

Local Safety Group starts them young!

The Safety, Health and Environmental Forum (Scotland) (SHEF), in partnership with Reid Kerr College, ran a "Safe Start" afternoon for 16-18 year old students from the department of the Built Environment at Reid Kerr College. The event was supported by Renfrewshire Council, Robertson Construction Group (both signatories to the R.o.S.P.A Higher Performers Challenge), the Health and Safety Executive, and the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and was centred around the campaign for European week for Safety and Health, which ran from 23rd – 27th October 2006.

Across Europe, 18 – 24 year olds are at least 50% more likely to have a non-fatal accident in the workplace than those in other age groups. The European Agency for Safety and Health provides young workers with a range of information on what to look out for, and encourages them to speak out or refuse work if employers make light of potential threats.

The Safe Start campaign is dedicated to young people to ensure a safe and healthy start in their working life, and that risk awareness and risk prevention are promoted in enterprises, schools and colleges, and the wider education community.

Lecturers from the department of the Built Environment at Reid Kerr set up "accidents waiting to happen" in their workshops, and the students were asked to find them and describe how they could stop the accident happening. The students were assisted with the hazard spotting by staff from the Health and Safety and Building Services sections of Renfrewshire Council and other member companies. The students then took a quiz based on the Construction Skills Certification Scheme health and safety test. The winner, Stuart Brophy was awarded a £50 voucher for Virgin, and SHEF(S) Construction Safety Quiz Award. All the students also received a certificate of attendance.

Members of the Safety, Health and Environmental Forum (Scotland) assisted in making the afternoon one to remember. The current chairperson of the Forum is Claire Allinson, of the Health and Safety section in Renfrewshire Council. Claire said "the Safety, Health and Environmental Forum (Scotland) was delighted to be involved in this event which encouraged the students, who are potential employees of Renfrewshire Council and other member organisations, thinking about health and safety at an early stage. The afternoon was such a success that Reid Kerr college is planning it as an annual event".

Renfrewshire Council, Reid Kerr College, Robertson Construction and the CITB are members of the "Safety, Health & Environmental Forum (Scotland)", which was established in 1937, making it the oldest employers Health and Safety organisation in Scotland. It is a non-profit making, self supporting group and is affiliated to Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (R.o.S.P.A), Safety Groups UK (SGUK), and the Scottish Chamber of Safety (S.C.O.S). The Forum represents a wide cross section of employers from various industries and holds monthly meetings where talks by experts on specific safety subjects are regular features.



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Claire Allinson, Chairperson of the Safety Health and Environmental Forum (Scotland), and Health and Safety Officer, Renfrewshire Council

Shaun Brophy, Reid Kerr Student, winner of the SHEF(S) Construction Safety Quiz Award.

Thomas Campbell, Senior Lecturer, Reid Kerr College