



ORR occupational health programme update

October 2016

Introduction

This quarterly brief updates you on progress with some of the work under [ORR's Occupational Health programme 2014-19](#), to inform discussions on health with ORR inspectors. We have identified key messages for rail duty holders and would welcome [feedback](#).

This issue focuses on:

- Call for action on mental health
- Have your say: HSE review of the law on hazardous substances
- Fitness for Work
- Manual Handling – how do you assess tasks that involve pushing or pulling?

1. Call for action on mental health

Wednesday 2 November 2016 is [National Stress Awareness Day](#), the ideal time for rail companies to make a firm commitment to do something new to tackle mental health, which now affects one in four of us.

ISLG, the safety forum for principal contractors, recently carried out a detailed survey on work related pressure across all levels of the workforce within infrastructure owners, contractors, and suppliers. Analysis of the responses from almost 1200 participants suggests that work related pressure is widespread; is often accepted as part of the job; and impacts the safety and quality of the work, as well as the physical and mental wellbeing of workers. The [full report](#) and a supporting [ISLG presentation](#) to help to

communicate key findings are on RSSB's web site. ISLG has identified a need for change and suggests action in key areas, including reducing the actual and the perceived amounts of work related pressure, and mitigating the impact on the individual. ORR fully supports this work and would encourage rail infrastructure contractors and suppliers to use the report findings to develop action plans to reduce the sources of work pressure (including behaviours and relationships), and improve awareness and coping strategies.

Tackling the stigma associated with mental health remains a real challenge in male dominated industries such as ours. A new scheme for the construction industry, '[Mates in Mind](#)', due to be launched by the influential [Health in Construction Leadership Group](#) next year, has the potential to transform how mental ill health is perceived and managed by providing for peer-to-peer support among construction workers. 'Mates in Mind' is based on the highly successful '[Mates in Construction](#)' suicide prevention programme started in Australia in 2008, and is expected to be rolled out as a voluntary, accredited mental health training scheme for contractors and sub-contractors through the construction supply chain. Although full details are not expected until early 2017, it is likely to include awareness training for construction workers to spot signs of mental distress, and training for mental health first aiders who can offer support to their peers. Some rail employers are already adopting elements of this approach and rail contractors, for example, may want to consider the benefits of the proposed scheme. TfL, for example, shared their experience of using peer support for mental health and mental health first aiders at the [2016 National Mental Health Transport Summit](#).

The [National Mental Health Transport Summit](#) earlier this year called on all transport sectors to do more to make it easier for passengers with mental health problems to access transport networks. Building mental health awareness into your company and improving accessibility for passengers with mental health conditions should help to improve the customer experience, with the potential to enhance your customer base and revenue. Several rail companies are already doing good work in this area and we would encourage more rail operators to explore ways of making their services more accessible for those with mental health problems. [BlueAssist](#), a UK registered charity, is one example of an innovative national scheme which seeks to support the public who may have a hidden disability to get help, including rail passengers using trains and stations. Passengers who might have difficulty communicating can use the free BlueAssist cards or phone App to ask for help with dignity, and rail operators can get help to train their staff to offer positive and helpful support. ORR encourages wider participation in BlueAssist and similar local initiatives as good practice for train and station operators.

Key messages:

- Can you use the recent [ISLG survey report](#) to better understand the extent, sources, and impact of work related pressure within your business? The [ISLG supporting presentation](#) may help you to raise awareness and build understanding of work pressure among your workforce, including senior and delivery managers. Do you have an action plan to manage the risks from work related pressure and minimise its impact on worker health and operational safety? You can [contact ISLG](#) for more information or to offer support to this work.
- Are you doing enough to train your workers and their line managers to recognise signs of stress, anxiety, and depression, and to seek help? We encourage rail infrastructure managers and their contractors to seek early information on the 'Mates in Mind' scheme and consider pledging support as good practice in promoting good mental health.
- The IOSH Railway Group and CIRAS are holding a webinar on 19 October aimed at reducing the stigma associated with mental health in the transport industry. You will need to [register online](#) to book a free place.
- How can train operators do more to make travelling by train easier for those many passengers with mental health or other hidden disabilities? Can you share good practice in this area with [ORR](#) and ATOC?
- [BlueAssist](#) is keen to form partnerships with more train operating companies. Northern Rail, TransPennine Express and Hull Trains already use the Blue Assist Scheme and are training their staff to recognise and offer support to passengers who may ask for help using the distinctive Blue Assist card or App. Can you join them, or adopt a similar local scheme?

2. Have your say: HSE review of the law on hazardous substances

HSE is currently reviewing the regulations on the control of hazardous substances in the workplace, with the aim of making them more simple and straightforward without reducing the level of protection. The review covers the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH), the Control of Lead at Work Regulations (CLAW) and the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR). COSHH is particularly important for our industry and ORR is contributing to this review.

HSE is seeking information from all industries on their experience with complying with these regulations. ORR encourages rail companies and trade unions to take this chance to inform any regulatory changes by sharing your views with HSE. We will alert the industry to any subsequent consultations via our [occupational health web pages](#), future editions of this update, and also via RSSB.

Key messages:

- **If you work with hazardous substances or advise people who do, HSE would like to hear about your experiences. You can [email the HSE review team](#) directly with your views in advance of the more formal consultation process.**

3. Fitness for Work

ORR is currently consulting with the industry on proposed 'Fitness for Work' guidance. This document summarises the legal aspects of fitness for work and outlines key informative sources. It touches on some of the issues arising from recent incidents in rail and other sectors. If you would like a copy or to participate in the consultation exercise, please [contact us](#) . Consultation closes on the 1st November 2016.

One target group for this guidance are the Recognised Doctors who have successfully been reviewed by ORR and appear on the published list of doctors for doing medical assessments of train drivers, a requirement of the [Train Driver Licence and Certificate Regulations, 2010](#). We are currently doing an on-line audit of the Recognised Doctors that enquires about how train driver medical assessments are conducted and current governance arrangements. A working group drawn from the industry's [Health & Wellbeing Professions Committee](#) will be reviewing the results during November.

Key messages:

- **Have you contributed your views on our draft 'Fitness for Work' guidance? If you would like to, please [contact us](#) as soon as possible and before the 1 November.**

4. Manual Handling – how do you assess tasks that involve pushing or pulling?

There are numerous tasks within the rail industry that may require an employee to pull or push something, such as assisting wheelchair users on and off trains (RSSB's ['Working Together - Wheelchair Good Practice Guide'](#) provides helpful guidance); use of catering trollies on trains; signal lever pulls; and using trollies on track for moving maintenance equipment. But how do you risk assess these activities?

HSE have developed a new tool called RAPP – the [Risk Assessment of Pushing and Pulling tool](#). This tool is part of a suite of tools designed to assist employers with the assessment of manual handling tasks carried out by their employees that could lead to Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs). It is designed to be used in conjunction with the [manual handling assessment charts](#) (known as the MAC tool).

Equipment such as trollies are often seen as a solution to many manual handling problems. However, they can create their own problems when surfaces are uneven, sloped or obstructed. The RAPP tool will help you assess key risks in these situations and help you evaluate the effectiveness of any risk-reduction measures.

Key messages:

- **What tasks do your employees carry out that may involve pushing and pulling? How do you currently assess the risk from the pushing and pulling of loads? Are you familiar with the new [RAPP tool](#) to help you do this?**
- **Do you subscribe to HSE's [MSD eBulletin](#)?**



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