

NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting: 20th March 2025

REPORT NO.
5

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING (HS&W) QUARTERLY REPORT

21ST NOVEMBER 2024 – 7TH MARCH 2025

Purpose: For members' information.

Recommendations: The report is received.

1. Training

The following formal external HS&W-related training has been undertaken in Q3 2024/25:

| Training Course | Duration (days) | No. Officers Attended |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------|
| H&S Union Training | 3 | 1 |
| H&S Conference | 1 | 1 |
| Professional Practices and Responsibilities ¹ | 1 | 1 |
| RYA First Aid | 1 | 1 |

Total number of officer days on formal external HS&W related training: 6 days

Our newly developed Training Matrix is now routinely reviewed by the SMT in our monthly management meetings to ensure training, qualifications, medicals *etc.* are in-date and relevant to the duties being undertaken across the Authority.

2. Policy Development

SMT have identified a list of up to 30 HS&W-related policies which we should have as an Authority, many of which we do already have but need reviewing / updating. In this reporting period, an updated policy on Lone Working has now been implemented, with ATVs, Drones, RIBs and Boarding Procedures to follow in due course. We will continue to work through our policy reviews and add further ones as we go along.

Joe and I have been working to review our SOPs and RAs relating to North Western Protector (NWP). Joe has now finalised a revised set of documents relating to everything we do relating to NWP. We planned to have a meeting with crew members in Whitehaven in February, but this had to be postponed due to illness; it will be rearranged for some time in March or April. At the appropriate point, I will then be looking to bring an external maritime safety specialist in to review our policies and procedures relating

¹ Required under Workboat Code for NWP.

to our seagoing activities and potentially review our practices too by spending some time at sea onboard NWP.

3. H&S Statistics

Statistics relating to H&S will be reported on a financial quarterly basis for the most recent completed quarter, in this case Q3 2024/25:

- Near Misses = 2
- Incidents = 0
- Accidents = 0
 - (of which RIDDOR reportable) = 0
- First Aid administered = 0

One of the near misses related to issues with a NWP crew member's lifejacket, whereby the zipper was protruding at the bottom and got caught in a rope whilst undertaking potting surveys in the Allonby Bay HPMA. This was part of a selection of wider issues with the model of lifejacket being used onboard NWP and we have since changed to a new make and model, which has removed this issue and others.

The other near miss was from an officer's quadbike slipping into a hole whilst out on a survey, causing them to fall off. The officer did not incur any injuries and the bike was pulled out with a rope using the other officer's bike. The quadbike was checked, and no defects were found and no water ingress had occurred. A review of the towing equipment on the quadbikes resulted in the purchasing of specialist tow straps to replace ropes, with one stored in each quadbike box; these were delivered at the beginning of March. Furthermore, senior management had already identified a need to have refresher training for officers on what to do in the event of a quadbike getting stuck. This will be occurring later this year as part of our new internal training calendar initiative. With the potential development of digital stats and mapping (see CEO Report, Agenda Item 9, Report 4, Section 6), there is also potential for us to start mapping areas at our intertidal survey and patrol sites where there is higher risk of quadbikes getting stuck. This is something we will explore as the project develops.

4. Carnforth Radon Gas Issue

Towards the end of 2024, we began monitoring for radon gas at our four premises at Carnforth and Whitehaven (office and lock-up at each). Monitoring was carried out at these locations due to them being within a radon affected area, as defined by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). Whilst results came back well within acceptable levels at three of the premises, the levels at the Carnforth Office were high enough to trigger a notification from the UKHSA and a requirement for the Authority to take specific action under The Ionising Radiations Regulations 2017. This included:

- appointing a Radiation Protection Advisor (RPA)
- notifying the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- notifying local environmental health
- putting in place steps to reduce the radon gas levels

All of the above actions were taken, and the three staff working on the ground floor were relocated to higher floors in the office.

In short, the RPA has advised that the levels recorded, whilst triggering statutory requirements under the IRR, were not of a level that warranted significant immediate intervention and they advised that staff could return to working on the ground floor whilst we explored longer-term mitigation measures.

I am currently exploring the installation of some form of ventilation into the office basement in order to bring down the levels of radon there, would should in term reduce levels on the ground floor, and indeed, throughout the building. Costs for this are expected to be up to a maximum of £2,000.

Mark Taylor, North Western IFCA CEO, 7th March 2025.