

# Improving Communication in Safety and Health (OSH): a unique approach

*"An adaptable framework for both native and non-native English speakers that can be modified for other projects and other sectors."*



## The Challenge and the Traditional Approach

- Workers whose first language is not English, and the traditionally low levels of literacy in construction, increase the challenges for effective communication
- Many claim that poor communication and a lack of understanding have contributed to accidents and incidents
- Others use pictures, buddying and interpreters to address these challenges and keep individuals safe

*"Previous research revealed strong regional accents posed a communication challenge."*



## A Different Approach

- Loughborough and Glasgow Caledonian Universities developed an OSH tutorial and assessment of English, in the Tideway context
- Language standards (basic for all / enhanced for supervisors, managers and technical staff)
- Online multiple choice tutorial focusing on comprehension using site based scenarios
- Explanations of why certain aspects of communication are important
- Also tests understanding of typical site vocabulary and technical terms

*"We have learnt that whilst reception and comprehension can be assessed with a computer based test, interaction and production require more face-to-face engagement"*



## The Updated Tideway Model

- Simplified tutorial - greater focus on assessment and single set of 30 questions answered by all
- Questions requiring more technical vocabulary, acronyms and colloquial expressions removed
- Non-English language questions replaced with non-English speakers' accents complimenting regional accents questions
- Clarity of accent-related questions improved

## Updated assessment and tutorial

**Watch, listen and understand**  
*Based on an introductory film*

**Read and understand**  
*Based on text on the Tideway HSW Mission Statement*

**Observe and understand**  
*"Don't walk by"*

**See and understand**  
*Sign recognition*

**Listen and understand**  
*Regional and non-English accents*

**Pass**  
*Five or fewer incorrect answers*

**Follow up face-to-face interview**  
*To determine the appropriate responses, evaluate interaction and the production of language*

**Fail**  
*Ten or more incorrect answers*

## Some key considerations when applying this framework

- What is the purpose of the assessment?
- Are employers and stakeholders ready for potential equal opportunity challenges re: language competence?
- How will employers make it relevant a range of roles – do different versions need to be created?
- Who needs to complete the assessment? Just frontline workers? Office-based staff, site-based staff, visitors?
- What is the pass rate and what happens to those who do not pass?
- How do you make sure everyone engages with the assessment?

For more see <http://tideway.lboro.ac.uk/publications/>