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Lord Hunt To Visit Forum

Chair of the Forum, Carol Duerden and Development Worker, Jane Howie gave presentations at the Healthy Places - Healthy People Conference in London on the 17th May. At the Conference, which was organised by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Lord Hunt of Kings Health OBE, Parliamentary Under Secretary for the Department for Works and Pensions also spoke.

Lord Hunt was said that he had read the Forum's presentation and kept referring to the Forum in his speech, he was obviously impressed by the work of the Forum and its involvement with the Local Area Agreements. He was so impressed he said he would like to come to visit us and find out more about the Forum. The meeting will probably take place at the end of August or the beginning of September.

Lord Hunt spoke about sickness absence in the UK, the ageing population and incapacity benefits and the costs of occupational ill health. A new National Director for Health and Work, Professor Carol Black, has been appointed. He spoke about the Health Work and Well-being Charter that will create an environment that promotes the health and well being of all those in work and all those who wish to work. The benefits, he said, will be experienced by individuals and their families, by organisations and throughout the whole of society. He spoke about the need for good leadership but stressed that there has to be good partnerships with employees.

To finish his speech he went on to say that the potential for working with the Local Area Agreements is high, he believed that the DWP would be represented on the Local Area Agreements by the Job Centre Plus. Lord Hunt believes that there is scope for having employment advisors in GP surgeries and for the NHS to provide fast track services, he said, there is a need for more immediate access to rehabilitation schemes and fast track treatments for injured workers. cont. page2



BASRA - Remember the dead and fight for the living on WMD

On Workers' Memorial Day, eight members of BASRA (Bradford Area Safety Reps Association), wearing purple 'forget me knot' ribbons went down to London to join in a demonstration and a rally. They started off with a protest outside Canada House as part of a coordinated International campaign lead by Building and Wood Workers' International against the aggressive marketing and promotion of asbestos in developing countries by the Canadian Government. Their message was for the Canadian Government to 'Stop settling death around the world!'

The demo, which was lead by the Construction Safety Campaign, moved on to protest outside the Health and Safety Executive headquarters. cont p2.

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Carol Duerden spoke after Lord Hunt, and informed the conference about the History of the Forum, why it was set up and how it began. What the Forum does, who belongs, what difference it is making and its major achievements. Carol went on to speak about the Danish Model of an Occupational Health Service. Jane Howie spoke next about the Forum's securing Health Together Strategy and its Local Actions. She spoke about the sub groups of the Forum and gave some statistical information on the costs of occupational ill health in Bradford, the levels of health and employment deprivation in Bradford and the lack of occupational health services. Jane recommended that other Local Authorities worked with existing voluntary organisations or help to establish a similar forum in their area, work with union health and safety reps, set up a NHS referral system and to get to know what developments are being made with the Local Area Agreements.

Jane gave a brief overview of Bradford's Local Area Agreements. These help join up public services and help to involve decision making and reduce bureaucracy. The Work Health and Well-Being strategy can be progressed through the LAAs. This strategy aims to manage minor health problems at work, help return to work following an absence because of illness, and avoid work-related health problems. In Bradford the Forum is helping to progress the Work Health and Well being agenda through newly formed partnership with the Healthier Communities and Older People's block of the LAA and more recently the forming Economic Development and Enterprise arm of the LAA. The Forum is striving to refresh and make new links with major partners to join up working to help reduce deprivation, develop a dynamic and inclusive labour force and have good jobs for the people of Bradford. This will contribute to the well being of the district and help make Bradford a great place to work, rest and play.



BASRA Workers Memorial Day story cont.. from page 1

The reason was to protest about the UK government's weakening of the HSE's enforcement regime to a more 'business friendly' model. Simon Hester Prospect rep from the HSE union came out to speak to the crowd. He said that the Government's de-regulation drive will get worse and there was a massive need for union involvement in the Olympics Project. A minute's silence was then held to remember the dead.

The demo then slowly moved through the streets of the embankment and held a rally outside the Greater London Authority near Tower Bridge where speeches were made..

BASRA (Bradford Area Safety Reps Association) wrote to all Bradford Area MPs asking them to support formal recognition of Workers Memorial Day.

This year International Workers Memorial Day has the widest range of countries participating and the widest ever range of events.

Work related cancer alone, kills 6,000 (half asbestos related) in UK. Hazards (magazine supported by TUC) estimates this figure is nearer 48,000). 2 million people in UK made ill by their work each year (HSE), 3/4 of these upper limb or back problems, and stress.

The ILO (International Labour Organisation) estimates 2.2 million people die from work-related causes worldwide each year. –That is more than 6,000 every day and 10 % higher than three years ago. The majority of these deaths are predictable and preventable.

BASRA – want good jobs and safe jobs. The group is helping to make sure that workers have more protection. The number of people who have access to occupational health support in their work needs to be increased and Health and safety reps have a very valuable role to play. BASRA is also striving to help with the provision of more equitable working conditions, it does not just want to see any jobs just for the sake of job creation it wants to see good jobs that are healthy and lead to a good quality of life.

Smokefree Workplaces

The last Seminar that the Forum organised was on smokefree workplaces. This was organised in partnership with the NHS. Speaking at the seminar was: Madge Boyle from the NHS, Mick Gledhill and Andrew Mawson from Bradford Area Safety Reps Association, Karan Brown from the Workers' Health Advice Team, Dian Bell from the Public Health Communications team, John Major, Head of Service from Bradford Environmental Health and local business woman Gil Richardson from Market Taverns.

Madge spoke about the health case for smokefree workplaces. There is no safe 2nd hand smoke exposure level. Madge went through several reviews including the IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer) one, which concluded that “the evidence is sufficient to conclude that involuntary smoking is a cause of lung cancer in never smokers”. 2nd hand smoke contains a cocktail of 4,000 different substances, many are poisonous, 60 of these substances are known carcinogens, namely, ammonia, arsenic, mercury and formaldehyde. It is estimated that 3500 people die each year in the UK from breathing other people's tobacco smoke – exposure at work, Madge said, leads to approx 700 of these deaths.

Andrew and Mick from BASRA gave a presentation with a Trade Union perspective on smoking in the workplace. Starting off with a brief history of smoking.

Before 1 BC Historians believe native Americans began using tobacco for medicinal and ceremonial purposes

600-1000 AD First pictorial record of tobacco being smoked found on Guatemalan pottery

1492 Columbus discovers tobacco in the New World

1531 European cultivation of tobacco begins in Santo Domingo

1548 Portuguese cultivate tobacco in Brazil for commercial export

1571 Monardes, a doctor in Seville, reports on the latest craze among Spanish doctors – the wonders of the tobacco plant. Monardes lists 36 maladies which he believed could be cured by tobacco

1585 Sir Francis Drake introduces smoking to Sir Walter Raleigh

1600 Sir Walter Raleigh persuades Queen Elizabeth to try smoking

Legislation on smoking at work is finally coming, Unions and Management and Employees need to work closely to implement effective policies, these need to be negotiated with employees. A policy should consider work stress factors that may encourage smoking, health promotion opportunities should be exploited, help where possible for smokers who

wish to quit, **stigmatising ‘smokers’ should be avoided**, use the legal changes to make sensible workplace health improvements for all – smokers and non-smokers.

Mick said it was rather ironic that workers will not be able to smoke cigarettes in places of work where other carcinogens are present.

Karan Brown spoke in depth about practical advice on developing smokefree policies. All presentations can be found on the Forum website see www.baohsf.org.uk Her presentation included how to draw up a policy, how to make necessary arrangements. The following points were discussed in Karan's presentation. 50% of the structure of outside shelters needs to be open to the elements, discussion about clocking off to go to have a cigarette, smoking policy becoming part of contract of employment. The Workers Health Advice Team are currently offering in-house service to help your organisation develop a smokefree workplace policy contact Karan on 01274 393949 for more details.

Dian Bell calculated the economic costs of smoking, she said Economic impact of smoking to the Yorkshire and Humber economy is £1.2 billion a year, a majority of this cost is borne by businesses/employers. For Bradford smoking costs £33.2 million in treatment, £20.6 million in sick days £39.4 million in cigarette breaks. Dian said there is help for employers, see www.smokingcosts.co.uk



Local Businesswoman Gil Richards spoke about her experience of introducing smokefree environments in the bars she has been managing. She said that it was a very 'scary thing to do at first and it felt a little bit like cutting off our nose to spite our face'. She said it is so different to what it was five years ago and that it is great, with both smoking and non smoking staff members and customers having a positive response to the ban. She said that she talked to staff all the way

through the initiative.

John Major said that at present the legislation is still a bill but it will become an Act and by July 2007 there will be a total ban on workplace smoking. Premises where smoking will be banned is all enclosed public places and workplaces, this includes private clubs and excludes certain places where a person may have his home – e.g. prison, care home, hotel. The House of Parliament is also exempt! John then spoke about how the new regulations will be enforced. There will be fixed penalties with fines of up to £2,500 for not enforcing the ban and up to £1,000 for not displaying signs. It looks like the local authority environmental health staff will be enforcing the act. John said 'there is no intention of going out on July 2007 and dishing out enforcement notices like confetti but if places are deliberately flaunting the legislation compliance with the law will be enforced.

Launch of Securing Health Together 2006-2009

At the beginning of the last seminar Geoff Twentyman, Secretary of the Forum launched the new Securing Health Together Strategy in the Bradford District.

Geoff gave a brief presentation about Bradford's local occupational health and safety strategy - Securing Health Together in Bradford 2006-2009.

He said that originally the Forum had been focusing more on safety and that now there is more emphasis on health. 2 million people suffered from an illness they believed was caused or made worse by their current or past work last year (HSC statistics 2004/05) 576,000 of these were new cases in the last 12 months.

Bradford Area Occ H & S Forum is the major partnership concerned with occupational health and safety in Bradford and its working group includes representatives from the Local Authority, NHS, Trade Unions, Enforcing Authority and Public and Private organisations. It also has several hundred

small to medium businesses from the Bradford area as part of its membership.

The new SHT strategy reflects the latest development in occupational health and safety - the return to work agenda, and the work environment as a source of better health.

The SHT strategy and Bradford Area Occupational Health and Safety Forum, link directly to Bradford's Local Area Agreement and its Community Strategy under the Healthy Communities and Older People and the Economic Development and Enterprise themes.

The Forum has consulted widely on the draft strategy.

The progress report on the last strategy showed that during its first two years 13 actions were completed, 16 actions had made some progress and 1 action had no progress.

The new strategy is a robust one, it has 5 key programmes of work which have very clear actions, this makes the job of helping to create better occupational health and safety services in Bradford much easier.

Geoff said thanks to Neville Rolland the Consultant in Policy and Strategy Development, who helped write the strategy.

Contact the Forum if you would like a free copy of the strategy. It is available on our website too.

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

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