

No. 298/2018

18 May 2018

Our Ref: EX9/18

**National Hazards Conference 2018 - Friday 27<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2018, at Keele University, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire: Safety Reps @40: Vital to the Future of Safe and Healthy Work:**

**To: All CWU Branches  
All CWU Regional H&S Forums  
All CWU Safety Reps**

Dear Colleagues,

The 29th National Hazards Conference takes place at Keele University, from Friday 27th to Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2018 and the CWU is once again pleased to be supporting and sponsoring this unique and popular event for Trade Union Safety Representatives.

Hazards Conference is the UK's biggest and best educational and organising event for trade union safety reps and activists. It consists of a mixture of plenary sessions, meetings and a comprehensive workshop programme. It gives delegates the opportunity to exchange experience and information with, and learn from, safety reps and activists from other unions, sectors and jobs across the UK.

2017 was a significant year for our workplace health and safety. The Grenfell Tower fire was a shocking example of the consequences of the government's 'bonfire of health and safety regulations'. It was an 'enough is enough' moment! After decades of undermining the HSE and LA enforcement bodies through savage cuts in funding and arbitrary policy changes, critical fire, building, product, environmental and workplace safety laws have been unjustifiably and insanely changed and trade unions have been undermined through draconian legislative changes with an aim to shackle their collective and organisational effectiveness. The Government is attempting to silence critics and exclude many experts and interested parties from the public inquiry into Grenfell turning it into a whitewash.

But 2017 was not all bad news. This was also the year we started our celebrations of 40 years of SRSC regulation. One of the most important pieces of health and safety legislation in the UK. The SRSC give safety reps their statutory rights to inspect, consult their members, challenge their employers and improve health, safety and welfare in their workplaces. We have also seen a number of prominent safety based disputes: the courageous McDonald strikers took industrial action to increase their low pay and improve their health and safety at work, and the determination of the railway workers fighting to keep our guards on the trains.

Technological changes have also featured heavily in the news throughout the year as employers seek to squeeze more and more profit out of their organisations. Automation

shouldn't be a tool to beat or exclude workers, it should be an opportunity to support and improve our society, to cut and improve our working hours, to provide a better life work balance with enough income to support our additional leisure time. It should be an opportunity to improve our health and life expectancy. Automation should be about sharing the opportunities for the community and not grabbing the surpluses for the greedy few. It should aim to improve the health, safety and welfare of all workers.

Hazards 2018 will be addressing some of the most important issues facing workers, it will provide practical skills, improved knowledge and give delegates a new confidence to support their roles in the workplace.

The booking form is up on the Hazards Campaign website now:

<http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/blog/hazards-conference-2018-booking-form>

Also on the Hazards Campaign website <http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/> sign up for updates on the right hand side of the page.

### **Hazards 2018 Workshops, Seminars & Meetings:**

The opening plenary session with keynote speakers is on Friday evening and the closing plenary is on Sunday morning. There is no Saturday plenary. Saturday is a day for workshops, seminars and meetings ending with campaign sessions.

One of the Campaign Sessions this Year will be organised and presented by CWU Health and Safety Reps on 'Driving for a Living'. This will be supported by the CWU Health, Safety & Environment Department and additionally there will be a CWU Stall in the Hazards Conference Exhibition Area highlighting safety issues around mental health, dangerous dogs, staying safe in the sun etc. Safety regions are invited to forward any spare literature and merchandise they may have to stock the stall throughout the weekend. Please contact Andrew Hickerman ([andrew.s.hickerman@royalmail.com](mailto:andrew.s.hickerman@royalmail.com)) or Tony Pedel ([pedelsafety17@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:pedelsafety17@hotmail.co.uk)) who will advise on delivery details.

The final plenary on Sunday will pull it all together and send safety reps off with more tools in the kit. This year the workshops, seminars and meetings are themed to provide a concentrated examination of all the key issues. Read the form carefully before you fill it in. Contact the organisers if you need help or further information.

There are three Themes to choose from with 6 workshops in each Theme. Choose 2 workshops and one reserve. Also choose one Meeting. Two weeks before Hazards conference begins, the organisers will send delegates a list of Campaign Sessions to select from with final joining instructions, and delegates can then sign up for the Campaign Sessions at registration. Delegates will be posted the programme and more details to supplement the brief outline on the attached registration form and at: <http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk>

### **Below are the outline details of the Conference keynote meetings and workshop sessions:-**

#### **Hazards Conference Keynote Meetings:**

**Choose ONE Meeting and enter No. 1, 2 or 3 in the box on Registration form**

**Meeting 1: From menstruation to menopause! Why do we need a gender sensitive approach to occupational safety and health?**

Women face similar health, safety and welfare issues as men, and also other hazards due to sex/gender role differences. We will explore the risk to women's health and safety at work from menstruation to menopause and beyond caused by inadequate gender neutral risk assessments and policies and share good practice, information and action by women safety reps. We will examine the key issues, inadequate protection from chemicals and shift work, poor job design, pregnancy and maternity discrimination, sexual harassment and how we can organise against them, and recruit more women safety reps!

## **Meeting 2: How do we challenge the consequences of privatisation, commercialisation and marketisation alongside the deregulation agenda and the selective enforcement of health and safety laws?**

Privatisation, outsourcing, zero hours contracts, agency workers, many people do not know who they are working for or what contractual rights they have and this is prevalent across all different sectors, professions and jobs. Alongside this a lack of enforcement from HSE, LA's and other enforcing bodies because of cuts to these services. We need to develop better strategies to keep us all safe at work.

## **Meeting 3: Why is transparency in the supply chain necessary in advancing the health, safety and welfare of workers both nationally and internationally?**

Slavery was outlawed many years ago, but is still an endemic problem in many industries and parts of the world. Here in the UK there have been cases of workers with passports confiscated working and living in slum conditions. There have also been many exposés in the agriculture and clothes industry, where workers are being employed in the most horrendous conditions and their health and safety totally disregarded. This meeting will explore what we can do in the UK to challenge these inhumane practices and advance health and safety for all workers.

## **Meeting 4: Is mental ill health a consequence of the intensification of working practices and bad management in our workplaces and what should we do about it?**

Mental health has become a talking point in the UK. In workplaces we have mental health first aiders, well-being sessions and a growth of individual treatments and solutions for workers unable to cope with the pressures they face. A whole industry has built up around mental ill health with organisations making money through training, publications, treatments etc. This meeting will explore the causes of mental illness at work and the difference between collective and individual solutions in making us better.

## **Hazards Conference Workshops (Select two plus one reserve from your chosen theme)**

### **Theme 1 Workplace organisation**

#### **01 Reps' functions and employers' duties**

What are health and safety reps functions? How do we ensure safety reps are able to carry them out and be more effective?

#### **02 Safety committees: what do we need?**

How do we ensure safety committees work effectively and proactively? How do we ensure that health and safety issues are not marginalised and dealt with as part of the bargaining agenda?

#### **03 Resources and creative action for safety reps**

What resources are available for safety reps and how can they be used to support their role. Creating effective newsletters, posters and leaflets.

#### **04 Supporting health and safety reps**

Some Trade union reps face victimisation, when they are trying to support their members and also suffering from their own work related stress. How do we support safety reps and what preventative measures can be put in place to protect reps from being harmed?

### **05 Workplace Inspections**

The workshop focuses on preparing for regular workplace inspections; explains the resources and tools you need, plus checklist development; recording & reporting the results of the inspection and follow-up action.

### **06 Investigating incidents and injuries**

Good investigation ensures problems are identified and further harm is prevented. This workshop will look at key steps for incident investigation, and give you the tools you need to undertake inspections effectively.

## **Theme 2 Dealing with risks**

### **07 Identifying Hazards/Risk, Hierarchy of control**

Risk assessment is the statutory foundation for employer working practices. Employer's duties, how to carry out risk assessment, the hierarchy of control and failures. How do we ensure safety reps play an effective role?

### **08 Violence faced by workers**

Workers are facing increasingly violent situations in their working environment. Care workers, ambulance workers, teachers, lone workers, hospitality workers retail workers etc. are all experiencing violence. This workshop will examine solutions and good practice in keeping us all safe at work.

### **09 Fire risk Inspections**

Fire service enforcers are tough on employer failures to assess fire risks. What are the standards employers must meet? What guidance is available? How to get employers to ensure fire safety at work?

### **10 Air pollution—external and internal**

Exposure to cocktail of chemicals at work, home, and in the environment is making us ill. We need a strategic approach to eliminating & reducing our exposure using REACH, COSHH, Toxics Use Reduction, Zero Carcinogens, and air pollution campaigns.

### **11 Driving for a living**

Long hours, heavy and precarious loads, lack of welfare, bullying and poorly maintained vehicles. Delivering to inaccessible buildings, tracking and surveillance. What can we do to challenge this?

### **12 New technology and new ways of working**

Identifying the hazards and risks from digital technologies, including musculo skeletal disorders, stress, surveillance and control. How can the law help, how to assess the risks and organise to prevent harm.

## **Theme 3 Challenging Employers agenda**

### **13 Sacked for capability:**

How sickness absence is being used as a punitive measure to reduce the workforce and control workers. What can we do to challenge this? Presenteeism is also causing harm and illness, how do we challenge this?

### **14 Resisting resilience & individual well-being schemes**

Resilience and individual wellbeing, counselling & other schemes divert attention from collective preventative action. How do we re-focus action on prevention & ensure reps are not diverted?

**15 Getting enforcement to work for us** Government restriction on enforcement limit what inspectors can do. There are fewer HSE and local authority inspectors, fewer proactive inspections. What can they still do and how do we get help from inspectors when we need it?

**16 Intensification of work and workplace bullying:**

Work is intensifying, creating a hostile, bullying working environment and causing long term harm. How do we identify and challenge the hazards causing us real harm at work?

**17 Challenging work related stress—mapping and the management standards**

Mapping is an effective tool to help reps identify health and safety risks and put pressure on management to carry out effective risk assessments using the Management Stress Standards to prevent work-related stress and other injuries.

**18 Precarious work**

Zero hours, temporary contracts, agency work, outsourcing and low pay are spreading throughout UK workplaces undermining hard won H&S conditions and standards. How do we use H&S arguments and methods to organise against them.

**How to apply for Hazards 2018**

**See attached Registration Form. The closing date for applications is Friday 6th July 2018**

Choose 2 workshops plus a reserve within one of the Themes, and one Meeting. Put your choices in the appropriate boxes on the form. Arrange your delegate fee, complete the registration form, and send it to Hazards together with your cheque payable to **Hazards 2018. If you want to pay by BACS contact Hazards for their account details to make the payment.**

**Notification**

Hazards will acknowledge your application within a few days of receiving it. If applicants don't hear from the organisers within two weeks of sending in their form, contact the organisers (contact details below).

**Conference timings and registration**

Hazards opening plenary starts at 7.30pm on Friday 27th July, and conference ends at 12.30pm on Sunday 29th July, followed by packed lunch. Delegate registration is from 1.00pm – 7.30pm on Friday 27th July, and between 7.30am - 9.00am on Saturday morning, 28th July.

**For more information, clarification or queries, contact:-**

Hazards 2018  
C/o Greater Manchester Hazards Centre  
Windrush Millennium Centre  
70 Alexandra Road  
Manchester M16 7WD  
Telephone: 0161 636 7558  
Fax: 0161 636 7556  
Email: [hazconf@gmhazards.org.uk](mailto:hazconf@gmhazards.org.uk)

So there's a lot to find out, discuss and debate, and a lot to do to defend health and safety and safe workplaces and our union organisation. Attend the Hazards Conference to hear and learn more about the problems we face and what needs to be done.

**Full details are contained in the attached pdf Conference Registration Form. Hard copies will be distributed to Branches and Regional Health and Safety Forums.**

For more conference event information about the programme visit the 2018 Hazards Conference pages on the Hazards Campaign website at:

<http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk>

For clarification or queries, contact Hazards at: telephone 0161 636 7558 or e-mail: [hazconf@gmhazards.org.uk](mailto:hazconf@gmhazards.org.uk)

Yours sincerely



**Dave Joyce**  
**National Health, Safety & Environment Officer**

**Hazards**  
**campaign**