

APPCOG Stakeholder Forum - Minutes

Tuesday 10th March 2020

10:00 – 12:00 | Borough Conference Room, 7-14 Great Dover Street, London, SE1 4YR

Chaired by Chris Bielby, *Chair of Gas Safety Trust*

Attendees:

Chris Bielby (CB) (Chair)
Adrian Hutt (AH), *NFCC*
Andy Curtis (AC), *CoGDEM*
Avril Samuel (AS), *Katie Haines Memorial Trust*
Chris Yates (CY), *CORGI Services*
David Goodall (DG), *Steve Vick International*
Emma Fraser (EF), *London Fire Brigade*
Ian McCluskey (IMc), *IGEM*
Jillian Robson (JR), *London Fire Brigade*
Malcolm Greetham (MG), *Energy and Utility Skills*
Nathaniel Shaughnessy (NS), *Policy Connect*
Nigel Winnan (NW), *West and Wales Utilities*
Oona Muirhead (OM), *Policy Connect*
Paul Overton (PO), *CO-Gas Safety*
Robert McLaren (RM), *Policy Connect*
Sayda Lees-Manning (SLM), *IGEM*
Scott Darroch (ScD), *Gas Safe Register*
Stephanie Trotter (ST), *CO-Gas Safety*
Tahnika Dunn (TD), *London Fire Brigade*
Thomas Bradley (TBr), *Cadent*
Tom Bell (TBe), *Northern Gas Networks*

Dial-in

Clive Shrubsole (CS), *Public Health England*
Roland Wessling (RW), *CO*SciTech*
Dan Edwards (DE), *SGN*
Isabella Myers (IM), *COMed*
Maureen Nolan (MN), *Gas Safe Charity*

Apologies:

Andy Shaw	<i>Liverpool John Moores University</i>	Katherine Atkinson	<i>Safer Tourism Foundation</i>
Adrian McConnell	<i>Safety Health Environment</i>	Kevin Tyson	<i>Boat Safety Scheme</i>
Alun Williams	<i>HETAS Ltd</i>	Laura Davis	<i>Wales & West Utilities</i>
Ashley Martin	<i>Rospa</i>	Louise Clanfield	<i>NEA</i>
Angela Love	<i>Gas Safe Charity</i>	Maria Kokkinaki	<i>Energy UK</i>

Calvin May	HETAS Ltd	Mark Jones	Merseyfire
Cheryl Cox	Certsure	Paisley Henderson	Wales & West Utilities
Christine Bridge	HSE	Pamela Goe	SGN
Claire O'Meara	Fire Angel	Paul Collins	Certsure
Derrick Crump	Cranfield University	Paul DeCort	MHCLG
David Long	SSE	Peter Ritchie	IOM
Elizabeth Warwick	Wales & West Utilities	Phil Burrows	Cadent
Baroness Finlay	House of Lords	Paul Rose	OFTEC
Gaia Alexander	London Fire Brigade	Rebecca Close	Public Health England
Gemma Baguley	IGEM	Reece Emmitt	Wales & West Utilities
Gerarda Kendrick	Gas Safety Trust	Rob Lyon	COGDEM
Gordon Lishman	Gas Safe Charity	Rory Taylor	Energy UK
Graham Hall	Electra Link	Sally Thomas	Wales & West Utilities
Graham Watts	Boat Safety Scheme	Sophia Haywood	UKLPG
Ian Moss	Energy & Utility Skills	Steve Goldthorpe	British Gas
Ian Watson	EON	Stewart Davison	Gas Tag
James Clark	Greater London Authority	Stewart Clements	HHIC
Jane Hewin	Safer Tourism Foundation	Tom Watson	Energy Networks
Jill Wakefield	HSE	Trevor Smallpeice	TS Enterprises
Jonathan Shaw	Policy Connect	Sharon Biggs	London Fire Brigade
Jill Walker	Northern Gas Networks		
Mark Rolfe	Gas Safe Register		

1. Welcome by the chair and apologies

CB welcomed everyone and received apologies.

2. Matters arising

- AC Clarified that CoGDEM's CO helpline referenced in minutes for 05/11 stakeholder forum is not new and has been running for several years
- ST noted the importance of victims' representation at forum, and asked for Policy Connect (PC) to ensure these are included on all forum invites. Suggested there be a general 'APPCOG' email address to reduce data-loss following staff changes. OM confirmed distribution list had been updated to include victims' charities going forward.

Action: NS to go through and update contacts SS for all groups.

3. APPCOG update

Please see written APPCOG update attached.

4. APPCOG Working Group updates

a. Comms Group (SD)

Festivals and CO: Last year this was primarily run through a combination of social media, and working directly with festival organisers to distribute information to attendees. Details of 2020 campaign TBC in coming weeks, including possibility of upskilling first-aid workers.

- [This briefing on CO and festivals](#) was produced by APPCOG in March 2019, outlining the risks of CO poisoning at festivals.

Dry January: Given similarities between symptoms of CO poisoning and a hangover, Gas Safe Register launched 'Better Gas Safe than Sorry' campaign on January 21st outside Birmingham bullring. Handed out over 6000 bacon sandwiches to passers-by to raise awareness of symptoms. Significant press coverage including interview on ITV lunchtime news. SD stressed the benefits of piggy-backing off existing calendar events, such as dry January, to promote CO message.

Upcoming

Spring campaign: will be targeting 'movers and improvers', i.e. people moving properties or conducting renovation/DIY work on their homes, with spill-over effects on CO-safety in the home. People fiddling with appliances, covering up alarms, or just generally moving things around without thinking about the safety implications of doing so. Will launch in late-April/early-May.

CO Awareness week: successfully piloted in November 2019, primarily focussed on sharing existing socials content and community amplify each other's messaging. Aiming to re-launch this year with more organic content. Dates TBC, but needs to allow clear distance after Gas Safety Week and fall before Xmas period begins to dominate media.

Gas Safety Week: 14- 20 September. Theme is family safety. Aiming to get a wider range of groups involved early, from large energy suppliers to small charities. Levels of contribution will naturally be proportionate to the size and reach of the organisation. In addition to the normal launch event in Westminster, like last year are planning to hold an event in Holyrood. Plans to extend to Stormont now this has reopened, though may not be possible until 2021.

Questions

OM asked question on impact of mass self-isolation/quarantine (COVID-19) on CO safety. SD noted that winter cold-snap/flooding had presented chance for some opportunistic messaging around being safe in our homes. Is considering Comms surrounding COVID-19, especially given symptoms crossover with flu may create added risk.

ST asked about awareness of builders, and link with spring 'movers and improvers' campaign. SD pointed to work done by Trevor Smallpeice on awareness within trade industries.

IM noted that Public Health England (PHE) currently have [some guidance on health and safety at festivals](#) (incl. all major events) for organisers that does not currently include any reference to CO safety.

Action: NS to follow this up with contacts at PHE and look into adding section on CO.

b. COMed (IM)

NICE Indoor Air Quality Guidance: Significant policy win for COMed, as NICE adopted five of its recommendations in its updated guidance on '[Indoor Air Quality at Home](#)'. This will subsequently be used by healthcare professionals to raise awareness of, and prevent CO, poisoning. IM thanked COMed members for their contributions to this consultation.

CO and Pregnancy: Working paper produced by COMed on addressing CO poisoning in pregnant women (also attached to this email). Focussed on increasing preventative measures, improving treatment pathways, providing advice, filling research gaps, and expanding CO training to relevant HCPs. COMED will focus its efforts this year in developing this workstream. A number of PQs have been submitted by the APPCOG on this theme and Baroness Finlay wrote to GST to establish whether this was an area of CO exposure research that they were currently or intending to fund. A COMED/APPCOG roundtable on CO, pregnant women and the Priority Services Register has been suggested.

NBOT (Oxygen Therapy): There was a discussion on producing guidance on the provision of NBOT as this is the only treatment available in England for CO poisoning. The discussion is to be written up as a short paper in the next few weeks. It is expected that this will feed into the ongoing discussion regarding the production of more detailed and standardised guidance on the treatment of CO.

Specialist Neurology Clinic: As an outcome of the COMED neurology workshops, a GST funded clinic is being trialled at St. George's Hospital, Tooting. A leaflet is also being produced.

New Members: Julie Connolly, Liverpool John Moore's University; Sharon Biggs, London Fire Brigade

EDCO Study: A&E study at St George's Hospital, Tooting, Epsom & St Helier Hospital, Carshalton, Surrey, Frimley Park Hospital, Frimley, Surrey and Wexham Park Hospital, Slough, Berkshire, monitoring the impact of low-level CO exposure on

patients. The study is progressing well, with recruitment ongoing in order to secure the required number of patients (>5000) for robust results. Current timescale is for analysis to be completed and first results to be available early-2021. This is a large collaborative project with SGN, Cadent, HomeServe, PHE, and the Universities of Surrey, Kingston and St. George's, University of London.

Coroners Report: A GST funded project with Cranfield University that is considering the potential for Medical Examiners and Coroners to identify environmental exposure to CO. The work is nearing completion and should be available in the summer 2020.

Lille Conference: 3 March 2020 saw first joint ICORN, CoGDEM and AFPRIM, GST CHRU, Lille conference on CO. Excellent event held, with slightly lower than anticipated numbers, but perhaps allowing for better and stronger outcomes to be reached. A number of GST funded projects were presented. An output from the conference will be produced.

Dark spot detectors: Still available on [Amazon](#) and a number of sellers on eBay, APPCOG needs to effectively combat the retailers selling these in order to protect consumers.

Action: NS to draw up a list of Amazon and eBay sellers that are providing these, and engage MPs in writing to Amazon/eBay on having these removed.

c. CO SciTech (RW)

SciTech has not met since last stakeholder forum, with staff turnover at PC meaning group has lacked continuity from secretariat. RW expressed concern that SciTech needs more support than it is receiving, given limited time and ability of chair and members to drive group forward.

Action: OM to arrange meeting in coming weeks with CB and RW to discuss future working arrangements for SciTech.

5. Members and Stakeholders Update

a. London Fire Brigade (TD)

TD outlined project, commencing 2 April, that will see 1500 home fire safety visits to houseboats along Thames waterway. This will last 15 months, following which data will be provided to LJMU to produce an anonymised report. Will feed into study of CO safety on houseboats and used to provide training to firefighters.

As requested by members, the press release and scope of study are attached to this email.

b. CO-Gas Safety (ST)

25th January 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the founding of the CO-Gas Safety charity, with a [special press pack](#) launched to mark the occasion. The charity has been collecting data for 24 of these 25 years, with 95% of the deaths in this database having since been verified by coroners, and recently received recognition from the National Physical Laboratory on the quality of this data.

Annual CO awareness competition, run through 'Safety Seymour' ([p.56](#)) initiative in primary schools continuing in 2020 – going to Jersey for the first time this year. The GDNs are to be greatly commended for the continued success of this competition and for the continued improvement to this initiative.

Please read [article](#) written by ST in the New Law Journal about how difficult it is for those suffering from carbon monoxide to prove CO even to obtain diagnosis of CO for the correct medical help, let alone make legal claims

Attended Lille conference, highlighted work of: Hilary Wareing (COMed) on CO and pregnancy – with testing of CO levels often only undertaken in relation to smoking; Dr Mari Heristad looking at impact of chronic, very low-level exposure among students; Dr Julie Connolly on her PhD work using IPA; and Beth Cheshire finding that a rise of 3% COHb affected driving skills. Final presentation given by two students recounting the death of their flatmate and his girlfriend the most impactful, highlighted the need for greater comms (social and TV).

CO-Gas Safety recently engaged with HSE on improving regulations, especially those made in 2000 as a result of a massive gas safety review, and with the support of the majority of the stakeholders. However, we were met with an extremely negative response. Agreed with IM in Lille that COMed would support future engagement, though exact shape of this TBC with COMed.

ST highlighted the continuing problem of referrals, with the '[algorithm](#)' for GPs with regard to diagnosing CO poisoning issued by PHE. GPs are advised to consult with NPIS or PHE (or reconsider diagnosis of CO), but currently neither body has the resources to test the appliances in a suspected victim's house. This is a particularly pressing problem for tenants, given inspection of devices requires consent of landlord, where in many cases tenants do not feel in a position to ask.

ST finished talking about numbers affected by CO and revision of the numbers on this listed [on website](#). Asked about progress of study being undertaken in 75,000 homes to benchmark average rate of exposure, CB confirmed this is in progress but not yet ready for publication.

PO said that his daughter, Sian has made a [new video](#) released on CO-Gas Safety website, offering the perspective of both a survivor and family member about the death of her older half-sister Katie Overton. Katie, aged eleven and a half, tragically died of CO in 2003. This video covers the ongoing impact of the death on the whole family. This family was also poisoned by CO over many months, before and at Katie's death and then continuing for about 10 days after Katie's death. Then one morning Paul woke up feeling terrible and there was a horrific smell so he realised that the

boiler wasn't right, and they all felt really ill so he turned off the boiler (or it cut off itself – he's not sure). He was a private tenant, so he called the agent who then sent a CORGI engineer (as the registering body then was). The CORGI engineer realised from the boiler's state that it was probably emitting CO, left some sampling equipment in the house when he reconnected the boiler. The CORGI engineer then left the equipment in the house for a while, (about half an hour) and then ran in and out (holding his breath) to obtain the readings. When he saw the readings, he was surprised nobody else had died. Paul then reported this and although Katie had been cremated some blood samples had been kept and were tested and CO found as the cause of death.

c. *Katie Haines Memorial Trust (AS)*

KHT ran campaign to give 40 alarms to 40 fire stations for their vulnerable clients to commemorate what would have been Katie's 40th birthday in January 2019. To date alarms provided to the Fire Service in Wimbledon, Mitcham, Sutton, Oxford, Royal Berkshire and Swindon. KHT also provided 250 CO alarms to the Blue Lamp Trust.

AS and GS met with Wiltshire MP, James Gray, following which he wrote to Robert Jenrick, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on our behalf concerning the need for improved legislation concerning carbon monoxide alarms.

AS & GS met with Barry Sheerman MP at Portcullis House to discuss KHMT participation in APPCOG Events, James Gray MP also attended this.

Finally, KHMT contacted by Merton Council Safety team who were organising a 'Junior Citizens' school event in May in Merton aimed at year 6 children. About 1500 children attend and the Council wanted me to have a stand. Phil Burrows (Cadent) agreed to participate with Avril and use Safety Seymour resources on stand.

d. *West Midlands Fire Service (AH)*

Current study being undertaken on the effect of low-level CO and cognitive function, will share results with forum as and when these become available.

There is currently a push to include CO detection in the new 'safe and well' check guidance being issued to home safety inspectors. AH very optimistic this will be included in new regulations.

e. *CoGDEM (AC)*

Co-organised Lille conference on 3 March, taking forward a number of pieces of work off the back of this, including working with Hilary Wareing (iPiP) on the effects of CO poisoning on pregnant women and the unborn child. Intentions to provide training to

midwives on alerting pregnant women to the dangers of CO, and encouraging low-level CO monitors to be included in equipment for home visits.

Rob Lyon (RL) currently working on six podcasts speaking to various people affected by, and working on CO safety. These will be released in a few weeks' time and will be shared with forum.

Currently looking into issue of uncertified alarms being sold on Amazon and eBay (colour-changing dots). Some positive responses from Amazon so far, but eBay sellers proving more challenging to get on top of.

On related topic of alarms, RL has created user-friendly good for using different alarms, including what different sounds mean across different models.

Question on standardisation of alarms. AC says this has long been a desirable end-state, but has never been possible to coordinate all manufacturers. RW also notes there has been recent steps to trial alarms that deliver verbal warnings.

f. GDN Update (NW, TBe, TBr & DE)

All GDNs continuing to support Safety Seymour initiative. NW notes the incredible story of Jaydee-Lee Dummett, who, three weeks after their workshop, spotted her brother having symptoms of CO in the night, and remembered the emergency number. Awarded Pride of Britain award for saving all of the family's lives. GDNs all looking at rolling out Safety Seymour initiative beyond primary schools, though materials need tailoring to older audience.

Following a trial by Cadent, the GDNs have all identified and commissioned a set of key sites for their billboard 'be alarmed' campaign, including a bilingual posters for those in Wales.

All GDNs committed to schools' CO safety competition, already a few hundred entries received. However, the schools closures from March 2020 will impact upon further entries and a decision will be made on what to do with entries already received and the timing of the awards

GDN s are also supporting a number of research projects, including Policy Connect's CO and Carers Inquiry using the experiences of their partner organisations.

WWU now working with all seven local Fire and Rescue services to deliver 5000 CO monitors in the region, linking this with other measures to tackle fuel poverty and encourage Priority Service Register sign ups.

All GDNs submitted business plans to Ofgem In December, committing to continue work on CO safety (linking to new alarm regulations). This includes RIIO-GD2 provisions to establish 'use it or lose it' pot of £30m over 5 years committed to tackling issues of social responsibility around vulnerable customers and gas safety including carbon monoxide. 25% of this will be earmarked for collaborative working

between GDNs, and will be bringing other stakeholders into this process shortly once details have been agreed with Ofgem.

NGN leading on work with FunKids radio on CO Safety Comms to children supported by the other GDNs. Refreshing and expanding campaign from 2 years ago. Also have launched new 'anti-hero' competition initiative, encouraging children to design a CO villain – have received over 2000 entries thus far.

NGN participating in community film festival focussed on hard-to-reach communities (e.g. migrants) and working with organisation who run a number of similar events to produce films focussed on CO awareness. Finally, looking internally at colleagues' awareness of CO and ability to refer, with over 2000 in the field can make a significant difference locally by upskilling its workforce.

SGN CO awareness campaign, ran 1 October to 12 November on Mumsnet, potential views 142,857 with ad location anywhere on site – no targeting

SGN Collaborative CO Billboards in conjunction with Cadent - Billboards confirmed at: West Quay Retail Park (Southampton) and Chatham Hill (Chatham) throughout first half of 2020

SGN have developed new process that triggers a notification letter to be sent to Landlords when it is identified on our emergency jobs that a rented property does not have a CO alarm installed. This letter advises them of any unsafe situations we found and the action we took, as well as advising them that there is no CO alarm fitted and the importance of installing one.

SGN CO Alarm Sound Video's developed with Playfair Marketing that give a visual and audio description of the different alarm sounds and notifications to explain what they mean. There are videos for most of the common CO alarm models. We are currently in the process of rolling these out and developing a Comms plan on how we will share these both internally and externally.

Finally, SGN innovation team are looking into how a CO alarm could use a Verbal warning for Battery/Alarm failure to remove any ambiguity and help reduce the number of spurious calls we receive to CO alarms that are not active, but just notifying of a fault with either the alarm or battery.

Cadent are launching their community fund in the near future – details to follow.

g. IGEM (IMc)

IMc updated on IGEM. Recently (end of last year) completed audit on gas engineer training providers (425 recognised in industry space). Aim to get rid of short-duration courses producing insufficiently trained engineers. Now taking work forward to drive improvements in this space, given safety statistics have been going in wrong direction for a number of years. Will share the data with standards-setting body at next meeting.

IGEM also hosting 17 November utilisation conference (rescheduled from original date in March)

h. Energy and Utility Skills (MG)

MG updated on Energy and Utility Skills. Offered to take anything on board to feed into upcoming standards setting body.

Recently discussed at strategic management board the prospect of expanding voluntary CO training to gas suppliers. However, there is significant pushback on making this mandatory due to financial burden of doing so

i. Gas Safety Trust (CB)

CB updated on CO and vehicles research. Current test fleet of 30 cars, and 30 vans and 30 lorries. Results currently being analysed, though indications that private cars are the worst emitters. Once analysis complete, GST will release report to everyone freely.

Ministry of Transport have shown interest in this inquiry (currently undertaking review of charter plans post Emiliano Sala crash), and asking for CO monitors to be included in light aircraft to monitor CO levels in planes, while Barry Sheerman has asked for access to detectors in order for waste carriers to be monitored.

NB. Since meeting on 10/03, AAIB report concluded it is highly likely pilot was affected by CO poisoning when plane crashed.

j. CORGI Services (CY)

CORGI produced some e-postcards in 2018 to target festivals and the plan is that (now subject to COVID-19) we would use them again this year.

k. Safer Tourism Foundation

Katherine Atkinson sent apologies and asked NS to provide update.

STF have conducting research on health and safety standards in direct-booking accommodation, included attendance at roundtable on CO and direct-booking. Following this, presenting to the Short Term Accommodation Association on carbon monoxide, concentrating on the need for everyone listing their property for holiday or short term lets on these platforms to install a CO alarm if they have any fuel burning appliance.

KA also meeting with Deborah Heather (Quality in Tourism) to discuss how CO sits within QiT accreditation.

6. AOB

(None)

7. Chair's closing remarks

CB thanked all members for their attendance and praised everyone for the range of initiatives and continuing commitment to saving and improving lives at risk from CO.

8. Close of meeting