

# Notes on the inaugural meeting of The Civil Aviation Authority's Offshore Helicopter Safety Action Group (OHSAG)

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**Date held:** Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014, 9.00 – 13.00

**Location:** The Grand Meeting Room, Thistle Aberdeen Caledonian Hotel, 10-14 Union Terrace, Aberdeen AB10 1WE

**Attendees:** Mark Swan [MS] (CAA - Chairman)  
Rob Bishton [RB] (CAA)  
John McColl [JM] (CAA)  
Chester Armstrong [CAR] (CAA)  
Luke Farrajallah [LF] (Bond Offshore Helicopters Ltd)  
Mark Abbey [MA] (CHC Scotia Ltd)  
Mike Imlach [MI] (Bristow Helicopters Ltd)  
Chris Allen [CAL] (Step Change in Safety)  
Mark Hardie [MH] (Oil and Gas UK)  
Colin Milne [CM] (BALPA)  
Kevin Payne [KP] (CAA – Secretary)

**Apologies:** John Taylor (Unite)  
Jake Molloy (RMT)  
CAA Corporate Communications

Item	Description
1	<b>Introductions</b> Mark Swan (MS) opened the meeting by inviting round the table introductions, noting that apologies had been received from Jake Molloy and John Taylor (both overseas) and from CAA Corporate Communications.

## 2 **Agree Terms of Reference**

MS introduced item 2 by asking members for their comments on the draft V1.0 Terms of Reference (ToR) for the CAA Offshore Helicopter Safety Action Group. MS suggested a time period of two years to deliver the programme. Considering feedback from members a draft version 1.1 of the ToR document is circulated with these meeting notes. Issues addressed in the revised ToR document include:

- Helpful to track data which measures the safety improvement i.e. have we achieved what we want to achieve.
- Building the confidence of the offshore workforce is a key deliverable and should be reflected. This underscores the need for effective communication with all parties. CM commented that BALPA is not recognised by all UK helicopter operators.
- Reinforce the desire to delegate specific work items to other established committees where deemed appropriate and establish technical sub-committees under CAA airworthiness and flight operations leadership to deliver on specific actions.
- Emphasise the need for a level playing field between all helicopter operators, whether or not holding a UK AOC i.e. National Operational Directives will apply to all helicopters operating on the UKCS.
- Effective control of communications with the wider audience.

**ACTION 1.1 on OHSAG secretary: To circulate agreed Terms of Reference for OHSAG and to provide a list of acronyms/ abbreviations used.**

**ACTION 1.2 on Mark Swan: To sign off final Terms of Reference.**

**ACTION 1.3 on CAA: To determine governance of specialist sub-groups and develop a communications plan.**

## 3 **A brief on the CAA governance structure and project plan**

During the meeting Kevin Payne (KP) circulated a PowerPoint presentation entitled “CAA Offshore Helicopter Safety Action Group March 2014” (the PowerPoint is attached with the meeting notes). The following slides drew additional discussion:

**SLIDE 4:** Implementation of Review Actions, Project Portfolio – MS confirmed CAA will up-skill and recruit as required.

**SLIDE 7:** Operational Directive – Chester Armstrong (CAR) confirmed that a CAA draft Operational Directive had been circulated to the helicopter operators for comment. CAR emphasised that the Directive would be applicable to all offshore operations (not just oil and gas) and would apply to all G-registration aircraft, wherever they were operating around the world, and to all operators irrespective of registration on the UK continental shelf. Concern was raised that the speed with which some actions were being implemented (the Operational Directive is intended to apply from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014) could lead to the introduction of residual risks (an unintended risk or consequence introduced through delivery of a safety improvement). MS stated that the CAA would reassess the implementation plan only if the introduction of a specific safety action were to cause an evidenced safety risk greater than the original safety mitigation.

**ACTION 1.4 on helicopter operators: To review the draft Operational Directive and provide feedback to CAR by Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April. Then circulate to group members for information.**

**SLIDE 8:** Certification of CAT A EBS – John McColl (JM) gave a brief on the initial certification of EBS. Changes to the suit and life jacket would be a minor modification – confidence in sign-off is good. Chris Allen (CAL) responded on the industry’s progress so far and the timeline towards implementation. From industry’s perspective, implementation for 1<sup>st</sup> June would be very challenging given the hoops that need to be jumped through e.g. product testing (April week 3), workforce training, integration with suit and lifejacket and procurement of 3500 units with up to a 20-week delivery time. Industry was also concerned about the potential for disrupting the summer maintenance work programme, which was planned to be undertaken in generally more benign conditions. It was agreed that EBS implementation would be top of the agenda at the next OHSAG. MS confirmed that he would be happy to speak to the offshore workforce regarding the implementation of EBS.

**ACTION 1.5 on Step Change and OGUK: To work towards the 1<sup>st</sup> June implementation date and for the specialist work group to keep OHSAG apprised of any issues.**

**ACTION 1.6 on EBS working sub-group: Project plan to capture EBS arrangements for air crew in addition to helicopter passengers.**

**SLIDE 9:** SMS symposium - CAR reported that an SMS symposium was being arranged for 23<sup>rd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup> June with participation from the three helicopter operators and the CAA (and possibly other National Aviation Authorities and non-UK helicopter operators). This would be a one day event focussing on the top 20 hazards related to the activity to determine the most appropriate mitigations and to agree on Safety Performance Indicators (SPIs) for the top 10.

**SLIDE 11:** Airworthiness –JM delivered a brief explaining that the initial Maintenance Standards Team meeting would be held in the afternoon (20 March). A further meeting was planned with operator engineering and continuing airworthiness managers to determine how information would be disseminated with EASA.

**ACTION 1.7 on Airworthiness Department: To ensure CAA is fully engaged on EBS certification.**

4 **Determine the format to brief the Group with progress of recommendations**

Members agreed that a system should be developed to allow benefits tracking and reporting, if necessary between OHSAG meetings.

**ACTION 1.8 on OHSAG Secretary: Develop a plan for the realisation of benefits and for reporting of action tracking.**

5 **Review CAA progress against actions**

Responding to comments raised by Colin Milne (CM) in highlighting the major work streams of CAP 1145 relating to pilot training and the need for a review of operational best practice, Rob Bishton (RB) noted that the SMS symposium planned for 23<sup>rd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup> June would pick up on operational issues such as night bow deck landings. CAR acknowledged that Pilot Performance would be addressed in a separate work stream which would draw from additional internal resources and fully engage with BALPA. It was appreciated that some issues (e.g. EFIS) had a wider application than just to North Sea helicopter operations. MS offered to engage with stakeholder groups on any issue related to the CAA Offshore Review.

6 **Report on EASA progress against recommendations**

MS stated he had recently met with Patrick Ky at EASA who had confirmed EASA's 100% commitment to address all report recommendations directed to the Agency. The meeting emphasised to MS that EASA's position was very forward leaning and fully supportive of the offshore review. EASA had been represented, with MS and CAR of UK CAA, before the Transport Select Committee on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March.

7 **Review helicopter operators' progress against recommendations**

Mike Imlac (MI) raised a concern that Rotorcraft Flight Manuals provided by OEMs were not comparable with those for fixed wing and that the disparity should be addressed in the CAP 1145 review. MS confirmed that an OEM might be invited to participate in a future sub-group but there was currently no intention for them to have representation on the OHSAG.

8 **Review O&G industry progress against recommendations**

CAL highlighted four specific industry issues, summarised as follows:

- Type A EBS implementation by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014 – there was no push back on principle or on cost, but there was concern with the challenging implementation timescale. (Concerns are already documented under item 3)

**ACTION 1.9 on oil and gas industry: If appropriate, to prepare an evidence-based safety case that looks at the balance of risk and the introduction of unintended consequences due to the implementation of CAT A EBS on 1<sup>st</sup> June.**

(MS confirmed the next meeting would be required to take place around the end of April/ beginning of May, and that CAT A EBS implementation would be right at the top of the agenda).

- Offshore Survival and Emergency Training – A lack of consultation with the Offshore Petroleum Institute Training Organisation (OPITO) was regarded as unfortunate and had led to some inaccuracies arising in the Report. The provision of offshore training had evolved over many years and was harmonised at European level. There was always a fine balance to be drawn between 'safety in training' versus 'fidelity of training' and there are a number of reports on the Step Change website which address this. OPITO intended to bring forward a review of the course content for the Basic Offshore Survival Induction and Emergency Training (BOSIET) and the Further Offshore Emergency Training (FOET) - for later this year. BOSIET and FOET both include Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET).

Post Meeting Note: OPITO has written to the CAA about their concerns and a meeting will be held.

- Fire-fighting service (FFS) upgrade for Normally Unattended Installations (NUIs) – The industry was concerned that the balance of risk due to the provision of extra flights and people needed to install and maintain automated fire fighting equipment etc, outweighed the safety benefit of implementation of FFS. In a DNV report, the industry has highlighted instead the use of crashworthy helicopters as a risk-reduction/ mitigation measure against a reasonably

	foreseeable ‘crash and burn’.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offshore workforce “sizing” recommendation– this had given rise to a lot of concern among the workforce and Oil and Gas UK has commissioned RGU to look at <i>all</i> the issues. However, additional clarity was needed on several aspects and it was accepted that this was the reason for a generous timescale for policy implementation. Communications with the workforce should be agreed in committee and disseminated through a single channel – suggestion for Step Change to assume the role.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the points above, CM raised the use of the Dacon Scoop in that BALPA did not support its use. It was considered that the sea state restrictions being imposed by the CAA report would not be sufficient to address these concerns.</p> <p>It was noted that discussion of mechanical rescue devices was included in the CAA Safety Review. MS noted these comments.</p>
9	<p><b>Review major risks and issues to delivery of actions and recommendations</b></p> <p>MS noted that we have not developed a risk log or action log at present.</p> <p>(Post Meeting note: a CAA Review project risk log will be extended to cover ‘delivery’ of the Report output.</p>
10	<p><b>Make decisions on ‘key asks’ (e.g. support to a particular project)</b></p> <p>Determination of governance and constitution of specialist sub-groups is assigned to the Head of Flight Operations and to Head of Airworthiness with benefits tracking and reporting between meetings as necessary.</p>
11	<p><b>Determine content to brief Government officials, stakeholder groups and the media</b></p> <p>MS asked members how the group would like to see the format and dissemination of the meeting report.</p> <p>LF and CM responded that the presentation of the meeting report should be framed to communicate the major messages effectively and sensitively to the offshore workforce.</p> <p><b>ACTION 1.10 on all: To develop a communications plan to disseminate the full breadth of improvements to stakeholder groups and to agree a communications strategy that hooks up with Oil and Gas UK and Step Change in Safety.</b></p> <p>An initial press statement was issued by CAA Corporate Communications on 21<sup>st</sup> March.</p>

**AOB**

LF acknowledged that with the issue of CAP 1145, the CAA has 'really stepped up to the mark' and had provided a significant opportunity to drive forward safety improvements for North Sea helicopter operations. He confirmed Bond's full co-operation with the project but warned against trying to do too much too quickly, stating the objective should be to build longer-term confidence in the offshore workforce.

CAL endorsed the comments of LF but expressed some reservations about the helicopter side floating concept contained in action A10 (EBS requirement).

CM said that BALPA endorsed the welcome return of leadership from the CAA on aviation regulation.

MS concluded the meeting by summarising the main action items and providing headline bullets from the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. CAR was asked to provide a 'hot debrief' to the HSSG in the afternoon, and with KP, to provide an overview briefing of the meeting for CAA Corporate Communications (action completed 21<sup>st</sup> March).

MS emphasised the importance of having workforce representation for the next meeting. It was agreed that no substitutes should attend group meetings except in extremis.

The date of the next few meetings will be circulated in due course; ideally the next will convene at the end of April or no later than the beginning of May.

**Date of next meetings: Target - end April/early May, at the premises of one of the helicopter operators with VTC, as necessary. To be circulated by the Secretary (Ros Jaeger).**