

# NWIFCA Annual General Meeting: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024

REPORT NO.  
6

## HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING (HS&W) QUARTERLY REPORT 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE TO 16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER

**Purpose:** For members' information.

**Recommendations:** The report is received.

### 1. External Support

Members may be aware that for the past several years we have used the services of Inspire Safety, a Cumbria-based company who provide advice to organisations on improving their health and safety policies, procedures and overall culture. Over the last 12 months of my tenure, I have kept this service provision under review and back in April, decided that, going forward, we no longer needed Inspire Safety's support. Whilst over the years they had provided a lot of direction in identifying gaps in our policies and procedures, I felt they were not able to provide the support to help us plug these gaps and did not have the relevant specialised maritime and coastal expertise that we required to help us do this. Their role with us had become fundamentally an administrative one, arranging regular internal health and safety meetings and keeping track of actions attributed to individual Authority officers; this is a role we can fulfil ourselves through our Admin Team. As a Senior Management Team (SMT), we are now in a much better position to understand where our priorities lie in terms of reviewing and updating our HS&W policies and procedures and improving our overall culture, and I therefore concluded that we no longer needed Inspire Safety's services.

As per what is set out below, work is continuing to review and develop our HS&W policies and procedures. At the appropriate point in the future, it may be worthwhile bringing in a specialist maritime safety consultant to review some of our operational policies and procedures to provide me, members and our stakeholders with some external, independent assurance that what we have in place is suitable. I have begun making enquiries with some contacts regarding this potential future one-off consultancy work.

### 2. Training

The following formal external HS&W-related training has been undertaken in Q1 2024/25:

Training Course	Duration (days)	No. Officers Attended
Food Hygiene <sup>1</sup>	1	7
Firefighting	1	12
First Aid At Sea	1	13
Emergency First Aid at Work	1	2
Powerboat Level 2	2	2
Lifting Equipment <sup>2</sup>	1	2
Safe Slings and Lifting <sup>3</sup>	1	2
Crane Loading, Slinger Signalling Training and Test	4	4
Vessel Stability <sup>4</sup>	1	3
VHF Operation	1	4
ATV Handling	1	1
Professional Practices and Responsibilities <sup>5</sup>	1	4

Total number of officer days on formal external HS&W related training: 70 days

Much of the above training was organised on the back of a review of our training records and requirements relating to the respective statutory workboat codings for the Authority's three patrol vessels. We found that we were under-qualified in certain areas, and so IFCOs have undertaken specific training to address these deficiencies.

Our Admin Team have also developed a new Training Matrix which records all the mandatory training and qualifications that specific officers need for specific roles, including when such training was undertaken and if and when it expires. This 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.

### 3. Medicals

Further to my HS&W Quarterly Report at the previous full Authority meeting, we have now agreed a way forward on medical certification for all seagoing staff. Officers will have the option to undertake an ENG1 or ML5 medical examination, but these must be carried out by a Maritime and Coastguard

<sup>1</sup> For food preparation onboard North Western Protector – required under Workboat Code

<sup>2</sup> Relating to operating lifting equipment onboard NWP

<sup>3</sup> Relating to operating lifting equipment onboard NWP

<sup>4</sup> Required under Workboat Code for NWP

<sup>5</sup> Required under Workboat Code for NWP

Agency (MCA) approved GP. Furthermore, these must be undertaken every two years rather than the previously stipulated five years.

#### **4. Policy Development**

With the ceasing of Inspire Safety's services, I have stood up an internal HS&W Working Group, and we began with a status check of all our HS&W-related policies and associated standard operating procedures (SOPs) and risk assessments (RAs). We 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, we have updated our Manual Handling, Incident Reporting and COSHH policies and associated documentation, and have begun reviewing our policies, SOPs and RAs on our ATV and vehicle usage, Lone Working, Drones, RIBs and Boarding Operations. 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 NWP. We spent two days looking through this at the beginning of September and Joe is now working to finalise a first draft of a revised set of documents relating to everything we do relating to NWP. We will then be reviewing this with our senior crew members in Whitehaven before taking all crew through the new SOPs and RAs to ensure that best practice is being followed at all times. As mentioned above in section 1, at the appropriate point, I will then be looking to bring an external maritime safety specialist in to review our policies and procedures relating to our seagoing activities and potentially review our practices too by spending some time at sea onboard NWP.

#### **5. 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 Q1 2024/25:

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

One of the near misses related to NWP losing steering on the port-side jet-drive. The back-up steering was engaged whilst repairs were carried out at sea and the vessel was fully functional and back on patrol within an hour. New sensors were ordered and a spare is to be kept onboard from now on.

The other near miss related to a crew member becoming locked in the toilet onboard NWP. The toilet door needed to be opened with a crowbar and the handle removed. As a result, the door handle was changed and a break glass hammer was installed within the toilet.

Whilst the above information relates to incidents covering Q1 2024/25, I feel duty bound to inform members of an incident at the Carnforth office after this period, on 2<sup>nd</sup> August. A stakeholder entered the office to discuss his Byelaw 3 permit, having missed the deadline for payment and having been informed that we would not be renewing his permit. After a lengthy discussion with Joe, Alison and me in the office foyer, the individual then became very irate and proceeded to headbutt the office front door several times, injuring himself in the process. The police were called and, whilst waiting for their arrival, Joe and I were able to calm the individual down and keep him in the foyer. The police

arrived within ten minutes and the individual was asked to vacate the area. Needless to say, this incident caused a degree of stress and upset to the three members of staff who experienced it and put all staff members in the Carnforth office that day at undue risk. We have since taken several actions to improve our office security, including installation of a peephole, door chain, panic alarm and more intercom monitors at the Carnforth office; we are also looking into the potential of reinstating CCTV there. Furthermore, we have reviewed our security across our other offices and, whilst physical provision of relevant security is adequate at Whitehaven, Barrow and Liverpool, we have had to change our policy on building access to ensure non-staff members can no longer gain unfettered access to our offices, in particular Whitehaven.

For future reports, I endeavour to be able to bring more information and data on our H&S stats with the improvement of our policies and procedures, including information relating to spot checks undertaken by line managers.

*Mark Taylor, North Western IFCA CEO, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024.*