

UKAS Asbestos Technical Advisory Committee
11th Meeting Minutes (Summary) - Monday 13th July 2009 at UKAS (Feltham)

Attendees:

S Burbeck, Adams Environmental Ltd (SB – Chair)
W Smith, UKAS (WS - minutes)
C Perryman, Greenwich Analytical Services (Local government) (CP)
G Burdett, Health & Safety Laboratory (GB)
B Sutherland, Noble Asbestos Consultancy Ltd (BS)
J O' Sullivan, Representing Asbestos Testing and Consultancy (ATaC) (JOS)
C Willoughby, British Occupational Hygiene Society (CW)
P Bodsworth, Independent technical assessor (PLB)
R Bettinson, UKAS (RJB - Secretary)
S Mallagh, Health & Safety Executive, Asbestos Policy (SM)
B Daunton, Health & Safety Executive (BD)
T Trevis, Representing Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (TT)
J Murthy, UKAS (JM – item 12 only)
A Goomer, UKAS (AG – item 12 only)

Apologies:

Bill Sanderson
Rob Blackburn (RB) (Representative JOS)
Steve Sadley
Bob Webster
Barry Tylee
Paul Winstone (Representative TT)

1. Welcome and Apologies, Transfer of Chair

All welcomed, apologies noted, chair formally transferred to SB

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the last meeting were agreed by committee members

3. UKAS Asbestos TAC Committee Membership

There has been a few changes in the membership in recent times. The ARCA representative requires a replacement to give the viewpoint of contractors. Also agreed TAC needs a replacement representative for asbestos training provider viewpoint.

4. Update from UKAS

General

- There has been a change in UKAS's Government Sponsor - DIUS replaced by DBIS (Business Innovation & Skills) on 5th June
- On track to be appointed the UK National Accreditation Body (as required under EU Regulation) during late Summer/early Autumn
- Graham Talbot was recently appointed Chair of EA (previously vice-chair)
- UKAS Peer Evaluation is due to take place mid-September
- UKAS acquired CPA on 8th April – Business as usual for both companies for now.
- ISAS (Imaging Service Accreditation Scheme) formally launched on 9th June

Asbestos

- One Asbestos Assessment Manager left UKAS at end January. Recently replaced with another Asbestos Assessment Manager (from an accredited asbestos IB)
- 8th Asbestos Assessor Meeting held in April in Derby (closed meeting):

- 4SC Impartiality: *Discussed later in this meeting*
 - P403 & Sampling: UKAS to stick with current policy requiring analysts to hold P403 & P404 for all air monitoring activities.
 - Bulk ID –number of samples: UKAS to ask ATaC to propose realistic limits; In the meantime current guide - 8 hr shift with >70 points or >60 samples should immediately raise investigation by UKAS assessment team, laboratory to justify the approach / acceptance of this number, *Discussed later in this meeting.*
 - AIMS blind rounds - HSL to consider this proposal and consider how UKAS TA would be informed of the result to action as necessary during the visit (after reporting)
 - Surveyors Guide: Transition of MDHS 100 survey accreditation to Surveyors Guide will be based upon self-declaration form in first instance, followed up in detail at following annual visit (proposal).
 - Field blanks: Current policy on requiring field blanks (and that these are mounted and retained) was reconfirmed.
- ABICS Scheme is now accredited
 - UKAS are discussing relevant section of Surveyors Guide with HSE to ensure it is factually accurate.
 - UKAS visiting Bootle during July to meet & brief the asbestos policy unit.
 - UKAS has been participating in the ATaC road-shows, talking about the benefits of using accredited services.
 - UKAS published an asbestos surveying flyer aimed at the users of surveying services – Aim is to emphasise the benefits of accredited V non-accredited.
 - UKAS website relaunched a week ago.

Applications:

Received 5 since last meeting (Nov '08) – All asbestos surveying

Sanctions:

7 asbestos bodies have been suspended in this period – 3 of these were imposed.

5. Update from HSE – including revised MDHS 100 update

SM – HSE policy unit are expecting to see the final version of revised MDHS100 this week before it goes to the publishers, this version will be shared with UKAS and BOHS, it is not for consultation - it is for information. Assuming no show stopping issues to resolve, HSE expect full publication in Autumn 2009.

New funding is available for the new round of the asbestos hidden killer campaign, looking at duty to manage and targeting trades again. This will be a smaller campaign that previously seen. Linking to this campaign is more work on duty to manage in 2010, 11 and 12 and more media activity for this too.

Evaluation on the duty to manage campaign is nearly completed, further work is going on. More surveys being undertaken and feedback to consider from these.

6. Update from BOHS, including ABICS

- BOHS are looking at all asbestos modules and qualifications, considering do they need full review? how to review and what to change?
- BOHS are currently reviewing all “p” modules, but being restrained by the revised surveyor guide, as any change needs to be implemented as the guide is published.
- All “p” modules are moving from multiple choice to short answer, most are now converted and these are to be rolled out at the end of the year or early next year
- There is also an increase in both time and questions within examinations.
- The S301 written paper, will be short answer too and there will also be micro essay questions (5 out of 8 to be answered)

- BOHS have identified a possible P401 problem (practical side), high failure rate, due to the candidates being pushed through too quickly. Members think P401 is a good exam and have confidence in staff competence of those that pass this module. Other feedback received by BOHS includes certain providers provide poor facilities for this exam. BOHS need to receive the feedback on the provider to be able to do something about it.
- No candidates have gone through the ABICS scheme yet, as BOHS are awaiting for the new survey guide before commencing this certification, had a few people (>60) applied.

7. Update from ATaC

- ATaC are working with ALG, RICS, BOHS to improve the standard of work of their members
- ATaC have tasks from ALG to complete includes that guidance to clearance work
- ATaC intend on auditing members (4SC and T3 survey) and include refresher training for members.

8. RICE

HSL confirmed the next round will be in Sept / October 2009. Lots of slides had started to grow fibres within them, general deterioration of the slides, so the entire RICE stock has been replaced / reviewed. HSL had no confidence in the counts and so full review of slides has been required. 100's and 100's of new slides now accrued and now these are being counted.

9. Review of Impartiality & 4SC

The UKAS policy on the impartiality required for testing laboratories undertaking 4SC work was reviewed to ensure this policy remains relevant and effective. There was considerable debate around the pros and cons of maintaining or changing this policy, with no outcome reached – UKAS are awaiting formal response from HSE.

10. Bulk ID – how many samples??

UKAS outlined the issue that arose out of a nonconformity raised at a laboratory where staff had been processing up to 150 samples per day (each), although the lab in question had identified this as a problem, the ceiling limit on samples per analyst per day (before investigation was to be undertaken) was deemed not acceptable by the UKAS Team. The first proposed limit – 70 samples / 90 points was rejected by UKAS as unacceptable, this level of work still AVERAGED sample times as 6 mins per sample considering standard breaks in an 8 hr shift, however the laboratory struggled to understand why this was an issue. The additional QC was still being undertaken as per HSG248 however the person undertaking the QC was also undertaking 70 samples per day. It was finally agreed 50 samples / 60 points, however this lab now wants to revert back to 70 samples / 90 points (already previously rejected by UKAS). This was raised and discussed at the Asbestos TA meeting and agreed any laboratory undertaking more than 60 samples and 70 points per analyst would be subject to further investigation and the laboratory to justify the approach / acceptance of this number. This assessment policy has been implemented by all assessors since April 09 however it remains difficult for UKAS to pin this on any requirements of HSG248 (although ISO17025 has requirements with respect to pressure / influence on staff). Feedback from UKAS Technical Assessors includes more guidance in the next review of HSH248 is required and appreciated by all (both UKAS and the testing labs). Time per sample type rather than numbers of samples (this eliminates pressure on staff to multitask and complete numbers of samples and also other testing or surveying work). Assessors are requesting more reanalysis during annual visits – and are finding some issues here, amounts of cargille liquid being used is also checked as is those labs where NAD samples are not

being included in the “pointing”. UKAS has already liaised with ATaC w.r.t. ATaC gathering some information from its members on what they believe to be realistic numbers per day per analyst.

Members agreed the numbers of 90 -150 samples is not possible and unfair treatment of analysts (which is what HSG248 was trying to avoid with the 40 points guidance).

Members also agreed the upper limit does need to be considered.

Members agreed more guidance is needed (HSG248 app2 wording needs to be improved) and that the policy currently implemented by UKAS (i.e. 60 samples / 70 points) is acceptable.

HSE confirmed that the 40 points was intended to be the maximum, although it does not necessarily read as such. The revised HSG248 will strengthen the language and the revise the points / numbers currently documented.

UKAS will continue to assess and investigate further if laboratories consistently analyse >60 samples or >70 points per analyst per 8 hr shift.

11. UKAS & Lab / IB – joint awareness / promotional campaign proposal

A proposal of a joint UKAS / accredited inspection bodies awareness campaign was discussed and will continue to be progressed – update at next meeting.

12. AOB

None raised

13. Date of next meeting – 16th December 2009

SB thanked all members for their attendance and contribution to a successful meeting.

End of minute's summary