

# SHIFT NEWS

SAFETY & HEALTH IN FIBRE TELECOMS GROUP

SUMMER 2022

## WELCOME

**Welcome to the first edition of the Safety & Health in Fibre Telecoms (SHIFT) Group Newsletter. My name is Alan Trueman, and I am Head of Safety, Health & Environment at CityFibre and extremely proud to be the group's first chair.**

I joined the Fibre Sector in April 2021 after 20 years as a safety professional in the broadcast and mobile network operator space where I had been appointed as chair to the Mast and Tower Safety (MATS) group in 2018. MATS Group bought together commercially competitive organisations to work towards a common goal, the improvement of work at height and radio frequency safety standards.

MATS Group was successful in the development of improved and consistent standards so when I joined the fibre sector, convening a similar type of group was high on my agenda. With such a buoyant and competitive landscape, I didn't know how successful such an endeavour would be but I have to call out Gavin Rae at BT Openreach who was the first to hear me out and was extremely supportive in providing the contacts needed to get an

inaugural meeting off the ground. Since then, the response to the group has been quite phenomenal and at time of writing we have 28 member organisations including the big incumbents and a number of alt-nets (details of which can be seen on page 3).

Now that the group is established and gaining some momentum our attention quite rightly turns to putting a plan in place to achieve our objectives. Several key focus areas where health and safety improvements are needed have been agreed and there is further detail later in the newsletter alongside details of our mission statement. I would like to thank all current members for their commitment so far and would encourage everybody in the sector to support the group so that collectively we can provide the UK with cutting edge fibre networks at pace but without compromising on health and safety standards.

**Alan Trueman**  
CityFibre & SHiFT Chair



## THE SHiFT GROUP MISSION

- To formulate and adhere to uniform standards of safety to ensure the continued well-being of all Fibre Industry personnel.
- To educate the public, suppliers, government agencies and clients on policy priorities and continued progress toward safer standards by sharing best practice and guidance.
- To promote and encourage diversity within the industry.
- To provide a unified voice for the UK Fibre Telecom Industry

## SHiFT GROUP CHARTER

**We are a group of resolute Health and Safety professionals striving for the recognition of a consistency specific approach toward the areas of Safety Health and Wellbeing amongst our industry.**

We will collaborate and present our failures and share learnings, demonstrate the success of our best practices in an honest manner.

When called upon for advice from our fellow group members we will assist one another where practicably possible to do so.

The group and its discussions, documentation and communications shall be disseminated regarding a commercially sensitive approach.

As a group we will stand together as many voices and challenge the current understandings of the work we do and the unique health and safety challenges this brings.

The group and its members shall contribute and dedicate time to continually improve the safety and health standards within our industry and uphold the groups charter its values and purpose.

# VORBOSS AND RAMADAN IN THE WORKPLACE



**Ramadan is the most sacred month in the Islamic religion. The start of Ramadan alters from year to year. It follows the Islamic calendar, which incorporates the phases of the moon. This year it fell between 4th April and 2nd May in the Gregorian calendar.**

It is a month that is demanding and requires spiritual discipline for Muslims, and includes focusing on charity and reflection for things we should be grateful for, such as food and water.

Observers of Ramadan fast during this period. The morning meal – the ‘Suhur’ – is eaten before dawn, marking the beginning of the fast, and the fast ends at sunset, marked with an ‘Iftar’ meal. This year, the fasts have been nearly 14 hours without food or drink (including water). This combination with long, days is challenging for many Muslims at work. Fasting is not supposed to affect working life or compromise safety. However, fasting co-workers may feel tired or lack energy during the days of Ramadan. We have been told by employees that usually the first few days are the hardest.

We wanted to find flexible ways of working that suited the Ramadan schedule.

## **Why was this important to Vorboss?**

We actively promote inclusivity and diversity in our workplace, by encouraging people to be themselves and to bring their whole selves to work each day. This in turn widens our perspectives as a company, drives innovation and creates a positive atmosphere for all. We wanted our team members to know that we care: we engaged with them, listened to their requirements, and trusted that a different attitude and approach would work.

## **What did this look like for our teams?**

A dedicated planner conducted teams’ workstreams, so team members could work effectively whilst also participating in Ramadan. The changes included extra breaks, different shift patterns and more regular check-ins.

Four teams of five people celebrating Ramadan were set up, including mobile field support drivers. Working hours for these teams were between 06:00-14:00 daily, so as not to interfere with daily prayers and to fit in with fasting patterns.

Teams planned work to be nearby to each other: a WhatsApp group was established, and each team was in regular communication with the others, assisting each other with kit and labour, whilst in turn allowing regular breaks for all team members.

Pre-loaded vans were collected at 06:00 daily and restocked at the end of shifts.

Weekly Thursday meetings were held at 13:30-14:00 to discuss what was working well and if any improvements needed to be made.

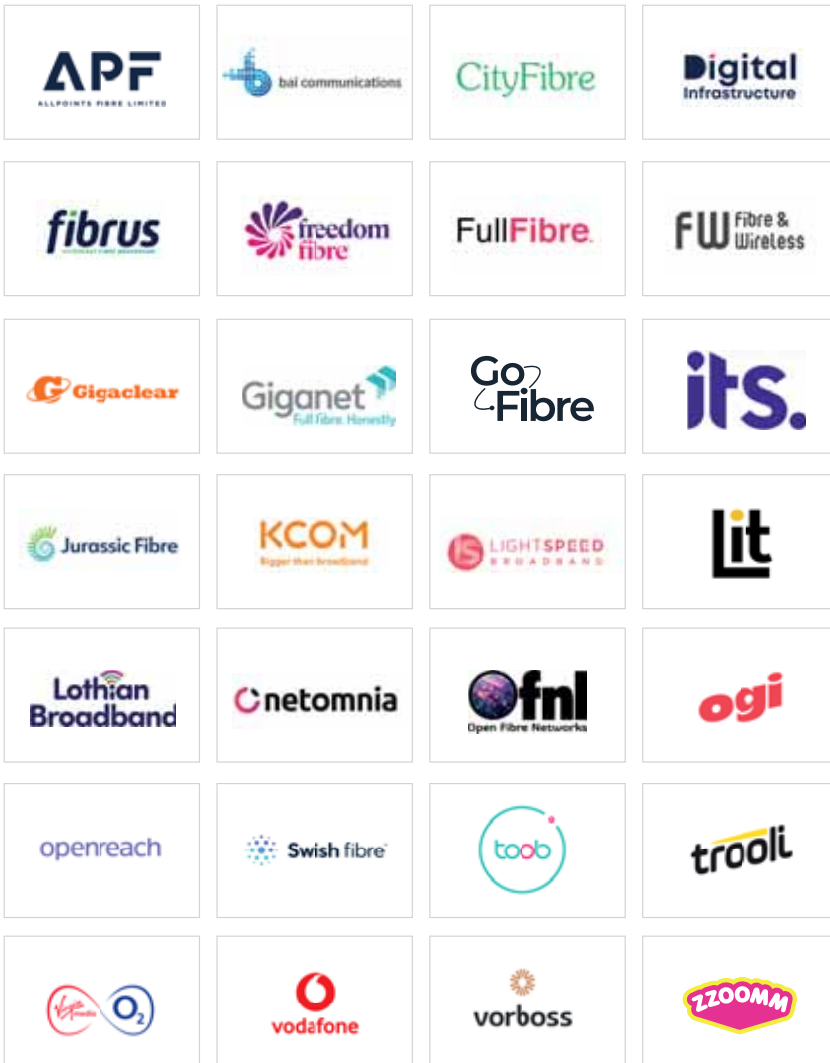
We allow flexibility for our team members to choose not to have days off on UK national holidays, such as Christmas and Easter, in preference of their own religious holidays. Team members can choose to reallocate these days to align with Ramadan, if they wish.

Eid al-Fitr – the festival of the breaking of the fast – marks the end of Ramadan, which is celebrated by Muslims for up to three days. Vorboss organised a meal for the to celebrate, all team members companywide were invited to participate

This was the first time Vorboss had planned any work specifically around teams participating in Ramadan. Because of the relationships we have built with our teams, and their superb attitude toward work, it was a huge success. Output was maintained, and even increased in some areas, which proves listening, trusting, and having a flexible approach has a positive outcome for companies and their employees.

# SHIFT GROUP MEMBERS AS OF JUNE 2022

The Group now has 28 member organisations.



## WORCESTER MEETING

In May 22 the SHiFT Group met at the Heart of Worcestershire College and was one of the first to try their new state of the art facilities and we thank them for their hospitality. The next F2F meeting will be at STREET WORKS in London on Tuesday 13th September, and we look forward to meeting old and new colleagues then to help drive safety standards within the fibre telecoms industry.



## THE RT HON RISHI SUNAK VISIT TO JURASSIC FIBRE



Jurassic Fibre is ramping up its rollout with expanded plans to cover 500,000 homes and businesses across 30 towns and villages in the southwest by 2026.



The altnet has passed 100,000 underserved properties across 21 areas in Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Cornwall in its first four years creating 350 jobs in the process.

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak recently visited Jurassic's Devon headquarters to discuss the company's progress with CEO Michael Maltby.



# SHiFT FOCUS GROUPS

The SHiFT Group is focussed on two separate work groups with clear purpose and objectives:

## CORPORATE GROUPS

To complete distinct tasks associated with the formal establishment and improvement of the SHiFT Group or to provide governance oversight to drive the right 'culture' and compliance with relevant rules, legislation etc.

## RISK GROUPS

To drive continual improvement around identified key risk areas by raising awareness (safety bulletins, best practise case studies, videos etc) through SHiFT media channels such as the website, LinkedIn, etc.

The group will also work together to get alignment/consensus on expected standards pertaining to the risk, establishing 'sprint' or 'task and finish' groups to produce best practise or guidance notes at pace that can be adopted by the fibre sector. Horizon scanning for new technology and innovations in the risk space, the risk group will keep the wider SHiFT group informed of developments and make proposals for adoption/advocacy by SHiFT Group.

## Focussed Workstream Areas:

### CG1

Establish Legal status of Group

### CG2

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) including Welfare Provision within the Fibre Industry.

### RG1

Competency Group - Endorsement process to ensure consistent approach.

### RG2

Service Strikes

### RG3

Working at Height Group

### RG4

Construction Design & Management Group

### RG5

Protection of Members of The Public

## SHiFT Group to form CLG - Company Limited by Guarantee

SHiFT Group is now in the process of forming a separate legal entity - CLG Company Limited by Guarantee to provide members with limited liability and enable the Group to enter into agreements with suppliers and for transparent corporate governance.

With the help of specialist lawyers, it expected the process will be complete by Autumn 2022.

## Jurassic Fibre in the community - sponsors of the Hospiscare Twilight Walk



What a blast #TeamJurassic had at the @hospiscare #TwilightWalk recently!

The Jurassic Fibre team walked the full 13 miles across the coast in 4 hours 10 minutes (and in baking hot sun)

As well as joining in with the spirit of the event they gave out hundreds of pink sweatbands and water refills.

They were proud to be the headline sponsor of the event, and the team raised an additional £570 towards the #charity

If you'd still like to donate, it's not too late! You can donate through our #JustGiving.

[www.justgiving.com/team/teamjurassic](http://www.justgiving.com/team/teamjurassic)

# SHiFT

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For more information about the SHiFT Group please contact [info@shiftgroup.info](mailto:info@shiftgroup.info) and follow us on LinkedIn

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