



Health in Construction Leadership Group

Strategic review

2023

Executive Summary

With the full support and commitment of industry leaders The Health in Construction Leadership Group (HCLG) was originally set up *by the industry for the industry*, to work towards the aim of construction becoming a leading industry for occupational health, including mental health.

Building on the progress made already on work-related ill-health over the past 6 years, this strategic review has been developed in consultation with supporters, HSE and the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) to look ahead to 2025 and the areas of focus needed to achieve maximum impact.

While continuing to support and promulgate a wide range of activities, the priority focus areas will be mental health, respiratory health and musculoskeletal disorders, underpinned by a strategy of innovation, health by design and targeted communication, as we strive to achieve a shift within the industry from controlling risks, to elimination and substitution.

Case for Action

According to the [latest statistics](#) on work-related ill-health in construction from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) construction remains a high-risk industry. 78,000 workers were suffering from work-related ill health (new or long-standing) averaged over the three-year period 2019/20-2021/22. This included an estimated 42,000 work-related cases of musculoskeletal disorder (new or long-standing), 53% of all ill health in the sector. There were an estimated 21,000 work-related cases of stress, depression or anxiety (new or long-standing), 27% of all ill health in this sector. Annually, there are about 13,500 new occupational cancer registrations and of this figure, 3,500 occupational cancer deaths are linked to construction workers.

The case is also underpinned in HSE's [Protecting People and Places HSE Strategy 2022 to 2032](#) and the [Construction Leadership Council](#) where tackling 'ill health' is cited as a priority area.

Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles

Vision:

All people working in construction employment are physically and mentally healthy and are protected from workplace harm by industry leading standards of occupational hygiene and health, mental health, and wellbeing provision.

Mission

To unite stakeholders across the construction industry to identify and share technical innovation, design choices and best practice prevention and support services; to develop consistent standards; and to communicate and promote these across the industry.

We will achieve this by collaborating with other stakeholders including HSE, ConIAC and CLC, and focusing predominantly on Tier 1 and 2 contractors, supply chain and major clients to:

- Encourage and facilitate collaboration and open sharing/learning across the industry as well as with other allied industries
- Where required and appropriate, support the development of new resources and initiatives
- Act as a voice on health in construction to raise awareness of issues around health, and of available solutions
- Encourage and share innovation in approaches to tackling ill health in construction
- The decision that HCLG focus on Tier 1 and 2 contractors, supply chain and major clients arises from collaborative discussions on best use of resources and widest influence. HSE and ConIAC support the same key priorities but will primarily focus on SMEs.
- Through our communications strategy and work with manufacturers, designers and industry bodies we will share our improvement plans and programmes with the whole industry inc. SME's, sole traders & unions.

Progress to date

As part of the journey so far HCLG has:

- Gained commitment from industry leaders to commit construction to a healthier future, and move this commitment into action - [first Summit took place January 2016](#).
- Set up [Mates in Mind](#), the first mental health charity dedicated to raising awareness and supporting mental health in construction – [see 2022 Impact Report](#)
- Contributed to a step change by raising awareness of Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) and working with suppliers and manufacturers to support innovation and practices to eliminate risks
- Raised the profile of Occupational Hygiene and supported the British Occupational Hygiene Society health in construction training
- Delivered health by design training and other guidance
- Supported the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) health campaigns
- Delivered and supported a number of events, seminars and webinars on a range of health related topics

Action plans

- There are tactical action plans for each of the three priority areas of [Mental Health](#), [Respiratory Health](#) and [Musculoskeletal Disorders](#) which are being implemented by dedicated working groups on each area, and set out specifically what will be delivered over the short to medium term.

- Supporting this is an overarching plan of communications including events and webinars which sets out how the HCLG's work will be shared, and importantly opportunities for others to engage with the HCLG.

Measuring progress

Progress will be predominantly measured via regular surveys of the construction industry via the HCLG membership, to track changes in awareness and in action being taken on health, in particular in the priority areas.

Structure of the HCLG: The HCLG is made up of the following:

HCLG Chairs

The HCLG is led by two elected co-chairs who have overall responsibility for signing off the strategy, communications, engagement and governance.

Steering group

Overall responsibility for developing the HCLG strategy and bringing it to life including reporting and communicating on the strategy to key audiences. Also responsible for establishing, supporting and managing the working groups set up to deliver the HCLG strategy.

The steering group is made up of:

- The elected chairs of each of the four working groups
- A HSE representative
- Industry body representatives
- Representatives of supporting organisations

Working groups

Groups made up of volunteer representatives from across the industry who develop plans and deliver activities. Chairs of the Working Groups are agreed by each group.

Current working groups are:

- Mental Health
- Respiratory Health
- Musculoskeletal Disorders

Underpinning the work of these groups will be the principle of health by design and elimination and substitution rather than control of risks.

Members of the HCLG

These are individuals from organisations who support the principles of the HCLG and use the HCLG website, resources and materials to develop their own thinking and support improvement. Members are required to register on the HCLG website and commit to the vision of HCLG. There is no fee for membership. Members can volunteer to be part of the working groups and are actively encouraged to share innovation and best practice.