

Official Note of the 4th Meeting of the Working Group on Product Recalls and Safety – Monday 13th March 2017

This was the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Product Recalls and Safety, under the Chairmanship of Neil Gibbins.

Attendees:

Neil Gibbins, Former Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Devon and Somerset (**Chair**)

Martyn Allen, Electrical Safety First, (ESF)

David Bolton, British Retail Consortium (BRC)

Steve Brunige, British Standards Institution, (BSI)

John Leadley, Baker McKenzie LLP (B&M)

Sian Lewis, Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances (AMDEA)

Wendy Phillips, British Toy and Hobby Association (BTHA)

Guy Pratt, Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO)

Charlie Pugsley, the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA)

Errol Taylor, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA)

Daniel Walker-Nolan, Citizens Advice (CA)

Melanie Wiseman, Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT)

Apologies:

Leon Livermore, Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)

Jonathan O'Neil, Fire Protection Association (FPA)

Mark Shepherd, Association of British Insurers (ABI)

Professor G. J. Rodgers, Brunel University London (BUL)

Meeting content

Margot James MP, Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility attended the opening part of the meeting.

Neil Gibbins, as chair, updated the Minister on the Working Group's emerging response to the Minister's questions which included:

- the need for more central technical expert support for Local Authorities delivering product safety functions and the opportunities presented by the changes to Primary Authority regarding the role of Supporting Regulators;
- the development of a code of practice covering corrective actions and product recall, led by BSI;
- drawing on behavioural insights work to better understand how consumers receive and respond to recall messages;

- the opportunities that Primary Authority offers to build confidence and transparency that product safety is being managed appropriately and the progress being made by AMDEA and ACTSO in taking this forward.

The Minister thanked Neil and the group for its ongoing work and that she wanted the group to be a powerful voice in continuing to highlight the importance of the whole issue and providing valuable insights and expertise in developing the Government's approach to product safety.

The Minister noted her support for 'Register my Appliance' but also her view that there was potential for technology at point of sale and delivery to make the registration of appliances simpler and easier. She asked retailers and manufacturers to keep this in their view as technology emerges.

The Minister believed there was a need to be ambitious in considering how Primary Authority and the availability of technical support for the coordination of recalls which had to be competent and credible in dealing with manufacturers.

Following the Minister's departure:

A discussion took place around support for vulnerable consumers and the potential role that organisations represented on the panel might play in supporting the registration of appliances and alerting them to recalls.

The panel discussed work of sub-groups around the following matters:

- the development of a code of practice on corrective actions (including recalls);
- the role of Primary Authority in supporting manufacturers and importers and encouraging uptake;
- registration of appliances and improving traceability of consumer products;
- behavioural insights research.

Agreed Outputs

It was agreed that the Chair would produce a draft report for the Minister based on the work of the panel members to date.

The Working Group also agreed that:

- The British Standards Institution would conduct a scoping exercise on the areas to be covered by a publically available standard on corrective actions (including recalls).
- BEIS and other panel member organisations would explore further how the uptake of Primary Authority in the white electrical goods and other business sectors would be encouraged.
- A programme of research to test approaches to recall communications based on behavioural insights was agreed.

A date has not yet been set for the next meeting of the Group, but it will take place once the Minister has received and had time to consider the Group's report.