

## Health and Safety Executive Board Minutes

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### HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

#### HSE Board

#### Minutes of the HSE Board meeting held on Wednesday 6 October 2004 in the Room 1102, Daniel House, Bootle

##### Present

Timothy Walker  
Jonathan Rees  
Justin McCracken  
Alex Brett-Holt  
Nick Starling  
Sandra Caldwell  
Jane Willis  
Vivienne Dews  
Chris Willby  
Laurence Williams  
Colin Douglas

##### Also attending

Item 3: John Hodgson  
Item 4: Julie McDougall, Susan Mackenzie  
Item 5: Brian Fullam  
Item 6: Mike Lacaille  
Item 7: Ann Peatfield

Observer: Kate Carroll  
Minutes – Rupert Lown

Apologies: Allan Sefton

#### **1 Minutes of HSE Board held on 25 August 2004**

1.1 The minutes were agreed.

#### **2 Improving HSE's Health and Safety Performance – B/04/050 – presented by Justin McCracken**

2.1 RIDDOR events have continued to occur. This work year there have been:

11 RIDDOR incidents to HSE staff

2 RIDDOR events to non HSE staff conducting HSE business

The HSE target for 2004/05 of less than 10 RIDDOR events has already been missed. HSE's incidence rate was now 400/100000, this is 2/3 of the UK industry average. This is unacceptable and performance needs to improve.

Whilst statistical variation may account for some increase in numbers it was not believed to be the key factor behind the rise.

The immediate causes of the RIDDOR incidents are: Slips and trips, Display screen equipment, and manual handling events.

2.2 Secondary causes were highlighted as;

Weak management to obtain and implement DSE control measures

Delays in obtaining specialist occupational health advice when requested following identification by HSE internal DSE assessors.

Managers not altering work patterns of at risk staff whilst waiting for necessary control measures to arrive.

Managers not exerting control over staff to ensure they follow processes and utilise expected health and safety controls.

2.3 Discussion raised the following points:

HSE has institutional clutter within office space. The moves of Merseyside HQ and the restacking of Rose Court should allow clearing of excess items, files etc.

Managers should take the opportunity to systematically arrange weeding of files, collection of crates, waste bags etc specifying waste areas, use of handling equipment and ensure appropriately trained staff undertake the manual handling.

NSD had arranged a team to manage the process of moving. Good practice and a useful guide to manual handling had been developed for staff.

There was a belief that staff were personalizing workstations with specialist items of DSE equipment which detracted assessors from identifying and resolving high-risk individuals.

Whilst HSE is a low risk environment, control measures for slips and trips, DSE and manual handling are all low cost. HSE must implement these measures.

Major industries have been trying to change the safety behaviors of their staff, should HSE implement such a programme in order to lead by example.

2.4 The Board agreed to:

Raise the awareness of the current Health and Safety performance within HSE and the contribution which each member of staff can make to improving it.

Highlight HSE's poor performance on manual handling, the risks associated with it and how they should be dealt with

Improve our response to health and safety incidents

**Action V Dews to review arrangements for timely provision of Occupational health advice regarding difficult DSE assessments.**

**Action J McCracken to review the process of HSE's DSE assessments to allow rapid implementation of DSE control measures**

**Action J McCracken to request the Central Health and Safety Committee to review and make recommendations as to HSE implementing any behavioral safety programmes.**

**Action L Williams to circulate NSD's good practice guides for decluttering and moving items whilst preparing for relocation.**

**Action S Caldwell, C Douglas and J Willis to consider how HSE could use the proposed Blitz campaigns in 05/06 to influence improved performance inside HSE**

- Action**      **Board members to include a health and safety survey when out in area offices.**
- 3**                **Workplace health and safety survey (WHASS) – oral presentation by Paul Davies and John Hodgson**
- 3.1                There were three key points to the workplace health and safety survey presentation:
- i.      HSE cannot measure precisely enough to track outcomes on a short/medium timescales, it is proposed to shift to measurement of incident pre-cursors.
  - ii.     Plans support this shift of measurement
  - iii.    Provide an update of the current position.
- 3.2                Currently HSE use four main sources of outcome data;
- a). RIDDOR
  - b). The labour force survey / self reporting scheme
  - c). THOR – The Health and Occupation Reporting scheme
  - d). Industrial Disability Benefit scheme
- 3.3                All the above schemes are subject to sampling errors or under reporting which together provide a broad picture of the scale and distribution of health and safety outcomes, and which can be used to examine relationships between, for example, occupations or exposures and outcomes. However measurement of absolute levels is not precise enough to monitor the targeted improvements in injury and ill health trends
- It is proposed to move to monitoring Risk Control Indicators and undertake workplace health and safety surveys. The benefits include: they occur before an incident; they can be influenced; sample sizes can be considerably smaller; quicker feedback can be generated and potentially linked to Programme management.
- It is proposed to utilise two new data sources
- 1). Workplace health and safety surveys (WHASS) will interview Employers and Employees.
  - 2). GP scheme
- WHASS will provide extensive information on the health and safety climate of workplaces, ie approaches to management, risk assessments, perceptions of risk, training, sickness rates etc.
- 3.4                Timescales for the WHASS project are:
- A large-scale pilot will report in March 05. The main survey will then occur during September 05 and April 06. The first report will be November 06.
- Smaller targeted surveys are planned to run and report during 2005.
- A new survey utilising a GP network of doctors with occupational health

knowledge. It is hoped that the GP network will be setup during October and December 04. The survey will start during February 05

3.5 HSE currently spends approximately £2m on RIDDOR, Labour Force Survey, THOR and Industrial Disability Benefit use and analysis.

The new schemes will approximately double HSE's costs on survey analysis

3.6 Discussion raised the following points:

The main WHASS survey would be undertaken every 5 years

The smaller surveys are compatible and would therefore provide meaningful data.

The survey would be undertaken by external organisations

Incentives are proposed to worker respondents in order to maximise response rates.

The pilots should provide information to establish that the work is value for money

HSE should explore whether the analysis of survey data is to be done in house or externally, this is to be linked to use of HSE Programme funding (?)

The Better Regulation Task Force have flagged that collection of injury and ill health records are a cost to business and would like it reduced. Does this impact with the RIDDOR review currently be worked upon?

It was important to find ways of gathering data on workers with the increasingly common "flexible" work contracts as well as those with traditional employment contracts.

3.7 The Board agreed:

To proceed with a large scale pilot of the WHASS survey

Prepare plans for separate surveys at Employer and Worker level during 2005

Surveys of this nature should be coordinated and consistent in approach to allow maximum utilisation of material gathered.

#### **4 Workforce and Pay Strategy – B/04/045 – presented by Julie McDougall and Susan Mackenzie**

4.1 The Board received an update with regard to developing the workforce strategy based on the Board members' views expressed to Personnel.

4.2 The Board agreed to a half day workshop to discuss the strategy's further development

**Action J MacDougall to arrange a date for the Board workshop in November / December**

**Action J MacDougall to circulate a list of possible material to support the workshop**

## **5 Horizon Scanning – B/04/027 – presented by Brian Fullam**

- 5.1 The Board were advised that the paper was principally about a risk management process, requesting a steer from the Board to take a systematic approach or remain with a corporately un-structured approach to the identification of emerging issues.
- 5.2 Horizon scanning was located in 4 main projects requiring approximately 2 staff years. It was suggested that a proper governance mechanism would improve HSE's effectiveness.
- 5.3 Two proposals were put to the Board:  
A dedicated team, possibly located in HSL, acting on behalf of HSE who could then advise the HSE Board  
A dedicated team, possibly located in HSL, reporting to an 'Intelligent customer' within HSE who oversees the project.
- 5.4 Discussion raised the following points:  
Horizon scanning was required by HSE to a sensible level  
A team could link in with Other Government Departments  
Could Advisory committees take initial items identified and build upon them?  
Horizon scanning needs a clear set of HSE objectives  
Horizon scanning leads to beneficial links with the industry communities that tackle the risks as the issues develop and it is therefore of value to be associated with them from the outset.
- 5.5 The Board agreed to Annex 1 with a dedicated team reporting to an intelligent customer within HSE.

## **6 Review of charging – B/04/049 – presented by Mike Lacaille**

- 6.1 Consultants had reviewed HSE's charging activities in two phases. They had considered HSE's charging regimes with respect to;
1. Land Use Planning
  2. Giving Advice
  3. Incident Investigation
  4. Cases of significant non-compliance
  5. Extending permissioning regimes.
- The review had identified that:  
There was scope to simplify the regimes.  
There was little scope to extend current structures

6.2 PEFD considered the costings undertaken in the review to be poor. The Board were asked to agree further costing work to be undertaken to establish cost of incident investigation. Charging for asbestos work could raise £0.5m per year.

6.3 Discussion raised the following points:

It was sensible to simplify charging regimes

It was sensible to undertake some work on establishing the basic costs of incident investigation.

HSE needed a clear policy of when we were actually investigating an incident and when we were conducting a pre enquiry to establish if an incident would be investigated.

Charging for asbestos work would need further consideration as the Local Authorities undertook some of enforcement work and their views would need to be sort.

**Action Mike Lacaille to produce a clear statement of HSE's charging policy**

**Action Mike Lacaille to establish HSE's basic costings on incident investigation.**

**Action PEFD to simplify HSE's charging regime**

## **7 More Specific and Prescriptive Approaches – presented by Justin McCracken and Paul Davies**

7.1 The HSC Strategy commits HSE to use more specific and prescriptive approaches when known elements of industry respond more effectively to such an approach.

7.2 Annex 1 of the paper is a draft policy. The policy is not new HSE Inspectors already do this when their judgment allows, however there is wide inconsistency. The document intends to provide clarity and expand on how and when HSE will indemnify staff should the need arise.

7.3 Discussion raised the following points:

Experienced Inspectors are comfortable with providing specific advice, newer recruits may require additional training to develop this skill.

Recording of information in detail as required by para 10(b) will affect productivity of staff and should be re-considered

HSE was trying to assist small firms comply and therefore para 9 should have criteria developed.

HSE should be stronger on when we will produce guidance and when we expect an Industry sector to develop its own specific guidelines.

7.4 The Board agreed that the policy was developing correctly but further clarification was required regarding;

- i. The recording of detailed advice
- ii. The training of less experienced Inspectors to deliver specific advice
- iii. Development of criteria to assist small firms
- iv. HSE's policy on when we will produce guidance and when we encourage Industry to develop their own guidance with our support

**Action John Ewings to explore the level of recording of detailed advice**

**Action John Ewings to discuss training of less experienced staff with Personnel**

**Action John Ewings to discuss the development of criteria on when HSE's policy for when HSE will produce guidance or encourage Industry to develop its own with Communication Directorate.**

**8 Succession planning –Identifying those with SCS potential at Bands one and two – presented by Vivienne Dews.**

8.1 The paper was submitted because:

- 1. The Civil Service had requested departments to undertake such action
- 2. HSE should develop staff to enter the Senior Civil Service.

8.2 A process was proposed; each member of the SCS discussed development aspiration with their Band 1 and Band 2 reports. It was accepted that certain members of the SCS had high numbers of B1 and B2 staff.

8.3 Board members were encouraged to be involved to provide a wider view of the SCS and its purpose.  
Once identified it was proposed that candidates would attend an assessment center.

8.4 Discussion raised the following points:  
HSE needed to improve its performance on talent development  
The process should be repeated every two years  
Talent would be identified on the basis of a standard  
Not being identified as suitable for development did not preclude staff from applying for SCS posts.

**Action SCS members to discuss development with Band 1 and Band 2 staff with in their commands before the end of December 04.**

**Action V Dews to discuss proposals with the trade union as quickly as possible**

**Next meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2004 in the Fortune Room, Rose Court**