



Switch ON event

London 2025

EVENT POST-SCRIPT

Where leadership meets risk awareness and meaningful action

On 20 November 2025, senior safety leaders from across the UK came together for the Switch ON event in London – a dedicated space for reflection, dialogue, and shared learning around the human, psychological, behavioural, and cultural drivers of safety.

This edition brought together a diverse group of organisations united by a commitment to strengthening safety, wellbeing, and operational performance.

We were honoured to welcome **Jane Atkinson CBE, COO of Enfinium**, whose reflections grounded the day in the realities of executive leadership and the lived experience of transforming operational culture.

Thank you to all participants for the openness, curiosity, and energy you contributed throughout the day.



Our collective responsibility: 1 million lives behind safety decisions

The group brought together perspectives from some of the UK's most critical sectors – including industrial operations, energy, manufacturing, infrastructure, mining, private equity, waste and recycling, retail and consumer goods – creating a uniquely diverse foundation for shared reflection and collective learning.

Collectively, the companies attending the event are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of over **1,000,000 employees worldwide** – a reflection of the broad operational footprint, economic significance, and societal impact of this community of safety leaders.

The room brought together a group senior of leaders whose decisions directly shape the safety, culture, and performance of thousands of workers.

With **66% of attendees in HSE Director roles** and strong representation from operations, strategy, responsible investment, and general management, the event convened those with both the authority and the accountability to influence meaningful organisational change.

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The impact of the event is so powerful that I would suggest to extend it to family and friends, to people outside industry.”

Managing Director

Leaders highlighted that **the event allowed them to:**

- **Step back from daily pressures** and reflect on their leadership with greater clarity
- **Strengthen their understanding of why people take risks** - stepping outside of safe boundaries and procedures
- **Reconnect with the human meaning behind safety**, and what drives commitment
- **Gain fresh language and concepts** – particularly around beliefs, attention and how the brain filters information
- **See safety through the eyes of peers**, recognising challenges shared across sectors
- **Explore the micro-behaviours** that create psychological safety
- **Identify practical ways to make speaking up easier**
- **Re-energise their leadership role**, leaving with renewed purpose



Resilience, reliability and the truth of operational safety leadership

In her opening keynote, "The view from the top", Jane Atkinson CBE, COO of Enfinium, offered a strategic and operational view of safety leadership. Her reflections emphasised the importance of aligning vision, culture, and daily behaviours – and the role senior leaders play in shaping the conditions for people to make safe decisions.

She also highlighted how, in private equity-backed environments, the linkage between safety, reliability and long-term value is increasingly explicit – reinforcing that operational risk management is both a human responsibility and a strategic one.

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Complacency is the biggest risk we face. The moment we stop questioning ourselves, we stop being safe.”

Jane Atkinson CBE, COO Enfinium

How people switch on:

The science behind attention and safer behaviour

Switch ON is designed to unlock the human side of safety – the beliefs, emotions, attention patterns, and meaning-making processes that shape everyday decisions. Rather than relying on instruction, the methodology enables individuals to discover for themselves how behaviours form, drift, and can be reshaped.

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Organisations can recover from financial impacts, but nobody fully recovers from a life changing incident.”

Kirra Shaw, Principal Subject Matter Expert, dss+

Core pillars of the Switch ON methodology - why it works

- Experiential learning that activates personal insight
- Emotional engagement as a lever for motivation, attention, and memory
- The neuroscience of attentional focus (RAS)
- Storytelling to build psychological safety, trust, and ownership

By combining cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions, the day created a shared language participants can bring back into their organisations to strengthen risk awareness and everyday decision-making.

The challenges shaping today's safety reality

Across the reflections and conversations of the day, several themes surfaced repeatedly, offering a clear picture of where organisations are focusing their energy and the challenges leaders are navigating today.

Many leaders spoke about the ongoing work of **embedding culture across diverse entities**, particularly as organisations grow, integrate new businesses or operate with teams at different stages of maturity. They highlighted the difficulty of keeping safety meaningful for people who have heard the message many times before, and the importance of securing visible commitment from senior executives to reinforce safety as shared and fundamental value not just a priority. Several also noted the need to gain alignment on core objectives – such as zero harm versus zero serious injury and fatality (SIF) – to ensure clarity and focus across their organisations.

Behavioural concerns also featured strongly. Leaders described the persistent issue of **small-task risks, habituation and complacency** – noting that most incidents arise when attention drifts during familiar work. Fatigue, workload pressure and confidence in routine tasks were also mentioned as factors that quietly undermine risk awareness. Some leaders expressed a desire to better understand **why frontline teams deviate from expected practices**, and how to engage them in more open discussions about risk perception.



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Our biggest challenge is to get people to switch on for smaller tasks. That's where our teams are currently getting hurt.”

QSSHE Leader

These reflections linked closely to the broader challenge of **shifting from compliance to commitment**. Leaders emphasised that while systems and standards provide structure, sustainable safety performance depends on strengthening the beliefs, routines and leadership behaviours that shape everyday choices. This included building confidence to challenge, encouraging ownership, and creating space for honest conversations about why people take risks.

Finally, many participants expressed a strong appetite to improve **leadership routines, clarity of expectations and psychological safety**, as foundational human elements of a strong safety culture. At the same time, they emphasised the need to deepen the integration of human insight and digital intelligence to support foresight and decision-making.

Together, these insights reflect a community aligned on the need for deeper cultural embedding, more intentional leadership behaviour and more meaningful conversations that connect people to the purpose behind safe performance.



Attention, belief and behaviour: the levers of safer organisations

Throughout the day's discussions, several interconnected learning themes emerged, reflecting both the realities of operational leadership and the human dynamics that influence safe performance.

A central theme was the **practical challenge of sustaining visibility, presence and clarity** in complex operational environments. Leaders recognised that their "leadership shadow" — the behaviours they model, reinforce or tolerate — shapes how teams interpret risk, make decisions and speak up. There was strong consensus that effective safety leadership requires emotional intelligence, consistency, an ability to create psychological safety through everyday moments and the challenging of complacency.

The discussions also highlighted the importance of understanding the **beliefs and habits that shape everyday behaviour**. When tasks feel routine, attention naturally reduces, focus narrows and the brain filters out nuance. Addressing this requires more than reinforcing procedures — it calls for helping people recognise how assumptions, pressure and familiarity influence their decisions in the moment.

Coaching emerged as a critical capability, with many participants recognising its value in influencing behaviour more effectively than training or enforcement alone. Leaders described the importance of walking the job with people, helping them see risks differently, and building the confidence needed to challenge or intervene early. This coaching-based approach was widely seen as key to strengthening ownership across teams.

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The Switch ON event helped us understand the journey from compliance to behavioral-led safety.”

Lead Systems & Insight Manager



Another recurring theme was the importance of **foresight practices**, including condition monitoring, scenario planning and predictive thinking. Leaders discussed how these practices help identify weak signals and emerging risk patterns, especially in organisations where small changes can escalate quickly. These insights connected naturally with the discussion on the **Reticular Activating System (RAS)**, which offered a simple common vocabulary to help teams remain attentive to what is new or different in their environment through asking the question 'are you switched on?'

Beyond the human and behavioural dimensions, many leaders reflected on the importance of complementing leadership routines with data-enabled insight. As organisations grow in scale and complexity, the ability to detect weak signals, identify patterns, and understand the conditions that precede incidents becomes increasingly critical. Several participants noted that digital tools – when used to amplify, not replace, human judgment – can strengthen foresight, improve the quality of decision-making, and provide clearer visibility into where attention and leadership focus are needed most.



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It inspired us to explore how we can mine the wealth of data that we've got from our safety systems using AI technology to help us dig deeper into what our current issues are.”

Director of Safety, Health and Environment

David Pereira dss⁺ Managing Director of Digital Services demonstrated how AI enabled analytics trained on comprehensive cross industry safety data can provide clear and sharp analysis as well as foresight into risks that need greater attention and intervention. This reinforced the view that the future of safety lies in the combination of human insight and digital intelligence, working together to create more resilient and responsive organisations.

Finally, leaders discussed the growing importance of connecting safety, reliability and organisational value – particularly in private equity-backed contexts. Several reflected that investors increasingly view cultural maturity, stability of operations and leading indicators as markers of long-term value creation, reinforcing that safety is both a strategic enabler and a foundation of organisational resilience.

Together, these themes reflect a leadership community willing to look deeper – examining beliefs, attention patterns, coaching practices and the conditions that influence behaviour – to build organisations that are safer, more resilient and better equipped to anticipate and manage risk.

Looking ahead: a community of safety leaders ready to lead differently

As the day ended, what became clear was the collective readiness of the leaders in the room to elevate how safety is understood, communicated, and lived across their organisations. The reflections, discussions and insights shared throughout the event demonstrated a strong willingness to look beyond systems and compliance, and to engage more deeply with the behavioural, cognitive and cultural factors that ultimately shape performance.

The experience has reinforced the importance of leadership presence, clarity, and consistency – and highlighted the value of shared language around belief-driven behaviours, attention, and psychological safety. These themes resonated across industries and roles, underlining the universal nature of the challenges leaders face and the opportunities ahead.

Looking forward, the momentum generated during Switch ON event provides a solid foundation for continued collective progress. The connections formed, the perspectives exchanged, and the commitments voiced throughout the day point to a community that is prepared not only to reflect, but to act – integrating these insights into daily routines, leadership practices, and operational decision-making.

As organisations navigate increasing complexity, shifting expectations, and evolving risks, the ability of leaders to influence culture, enable focus, and strengthen ownership will remain central to achieving safer, more resilient operations. dss+ looks forward to continuing this journey together, supporting the development of this growing community of safety leaders and creating further opportunities to exchange, learn and advance shared goals.



Want to know more?

Book a meeting with one of our experts [here](#)

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About dss+

dss+ is the operational transformation partner for complex and high-hazard industries. We help organisations achieve breakthroughs in safety, performance and sustainability that drive lasting success.

Combining deep technical expertise and decades of hands-on experience with cutting-edge methodologies and data-driven insights, we empower teams to shift mindsets, shape cultures and build the capabilities needed at every level.

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