

GHSL Reference Group – Meeting Notes

Date & time	Wednesday 29 October, 9:00am to 10:00am	
Location	Hybrid meeting - In-person and MS Teams.	
Lead	Government Health and Safety Lead	
Members	Chris Floyd	Land and Information NZ (Small Agency)
	Hamish Rogers	Ministry of Defence (Small Agency)
	Vanessa Wright	Serious Fraud Office (Small Agency)
	Emily Scarlett	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (Small agency)
	Rachael Mason	Customs NZ (Medium Agency)
	Jason Hare	NZ Trade and Enterprise (Medium Agency)
	Harry Maher	Department of Conservation (Medium Agency)
	Juliette McCandlish	Department of Internal Affairs (Medium Agency)
	Jeanette McKeogh	Ministry for Primary Industries (Large agency)
	Dave Griffith	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (Large Agency)
	Melanie Aitken	NZ Police (Emergency Response/Defence agency)

Topic - notes

General Environment Scan:

Risk landscape

Moving into Summer, busier in the field and people under stress. Generally, the same critical risks, with increasing transnational crime.

General feeling of needing to do more with less and so needing to focus tightly on highest risks and needs.

Restructures mean reconsidering how to provide a sustainable offering.

Discussion about modifying assurance approaches – balancing generalist third line/external activities across the whole organisation with narrower focus areas utilising Human and Organisational Performance principles and specific subject matter experts.

EAP and psychological support

Case management complexities (EAP) - Seeing more EAP sessions, difficulty interrogating data for individual who repeatedly accessing service and reasons for whilst maintaining confidentiality.

Reports of increase in use of EAP and need to balance support of employees without the workplace becoming a proxy for public health service provision. Some correlation between restructures and uptick in use of EAP.

Complex employment relations cases with Mental Health elements. Some people have complex lives and issues and need complex support.

Issue of some long-term cases where difficulty managing personal and professional boundaries and achieving suitable resolution.

Some cases where individuals are taking advantage of organisational good will, with personal grievances and conflict leveraging Health, safety and Wellbeing related systems primarily intended for provision of support and care.

Discussed initiatives in place including:

- Higher levels of support for some cases.
- Catering to the diverse needs of the public service workforce e.g. cultural, neurodiversity etc.
- Webinars to discuss key topics as a preventative measure e.g. webinars on resilience and unreasonable conduct
- Functional leads group with P&C and security working to identify high-risk roles

Topic - notes

- On site support seen as expensive, poorly attended and ineffective.
- Concerns regarding Mental Health First Aiders and risks they can be exposed to or create if not well implemented.

Action: GHSL to organise a Heads of H&S Forum to discuss the use of EAP and psychological support services, including the management of demand and potential misuse. Focus on the balance between supporting our people whilst ensuring appropriate value for expenditure.

GHSL team and work:

Will be setting up a working group to focus on driving as a critical risk. Telling a broader, richer story around safety of our people on the roads. Moving away from a singular focus on speeding to focus on overall driver safety.

HSE Global is offering a NEBOSH international certificate programme for our members in 2026, at a discounted rate and with participants getting the bonus of access to the HSE Academy.

ShopCare H&S Rep modules – working with HSE Global to consider opportunity to reskin and make available across the public sector (GHSL members)

Demonstration of the Safe-Gov App. Confirmed the core elements of the App will be available to executive leaders, board members, Heads of H&S and other named individuals with launch planned for mid-November.

Demonstration of the SharePoint GHSL Agencies Resource Hub. Aiming for launch before the end of 2025.

GHSL Reference Group

The Government Health and Safety Lead (GHSL) Reference Group acts as a touchpoint for aligning GHSL work programme with what the sector is seeing and doing. This group comes together to share what's top of mind, emerging risks & issues and how their organisations are responding. Insights shared here reflect common sectoral themes. The meeting runs under Chatham House Rules but if anyone would like to follow up on an area of interest, the GHSL can link people up.

Who is the GHSL Reference Group

The Reference Group is made up of health, safety and wellbeing representatives from a range of agency sizes and functions, providing cross-sector insight and leadership.