

Roadshows give reps the tools to benefit CIRAS members



Almost 200 new CIRAS reps have been provided with the knowledge to help bring another line of defence to their organisations.

During the past few months reps from across the country have taken part in CIRAS roadshows at which they were shown exactly how they can fit into the process to further improve health and safety reporting.

Most importantly, we explained how they can get the most from their membership – for themselves and their companies.

Throughout February events took place in Glasgow, Manchester,

Derby, Birmingham, Bristol and London, all led and supported by CIRAS' membership team.

At each event delegates worked together on several exercises designed to help them meet their responsibilities as CIRAS reps, such as advising colleagues on what can be reported and compiling good quality responses.

Kerry Dolan, Membership Manager, said: "The exercises promoted interactivity and the new reps showed no shortage of interest in CIRAS and came up with a lot of really interesting questions and

useful suggestions - many of which prompted significant debate."

"We'll be analysing all the questions and other feedback we received, to inform our future engagement plans and to look at ways in which we can improve the service and support we offer to our reps."

With good feedback from those who attended the meetings, plans are already underway for the next round of events which are likely to take place early in the summer and will provide further advice and guidance for a new batch of reps.

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Welcome from the editor

Welcome to the first CIRAS newsletter of 2016 - and the first in my tenure as editor.

The past 12 months have been extremely busy for CIRAS as we have seen our membership grow to record levels and have made our first forays into road transportation.

This culminated, in January, with the arrival of Transport for London's (TfL) bus operators into the scheme.

We now have more than 1,600 members, across a wide range of sectors, meaning a record number of companies - and subsequently employees - are benefitting from another line of defence.

This issue will, as ever, feature some of the reports we have brought to a recent, satisfactory conclusion and we will seek to bring you more of these throughout the year, highlighting exactly why CIRAS adds such value to the transportation industry.

We will also, through the expert views of Chris Langer, explore the threat posed to safety by external distraction as well as what health and safety really means in a digital age.

And, of course, there is the usual update on CIRAS and what we have been up to since our last edition.

I hope this newsletter continues to provide useful insight and

information which you, our members, feel is of genuine benefit.

I am keen, however, to ensure we continue to represent your requirements and interests and so, if there is anything you would like to see in the pages of the newsletter (within reason), please let me know at editor@ciras.org.uk



Glyn Hellam
HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

Far East shows interest in taking on confidential reporting

We're helping KRNA explore the viability of South Korean scheme

Earlier this month, officials from the Korea Rail Network Authority (KRNA) – South Korea's answer to Network Rail - visited CIRAS to look at how confidential reporting can assist in improving safety for rail workers and passengers.

Chris Langer, Scheme Intelligence Manager at CIRAS, said: "South Korea is in the process of finalising and opening its third high speed railway (HS3) and, in line with the expansion, concern has grown regarding the safety culture of the network.

"Beomjoon Park, the Deputy General Manager of the safety and quality division of KRNA, is in the UK undertaking a Master of Philosophy degree at the University of Birmingham and heard about CIRAS as part of his studies.

"The belief is that the introduction of a confidential reporting system could

help KRNA and South Korea improve its railway safety culture and reduce the number of incidents experienced across the network."

During the visit to CIRAS, Mr Park was introduced to the concept behind confidential reporting and the history of CIRAS, as well as being shown why the 'confidential' element is absolutely vital to the success of any scheme.

Chris added: "Confidentiality is key to the service and scheme we offer. If those reporting issues are to have any confidence in CIRAS they need to be 100 per cent certain that we will never reveal their identity. This removes any concerns they may have about possible recriminations and builds upon our stance as a completely independent organisation."

Speaking about his visit, Mr Park said: "This was a great opportunity to look

at how CIRAS has been successfully operated for a couple of decades.

"CIRAS' reporting and analysis process, and the efforts to ensure confidentiality through the whole process, are really inspiring to us.

"More surprisingly, we are very impressed that CIRAS has a relatively small team which has made a great contribution to the development of mature safety culture in the UK transportation industry."

Mr Park added: "It's obvious that the way CIRAS has designed and implemented the system is simple, but it is effective, efficient and transparent. It would be a massive challenge for us to implement this system in South Korea, but we really hope that this concept and CIRAS' spirit can help to accomplish 'mature safety culture' in the Korean railway industry."

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Improvements agreed at Arpley Yard thanks to report from staff

A reporter raised concerns about the condition of the accommodation at Arpley Yard

THE CONCERN...

A reporter raised concerns about the condition of the staff accommodation at Arpley Yard. The reporter commented that the staff accommodation block was a 26 year old portable building and due to its age it was in a state of disrepair.

The reporter lists the following issues:

- Rotten woodwork including floors and doors;
- Light fittings coming away from the ceilings;
- Vermin presence;
- Defective showers; and
- Air conditioning units that have not been serviced.

The reporter was concerned that the staff accommodation could lead to negative health effects for staff or even a risk of injury.

The reporter added that the portable building was going to be replaced in 2013, but that its replacement was deemed to not be fit for purpose.

The reporter suggested that the portable building needed replacing in its entirety and new, modern facilities provided.

The reporter asked if DB Schenker could:

- Comment on any plans in place to replace or modernise the staff accommodation at Arpley Yard?



© CIRAS

THE RESPONSE...

DB Schenker was aware of this issue and the business accepted that the building and contents required renewal.

Arpley Yard staff have been involved in discussions with management on the timescales for the completion of the works.

In tandem with this, DB Schenker confirmed it will continue to promote the use of internal reporting channels to ensure any future concerns are dealt with as soon as possible.

Details of investigation carried out:

Management carried out an assessment of the current accommodation in June 2015 and agreed that the building and fitments were overdue for upgrade.

The remedial work required was put out to tender, but due to the costs associated with the upgrade of the

existing building, this was deemed to be uneconomical.

A further decision was taken to replace the existing building with a new one.

There was a delay from the supplier of the cabins but a new delivery date of end February 2016 was agreed.

ACTIONS TAKEN

- Staff are to be re-located into a new fit-for-purpose accommodation block.
- All staff have been re-briefed on the importance of the available internal reporting channels to ensure future concerns are identified - and dealt with as soon as practicable.
- The current building is to have cleaning contractors carry out a deep clean.
- Vermin control contractors have been sourced to carry out a survey and action as required.

Safety Culture Under Strain?

London 26th April • Edinburgh 28th April



CONFERENCE 2016

Industry experts lined up to give insight at CIRAS events

Conference set to explore the challenges faced by companies when trying to embed a strong and lasting health and safety culture

Hosted in London and Edinburgh, 2016's conferences will focus on 'Safety culture under strain?' and will explore the difficulties faced by organisations – and individuals – to embed and maintain a strong safety culture.

An array of industry experts has been lined up to share the theory behind, and real life experience of, safety culture at its best – and, potentially, its worst.

Paul Russell, Head of CIRAS, said: "The strength of every organisation and business is its people and keeping them (as well as potential customers) as safe as possible is absolutely key to ongoing success. But do we really understand what it takes to develop the best possible safety culture or what challenges may be faced?"

Paul added: "At CIRAS, we know confidential reporting is at the very heart of modern, mature, safety culture. Giving employees an avenue to report health, safety and

wellbeing concerns, without fear of reprisal or discrimination, clearly demonstrates a willingness to take such concerns seriously.

So what are the factors – cultural or environmental – which might stop any company utilising confidential reporting? And why would employees perhaps feel hesitant to use such a system – even when confidentiality is assured?"

The CIRAS conferences will explore these, and many other factors, providing delegates with a clear path to embedding a strong safety culture in the face of significant challenges.

The events take place on 26 (London) and 28 (Edinburgh) April, and are open to all CIRAS reps – though places are limited.

Confirmed to appear at the CIRAS conferences are:

- Mark Groombridge, Head of Health and Safety, and Natalie

Curtis, Health and Safety Specialist, Balfour Beatty Rail

- Russell Keir, HM Inspector of Railways, Office of Rail and Road
- Chris Langer, Scheme Intelligence Manager at CIRAS
- Rob Miles, Technical Director, Hu-Tech Risk Management
- David Nicholls, HSQE Director, Keolis Amey Docklands
- Pam Warren, survivor of Ladbroke Grove rail crash
- Stephen Watson, Principal Risk Management Practice, Arthur D Little
- Tony Wilson, Managing Director, Abellio London and Surrey
- Louis de Wolff, Head of Safety Management, CalMac Ferries Ltd
- Forum Interactive

To book your place at either of the conferences please visit www.ciras.org.uk

TRAIN EQUIPMENT

Updated briefings to take place after LU train doors fail to shut

Relevant staff will receive reminder about correct procedures following incident on Bakerloo line at Willesden Junction

THE CONCERN...

A reporter raised concerns that during incidents on the London Underground (LU) Bakerloo line, in which train doors become stuck open on the MK2 stock, the correct procedures were not being followed.

When doors have become jammed open, trains have been taken out of service with instructions given to move them with the doors still open.

The reporter stated, if this occurs, a member of staff should be positioned at every open door whilst the train is leaving the station to prevent passengers from trying to board. The reporter said this had not been happening, creating the possibility of passengers boarding the train and it moving off with the doors open.

The reporter believed staff had not been made aware of the procedures which should be followed if this type of incident occurs again. They also state a Train Operator, when instructed to move a train with the doors open, should be issued with an official waiver. This results in a risk assessment of the situation being carried out, which the reporter felt was not happening.

The reporter asked if LU could:

- Re-brief staff on the procedures to follow when this type of incident occurs?
- Implement the official waiver process if there is a divergence from the rules?



© mattbuck

THE RESPONSE...

Whilst a Train Operator was performing platform-train interface duties at Willesden Junction the doors failed to close and remained in the open position (number one side).

Station staff were called to assist with the dispatch of the train, which then travelled two stops to Queen's Park where it was worked into the sidings for attention.

Prior to this decision, a dynamic risk assessment was completed by the Service Manager on duty. It was agreed by the LU Senior Operating Officer (SOO) that, given the next two station stops were on the opposite side of the train, (number two side) there would be no risk to the platform-train interface, and potential injury to customers, therefore the train was given authority to proceed.

There has only been one incident where this situation has occurred and lessons have been learnt as a result.

Although there was never any risk to people, it is recognised that, on this occasion, the correct processes in terms of a formal waiver were not followed

ACTIONS TAKEN

- All service control Service Managers to be re-briefed on the correct procedure for obtaining a formal waiver from the SOO ensuring that a full dynamic risk assessment is carried out and any risk is reduced to as low as reasonable practicable with results and rationale recorded.
- London Underground will issue a reminder briefing note to all Train Operators advising them on the correct process to follow when dealing with door irregularities.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Toilet waste cleared from tracks at Bradford on Avon junction

A reporter raised concerns about toilet waste being flushed on to the tracks at the junction in Bradford on Avon



© Bashereyre

THE CONCERN...

Due to Box Tunnel (near Bradford on Avon) being closed for engineering works, trains were being diverted via the nearby junction.

According to the reporter, this led to the trains sitting at the junction for several minutes while they waited to reverse.

In this time the toilets were being flushed, resulting in waste being expelled on to the track.

The reporter was concerned about the level of waste sitting in the four foot in this area and the potential health hazard it could present to track workers.

The reporter asked if Network Rail could:

- Inspect the junction at Bradford on Avon?
- Carry out any necessary cleaning required?

THE RESPONSE...

Network Rail conducted initial exploratory work and located the problematic area. A contractor attended the site on behalf of Network Rail and cleared the site of all effluent present on 19 August 2015.

The blockade concluded on 31 August and, after this date, trains

were no longer held at the location, resolving this issue.

Following the conclusion of the blockade, the area was inspected and no effluent was found.

Any further reports of effluent on track can be reported via Close Call which will rapidly arrange for the issue to be resolved.

ACTIONS TAKEN

- A contractor cleared the site of all effluent present on 19 August 2015.
- The area was re-inspected at the end of August and no effluent was found.

STATION ENVIRONMENT

New contractor appointed after decorating concerns raised

A reporter raised concerns about unsafe practices being displayed by decorating contractors at Cardiff Central station

THE CONCERN...

The reporter stated that on numerous occasions over a period of weeks, they witnessed a number of unsafe practices being carried out by decorating contractors at the station.

These ranged from stairways being closed during peak hours, resulting in crowding, to barriers being erected within one metre of the platform edge resulting in passengers having to walk on the coping stones.

The reporter feared that a lack of site management at the station during these works could have resulted in a member of staff or a passenger being injured.

The reporter asked if Arriva Trains Wales could:

- Review the works being undertaken at the station to make sure they were carried out in accordance with safe working practices?
- Review the site management for the works?
- Consider carrying out some work at night whilst the station is closed to passengers and train movements?

THE RESPONSE...

Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) management spoke to the contractor regarding the alleged unsafe practices, and ATW agreed that, on a few occasions, the contractor did not act in a manner that was expected of them. Stairways were closed with the agreement of local management, but timings of the closures were



© Chris McKenna

reviewed and amendments made. It should be noted that other staircases were available during these times.

Barrier positioning was inappropriate and deemed unsafe. ATW took immediate action and made the areas safe for passenger flow when the issue was brought to its attention.

The remaining works were carried out throughout the night by a different contractor and ATW ensured a qualified Controller of Site Safety (COSS) monitored all aspects of health and safety at all times.

Cardiff Central Station Duty Managers undertake regular patrols of Cardiff Central station as part of their 'control of contractor' duties and brief contractors attending sites on their responsibilities for safe working practices. Therefore, had this activity been observed during one of the patrols, it would have been identified and resolved immediately.

It is unfortunate, on this occasion, that the contractor did not follow these instructions. The steps taken by the ATW property team in removing

this contractor from working on site and amending the working practices, as well as appointing an additional COSS, is felt to be appropriate in order to remove this risk going forward.

It is the view of ATW that should anyone again witness unsafe actions at one of our locations, it would be appreciated that staff on site be immediately notified, in addition to any further reporting activities felt appropriate, in order for them to remove the risk in the safest possible time scale.

ACTIONS TAKEN

- ATW spoke to the contractor - on a few occasions the contractor did not act in a manner that was expected of them.
- A new contractor has been appointed.
- Barrier positioning has now been approved.
- A qualified Controller of Site Safety (COSS) now monitors health and safety at all times.

STEVE HINDS

What does CIRAS really mean to TPS Ltd?



Joining the confidential reporting scheme makes good business sense

Track and Protection Services (TPS) Limited is part of the Real Essential Group (Re-Group) of companies. For six years, TPS has engaged in the supply of IRSE licensed technical labour personnel for the full range of signalling, communication, installation, test and commissioning, and maintenance projects both in the UK and abroad.

Steve Hinds, Managing Director of TPS, shares his views about the requirement to join CIRAS.

What was your initial reaction upon signing up to the confidential reporting scheme?

Initial reactions were mixed given the company is primarily a labour supplier and already meets industry and client organisations' safety standards. However, on learning more about what

membership of CIRAS entails, it soon became clear that becoming a member of CIRAS made good business sense.

Did the CIRAS induction meeting clarify any concerns you have?

The professional support offered by CIRAS has been invaluable and by attending the induction our management consultant, Marlene Oates-Hinds, found the meeting clarified some points regarding the need to comprehensively address concerns across the industry – including the potential for safety related incidents.

The introduction of a one-stop shop for the confidential reporting of genuine safety concerns means there is a compilation of useful intelligence aimed at influencing ongoing improvements within the industry.

What did you learn from the meeting?

Marlene attended the induction meeting on behalf of Track and Protection Services Ltd and found it helpful in a number of ways.

For example, meeting other representatives from similar organisations, exchanging ideas about reporting challenges and how to overcome them, problem solving by working through a series of thought provoking case studies which gave attendees opportunities to discuss how different scenarios impacted on the need to report to CIRAS, and/or manage issues internally as appropriate.

What are the advantages for you in having a confidential reporting channel?

Having the ongoing support of CIRAS representatives can be of great benefit to SME

businesses. TPS appreciates that a confidential reporting channel is in place to ensure health and safety standards are maintained.

For continuous improvements to be made, it is imperative that anyone reporting a safety concern can do so without the fear of reprisals and have confidence that reported matters will be addressed in a fair and sensitive manner.

The intelligence provided by reporting concerns, investigating incidents and reporting the findings back to the industry, forms the basis for developing a body of knowledge relating to service improvements. This will be vital in instilling confidence in the reporting system to ensure issues which need to be reported are made and duly communicated as required.

How are you embedding CIRAS in your organisation?

TPS promotes a culture of transparency and meets regularly with its sub-contractors and client

organisations. A regular agenda item is compliance with industry standards. The role of CIRAS is highlighted and sub-contractors are encouraged to make use of the confidential reporting system as appropriate.

In addition, training courses, for example track safety, which all operational trackside personnel are mandated to attend, includes dissemination of information regarding the role of CIRAS and their responsibilities in ensuring they take the necessary steps to report issues internally as well as via CIRAS' confidential reporting system, if this is the route they feel more comfortable in pursuing.

The CIRAS newsletter is distributed to all sub-contractors, directors and staff of the organisation. Regular updates are given face-to-face, with opportunities to give feedback on the content of the newsletter or any associated subject.

TPS is a fully operational member of the Sentinel scheme. The CIRAS logo is included on the

accreditation page of the Re-Group's website and documents relating to industry-wide health and safety compliance include CIRAS. There is a dedicated HSQE/CIRAS representative, Kay Richmond, who is also a member of the TPS Board.

Kay is available to clarify any concerns, keep the board abreast with current safety issues and ensure TPS' contractors, staff and management comply with client and industry wide safety standards, including CIRAS.

What has been the reaction so far?

TPS Senior Management and sub-contractors have welcomed CIRAS.

TPS is committed to playing its part in the continuous improvement of safety within the industry. Directors, contractors and staff will participate in discussions about CIRAS and its impact on the rail industry with a view to ensuring everyone associated with the company co-operates with its requirements.

Meet our membership team

Our members are set to benefit from further improved relationships thanks to a new team established by CIRAS during the past few months.

Our Membership Manager Kerry Dolan has been joined by Katie Healy and Susan Gray, both Stakeholder Managers whose sole responsibility is ensuring you, our members, benefit from a designated contact and a well developed corporate relationship.

Katie joined the team in October and covers the central belt of England and Wales whilst Susan, who began with us in January, looks after our members in Scotland and the north of England. Kerry said: "Katie and Susan are key to us establishing much more



Katie Healy, Kerry Dolan and Susan Gray

personalised relationships with our members at a local level.

"Already, in the space of a few short months, they have set up meetings throughout February and March to meet with members on a one to one basis to discuss CIRAS, raise awareness and look to support our reps in promoting the scheme and realising the benefits of CIRAS membership."

Kerry added: "When I started at CIRAS in the middle of 2015 I had three key objectives; to gain a clear understanding of members and the services we offered to them, to assess whether these services met members' requirements and to build a team to further support those members.

"Now we have a much greater understanding of our members – who cover a diverse range of sectors – and are further developing the services and products we offer. But there is more work to be done and we will, during the coming months, be looking to gauge our members' opinions on how CIRAS can further develop to offer even greater benefits."

STATION & PLATFORM

Improvements made to tram platform at East Croydon

A reporter has expressed concern about the risk created by the structural changes that have taken place to the layout on platform one at East Croydon tram stop



© Peter Trimming

THE CONCERN...

The reporter stated that recent changes at the tram stop include bollards erected at the front of the platform to prevent armoured vehicles from accessing the front of East Croydon train station.

However, the reporter commented that these bollards narrowed the width of the platform considerably.

Also, according to the reporter, steps have been put in at the west end and in the centre of the platform at the entrance into the

train station. The steps have made it difficult for both passengers with wheelchairs and passengers travelling with pushchairs to access and exit the tram platform.

The only way for these passengers to exit the platform is for them to alight the tram and turn right. The exit at the east end of the platform is very narrow due to a sign post that has been erected, which only leaves about three to four feet between the bollards and the edge of the platform.

The reporter commented that at peak times the platform can be

extremely busy, and during these periods it is felt passengers are at risk of being struck by a tram if they are overhanging the platform due to the limited space.

There was also a perceived risk that passengers with wheelchairs and those travelling with pushchairs could trip and fall down the steps whilst trying to enter or exit the platform.

Another concern resulting from the changes to the layout of the platform, according to the reporter, was that passengers were alighting from trams on the other platform

and instead of using the authorised crossing, they were running across the tracks to enter the train station in order to save time.

The reporter asked if London Trams could:

- Consider re-instating the platform to the original size?
- Install a ramp for passengers with wheelchairs and passengers travelling with pushchairs at the west end of the platform?
- Convert part of the steps in the centre of the platform into a ramp for passengers?
- Confirm if a risk assessment had been done to minimise the risk created by passengers running across the track to enter the train station in the centre of platform one?

THE RESPONSE...

The London Borough of Croydon (LBC) carried out the infrastructure changes at East Croydon as part of its public realm improvement programme.

The works included the introduction of concrete bollards. These are hostile vehicle mitigation measures to protect the entrance to East Croydon station. By their very nature they need to be of substantial construction.

The reinforced concrete structure installation has not been completed and, at the time of the report, LBC's contractors had installed Heras fencing around it.

The width of the platform has decreased slightly due to the installation of the reinforced concrete structures, but this has been offset by the open central area of the platform which provides a direct entrance into and out of the station.

Prior to the infrastructure changes LBC had road safety audits (stage one and two) undertaken by an independent organisation. The

purpose of these audits was to identify possible risks in the design. Neither of the audits identified any safety issues with the design at East Croydon tram stop.

London Trams has commissioned an independent stage three road safety audit. This will highlight any safety issues with the current build. London Trams have sent the report to LBC and are now waiting for a response.

Consideration is being given to partially blocking off the central section of the new stairs to reduce the likelihood of people running straight across the tram platforms/tracks.

Note: London Trams is working with LBC to resolve outstanding issues but as yet LBC have not provided London Trams with an expected completion date for the works at East Croydon.

ACTIONS TAKEN

- London Trams have asked LBC to remove the Heras fencing that surrounded the concrete structures. This provides some additional space on the platforms and improves the sight lines for pedestrians and Tram Drivers.
- London Trams has removed the redundant pole at the east end of the platform to help ease passenger flows and to free up some platform space.
- The speed limit for approaching trams into the platform at East Croydon tram stop has been reduced.
- London Trams has asked LBC to move the steps back at the east end of the platform to provide a bit more space.



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CHRIS LANGER

Time for health and safety to embrace the emerging digital age

In this article our Scheme Intelligence Manager argues that, when it comes to health and safety, organisations could be utilising digital technology to much greater effect, and at minimal cost too



The digital health and safety culture mind-set

Few companies have been able to fully exploit widely available consumer technology for better workplace health and safety. Better health, education and self-improvement were themes even at the time of the industrial revolution. What is needed, in addition to fundamentally sound health and safety policy, is a proactive digital health and safety culture mind-set. Better application of technology to help effect behavioural change can make a substantial difference.

The digital health and safety culture mind-set:

- respects the importance of sleep and rest
- proactively uses existing consumer technology to full effect in the workplace

- uses the 'quantified self' as an effective tool to create health benefits
- subtly shapes employee's behaviour by setting up new incentives
- promotes and shares the digital reporting of key health metrics amongst employees
- improves health outcomes for employees cost effectively

Sleep your way to better performance

The amount and quality of sleep we get is vitally important. It underpins our mood, and has a profound effect on our work performance. A key finding in a major study on elite performers in the sports, arts and sciences by Ericsson (1993) found that the best performers slept for eight hours 36 minutes on average. Compare that to the figure from the aptly named Sleep Council, which

says that the average Briton gets around six and a half hours sleep a night.

In a sleep-deprived nation, our chances of Olympic-like performance in a variety of fields are being curtailed, often to the detriment of safety. Losing 90 minutes of sleep can reduce alertness by one-third. Consider the potential consequences for doctors, pilots, drivers and construction workers, who all manage the safety and lives of others on a daily basis.

Provided reasonable working hours and rest periods in which, sleep is an area we can gain some control. It is also a very measurable feature of our lives - sleep analytics are available through popular smartphone apps for just this purpose.

The age of the 'quantified' self

Employers could help take the fight to workplace inactivity, encouraging more of the desired behaviours at work. All our daily activities in and around the office make a difference, but are often overlooked because we don't mentally account for them. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), inactivity is the fourth biggest killer of adults. The country spends nearly £47 billion a year on obesity, more than on armed violence, war and terrorism, according to a report by McKinsey and Company (2014).

In fact, people who sit the longest may double their risk of diabetes or heart disease, when compared to those who sit the least. For those that sit for prolonged periods as an integral part of their jobs, such as drivers, it can be doubly difficult to achieve a satisfactory level of fitness.

Perhaps no-one quite anticipated how much our lives could be reduced to a set of numbers by technology. Smartphones and activity trackers can measure all manner of things: steps taken, floors climbed, kilometres walked, time spent sitting down, heart rate and calories burned to name a few of the most common ones. You'd be forgiven for thinking the quantified self is the whole self, and nothing but the self. It's not, of course, but the ability to track our every move enables effective goal-setting and progress tracking.

Electronic notifications and alerts can sometimes be a rude interruption in our working lives. However, when we are discreetly reminded to stretch our legs after a period of staring at our screens, the technology has our best interests at heart. We can take a quick break and return to work feeling refreshed. Productivity goes up, as does the generation of creative ideas.

Activity trackers linking to smartphone apps are available



© Pixabay

for as little as £15, with no subscription required. Employers are often happy to subsidise gym memberships, but could there be a more effective, lower cost alternative?

Non-attendance at the gym, after the initial enthusiasm wears off, often becomes a source of guilt. We might be better off starting our exercise routines from the office: climbing the stairs, taking a brisk walk at lunchtime in a 'green gym', and walking to the station instead of taking the bus. It can be more motivational, too, to think in terms of micro-activities rather than workouts.

Every micro-activity makes a contribution and they all add up to a real health outcome. Largely unacknowledged micro-activities such as cleaning your desk, taking a trip to the printer, or a walk to see a colleague, quickly add up to a significant calorie burning gain.

Corporate targets for calories?

It is extremely rare for there to be corporate targets for calories burned in the course of a working day. But work is often where a genuinely competitive team spirit thrives. Calorie burning comparisons across individuals, teams and departments could usher in a healthier workplace, and would likely have a positive, knock-on effect on business performance too.

The technology is there, the data is there, but it is not being leveraged, or reported on, for improved employee health. Blue collar workers, who are typically more active than office workers, might enjoy their currently under-recognised status as high calorie burners. This thinking is backed up by the science too.

In a fascinating study by researchers at Harvard University (2007), a group of housekeepers were informed of how many calories they were burning during the day over a period of four weeks. By simply telling them the value of their daily activity, they were actually able to lower their body fat, blood pressure and waist-to-hip ratio (as compared to a control group who were not given any information at all). As unbelievable as it might seem, this placebo-style effect actually creates measurable, real-world health gains.

Cultural change

There is a compelling case for the more effective implementation of digital technology, alongside behavioural workplace tweaks, to effect cultural change. It is not hyperbole to suggest the health of the nation depends on it. The obesity crisis, and the ongoing multi-billion pound cost to the NHS, could be tackled, at least in part, by instilling the digital health and culture mind-set. We will all get healthier in the right environment, one calorie at a time.

LATEST REPORTS

Some of the reports recently received by CIRAS which are under review

Fatigue and well-being issue:

Rosters on the low frequency bus routes are creating fatigue amongst staff. Staff could be asked to alternate between working a week of early shifts and a week of late shifts up to four times in a four week period. Constantly alternating between early and late shifts and vice versa does not allow staff to get adequate rest, as it becomes difficult to regulate their internal body clocks.

When changing the shift pattern, it is noted that fatigue can often be greatest in the first couple of days of a new shift, as the sleeping pattern of staff has not adjusted yet. It has been reported that staff often feel fatigued and that some are using caffeine tablets to counteract the

effects of feeling tired. It is felt that the shift patterns are also causing health and well-being issues and that the use of anti-depressants amongst staff may be more prevalent than the company is aware of.

Personal Protective Equipment:

Bus drivers are not being provided with adequate safety footwear. It is noted that there are often spillages on the surface of the garage floor, such as antifreeze coolant, screenwash or fuel that may have leaked from vehicles. As a result it is felt bus drivers should be provided with adequate safety footwear including steel toe caps and oil-resistant soles to prevent any slips, trips or falls in the work environment.

In cab equipment:

Tram drivers are becoming accustomed to overriding incorrect wrong door alarms at two tram stops in Edinburgh. The majority of trams that stop at Haymarket tram stop and West End tram stop are receiving wrong door alarms in the driver's cab, when the correct side doors have opened. As the wrong door alarm is falsely being sounded, drivers are overriding the alarm by pressing the door release button.

As this occurs on a frequent basis, it could lead to drivers automatically overriding the alarm when it has correctly sounded. If the wrong doors are opened in error and the alarm is overridden by mistake, it could lead to passengers alighting the trams into oncoming traffic or falling and injuring themselves.

INDUSTRY EVENT

CIRAS attends German event to explain confidential reporting

Industry conference gives opportunity to show benefits of scheme

Chris Langer, our Scheme Intelligence Manager, recently attended the German Human Rail Factors Workshop, in Braunschweig, to present a paper on the UK's experience of confidential reporting and its benefits.

The conference, hosted by the Technical University of Braunschweig and the German Aerospace Centre, was mostly attended by German delegates, but there were also human factors specialists from Portugal and the UK. Although the event focused on rail, the collective knowledge of delegates means the resultant learning can easily be transferred to other sectors such as marine, aviation and road transport.

A lecture by Professor Mark Vollrath 'Human Factors in Aviation, Cars and Rail – different domains, similar problems' reminded the



audience that it is important to be mindful of the specific context in applying human factors knowledge appropriately in a given transport sector.

A pilot, for example, faces a much more automated environment than the driver of a car, at least until the self-driving Google Car becomes a reality.

That said, there are many factors which cross domains. Examples include the effects of fatigue, the

use of non-technical skills, the application of new technology, and the automation of tasks.

The CIRAS presentation was well received - though not without challenges. Whilst fearing that it might be difficult to implement confidential reporting in Germany, delegates openly acknowledged its value and contribution to health and safety in the UK. There were also lots of questions, primarily about how the scheme operates, including how to get started in the first place.

The barriers to setting up and implementing such a scheme probably seem formidable to those contemplating it for the first time. But we have started a dialogue with the German Aerospace Centre and the Technical University of Braunschweig, and will be building on that relationship in the future.

Do you have any **concerns** about safety?

Have you tried internal reporting channels, or don't feel that you can?

If so, please provide your contact details in the space below. Any information you provide will be treated as confidential.

We ask you to provide your name and contact details so that a CIRAS Reporting Analyst can get in touch to discuss your report. Once your report is processed, your report form will be destroyed.

CIRAS will never reveal your personal information to anyone!

Name:

Home phone no:

Mobile phone no:

Convenient time to call:

Job title:

Company:

Home address:

Optional

If you would like to briefly describe your concern, please do so in the space provided below:

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There are other ways of contacting us if you prefer. You can call us, text us, or fill out a form online. All our details are at the bottom of the page.

What happens next?

- A member of the CIRAS team will get in touch and discuss your health and safety concerns.
- A written report will be prepared on your behalf.
- We will make sure the report does not contain ANY information that can identify YOU.
- We then send the report to the relevant company for a response.
- Once we receive the company response we will then provide you with a copy.

Fill out the form, cut along the dotted line, moisten the gum seal and post. We'll do the rest.



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