerden - Forum Chair, Jane Howie - Forum Development Worker, Neville Roland -Consultant in Policy and Strategy Development, and Geoff Twentyman -Bradford Council's Environmental Health Manager for Health and Safety.

Lord Hunt said "The purpose of the Health Work and Well-being Strategy is to improve the health and well-being of the working age population, create healthier workplaces and prevent people from becoming ill or being injured as a result of their work. It is also intended to raise the profile of health and work in society. "I am pleased that the Bradford Area Occupational Health and Safety Forum has signed up to these aims and is committed to working with other signatories to see them become a reality"



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ane Howie, Development Worker for the Forum said, "Employers need to provide safe and suitable work, with training and supervision for young employees. The Education community also has a vital role to play and it should be preparing young people for the world of work by teaching them about risk awareness and risk prevention".

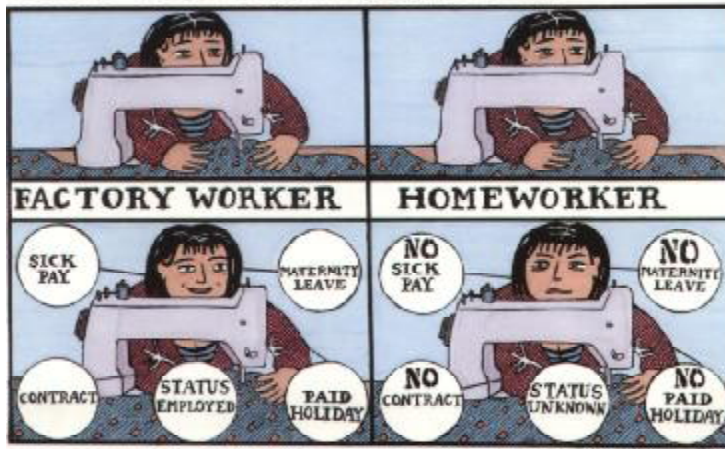
The Forum also distributed information packs to: schools, colleges, the university and Connexions offices throughout the District.

The rate of non-fatal accidents at work is at least 50% higher among those aged 18-24 than it is in any other age category. Reasons for this include lack of training, experience and awareness and the types of jobs and employment situations young people are placed in.

A Safe Start Charter was signed (see photo below) at the event by Forum Chair, Carol Duerden; the Charter states that Bradford Area Occupational Health and Safety Forum is dedicated to ensure that young people make a safe and healthy start to their working lives.

Some non Sure Start specific workshops also took place at the event, these were around the usual health and safety issues such as risk assessments, manual handling and asbestos. Two focus group meetings looking at Women at Work and The Health, Work and Well-being strategy were also held on the day.

## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE ...



In the UK, the HSE is working in conjunction with the Institution of Occupational Health and Safety (IOSH), the TUC and the Learning & Skills Council, amongst others. Activities here include: *Wiseup2work*, a series of jargon-free interactive exercises and games, lesson plans, worksheets and case studies, to help teachers bring health and safety alive for their students; an interactive website run by the Engineering Employers Federation; and action packs with free information from the HSE. See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/campaigns/euroweek/index.htm> for details on how to get involved.

People can still get involved by obtaining copies of the Safe Start PowerPoint presentations that can be downloaded free on the Forum website - [www.baohsf.org.uk](http://www.baohsf.org.uk).

## Campaigning for Employment Rights for Homeworkers

The National Group on Homeworking (NGH) is campaigning for justice for UK homeworkers. The campaign is based around a simple principle:

Homeworkers deserve the same employment rights and protections as those employed in factories or offices.

Currently thousands of homeworkers miss out on key rights such as maternity leave or protection against redundancy or unfair dismissal because their employment status is unclear. Some find that questions over their employment status can even block their attempts to access the national minimum wage.

Health and safety should be a more simple matter. In principle, employers have a duty of care towards all those who work for them under the Health and Safety at Work Act, and this includes homeworkers.

But as the Health and Safety Laboratory's 2002 report on homeworking stated – "The lack of clarity in the distinction between employee and self-employed status makes it very difficult for both employers and homeworkers to interpret the current HSE guidance on Homeworking. The current HSE definition of homeworkers as 'those people employed to work at home' (HSE, 1996) is perceived as not applying to many of the homeworkers lacking definite employee status.'

NGH wants the employment rights of UK homeworkers to be strengthened and clarified, giving them full recognition as employees. To support the campaign and get your hands on 'Spot the Difference' campaign postcards please call 0113 2454273 or email [nesta@ngh.org.uk](mailto:nesta@ngh.org.uk)



## Work and Well-Being Focus Group

There is a lack of occupational health services available in Bradford. With only a minimal amount of GPs having any Occupational Health Training – 4% (identified in Forum research undertaken in 2005).

There is also a lack of firms providing comprehensive occupational health support to employees – only 3% (taken from the Health, Work and Well-Being Strategy).

The costs of occupational ill health in Bradford are estimated as being between £32 and £40.5 million a year. This includes direct wage costs, indirect costs to employers, incapacity benefit and health service costs. (Taken from research undertaken by the Forum and the University of York).

More than half of incapacity benefit claimants are 50+

In Britain within 15 years there will be three million more people over 50 and a million fewer under 50. (Corrina Stowell Third Age Employment Network)

We need to redesign jobs to help people keep healthy and make places of work safe and healthy for people to work in.

Dominic Whowell from Jobcentre Plus showed a map of Incapacity Benefit claimants by ward. He gave a brief overview of the population numbers in and out of work and spoke about Jobcentre Plus and how it is there to help find “work for those that can, and security for those that cannot”. Current policy is to promote work as the best form of welfare and to help economically inactive people compete effectively for work.

The new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work – is looking at reducing the number of people who leave the workplace due to illness. The Pathways to Work scheme is to start in West Yorkshire in October 2007. This will include access to new support services.

Notes from the group discussion - There is every need for a Work, Health and

Well-Being focus group. The group would like to see good jobs for the people of Bradford as opposed to any job for the sake of it.

It was felt that there needs to be an incentive for employers to employ people who have experienced barriers to working in the past, and that Corporate Social Responsibility was not enough of a carrot. An Occupational Health and Safety advice service for SMEs needs to be funded by the Local Area Agreement. There is an Access to Work fund but SMEs still need advice on what reasonable adjustments are needed.

Employers need to be trained on how they can help stop people leaving work, via training on health and safety provision. A Small Business Health and Safety Advisor would be beneficial. It was suggested that the HWWB focus group could help put an information pack together.

There was some discussion about the aging workforce and the ability of older workers. Incentives to employ a 50+ person include the new Age Discrimination Act. There is a big need to retrain older people and to use older people to help pass on their skills to younger people.

The fact that there are high levels of inequality between pay was felt to be a barrier to getting people off IB. With minimum wages being very low, there is not enough incentive. The Focus group could possibly lobby government for higher minimum pay and more equality of pay.

Roving Safety Reps - existing Health and Safety Reps could be used to go to SME to provide advice and support on occupational health and safety best practices. Members of the Bradford Area Safety Reps Association would be willing to get involved with such a scheme.

Larger companies could be used to help train/raise awareness of occupational health and safety to smaller companies. Some research undertaken by the Forum in 2004 showed that a significant number of larger companies are prepared to do this. Carol Younger

from the Accent Group said that her organisation would be prepared to do this. Accent have a training centre which could be used for this and they have already helped train people for the very successful ‘Youth Builder Project’.



### Fire Safety Seminar

Nigel Charlston and Ian Percell (pictured above) from the West Yorkshire Fire Service lead a very interesting and well received seminar on the new Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order .

For the first time the RRO (Regulatory Reform Order) brings all people and all organisations together under one lot of regulations. Addressing the 100 local business and organisations that attended the seminar, Ian said "we want you to use this legislation to make it work in your business".

Ian started off by giving details of the new order including:

What is the new order? What does it replace? what does it mean? What will the order do? what are the duties in the order? and who will be affected?

A long explanation of who is a responsible person and who is the competent person followed. All the slides from the presentation can be found of the forum website [www.baohsf.org.uk](http://www.baohsf.org.uk)

The responsible person can appoint a person to assist them. Where premises are shared, responsible persons must inform, cooperate and coordinate with others in the premises. If you can affect

he control of the premises you are responsible. There may be a number of responsible persons in a premises. The responsible person needs to pick a competent person (there are safeguards such as having sufficient time and training to do the job).

The Fire Service will not do the fire risk assessments for you, as they are the enforcers, but they will give all the advice that is needed to do an assessment.

Risk assessments were explained in detail, using a 5 Step programme:

Identify Fire Hazard

Identify people at risk

Evaluate, remove reduce and protect

Record, plan, inform, instruct and train

Review and amend if necessary

The Fire service has a very good website that outlines how to put together a fire risk assessment see [www.westyorksfire.gov.uk](http://www.westyorksfire.gov.uk)

Nigel said that 80% of all commercial fires are deliberate. Arson and the cost to business was presented at the end part of the seminar (after a brief address by Lord Hunt).

See [www.baohsf.org.uk](http://www.baohsf.org.uk) for an electronic copy of Ian and Nigel's presentation

## Other news

Bradford and Airedale tPCT is offering free support, information and advice for companies and organisations on Smoke Free Bradford and Airedale. This includes, smoke free policies, compliance with forthcoming legislation, support for staff eg, workplace stop-smoking support groups. Contact Gail Stringer 01274 363592

The HSE have launched a second national campaign on back pain (you may have seen some interesting posters of the band) see [www.betterbacks.hse.gov.uk](http://www.betterbacks.hse.gov.uk) on how to sign up to the campaign.

Workplace Health Connect - free advice on workplace health, safety and return to work issues in England and Wales. 0845 609 6006

Workers' Memorial Day - Saturday 28th April 2007. An event is to take place on the Saturday at the Bradford Resource Centre. The theme is to be Chemicals and Cancer and is being organised by BASRA (Bradford Area Safety Reps Association). More details to follow. You will also be able to find details on the Forum's BASRA website page.



## BAOHSF

Tel: 01535 691049  
E.mail [jane@baohsf.org.uk](mailto:jane@baohsf.org.uk)  
web: [www.baohsf.org.uk](http://www.baohsf.org.uk)  
13 Scott Street  
Keighley BD21 2JH  
Tel: 01535 691049

## WHAT

Workers' Health Advice Team  
Unison Offices, 2nd Floor  
Auburn House, Upper Piccadilly  
Bradford, BD1 3NU  
Tel: 01274 393949

see the Forum website at [www.baohsf.org.uk](http://www.baohsf.org.uk)

To receive newsletters, seminar lists and keep in touch please complete this forum membership slip

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Send to Bradford Area Occupational Health and Safety Forum, 13 Scott Street, Keighley, BD21 2JH