

Health and Safety Executive Board		Paper No: HSE/10/28	
Meeting Date:	24 February 2009	FOI Status:	Open
Type of paper:	Below the line	Exemptions:	N/A
Trim reference:	2010/64584		

Delivery of the Strategy – Leadership

Purpose of the paper

1. To invite the Board to consider an update on HSE's and some local authority activities to deliver the Leadership aspects of the Strategy.

Background

2. A key theme of the HSE strategy is to encourage strong leadership in championing the importance of, and a common sense approach to, health and safety in the workplace.

3. In June 2009 the Board considered an outline of HSE's initial plans for responding to the Strategy's Leadership theme (HSE/09/58). In October the Board agreed a more structured approach to considering HSE's overall activities under strategic themes (HSE/09/95).

4. This paper reports progress with the work proposed in June 2009; the actions taken in light of the Board's steer at that time; and the business planning process which is proceeding.

5. There are significant linkages between this work and that relating to the Worker Involvement theme and the Managing for Health and Safety Project on which you received papers last month (see MISC/10/01 and HSE/10/12). Whilst good leadership is critical, it needs to be underpinned by effective management arrangements, and works best where there is real worker involvement.

Argument

6. The Strategy has assisted HSE to make the links between the strands of work that have been acting to improve leadership of health and safety. Following the Board's steer in June, further development work has led to a clear package of work for 2010/11. An important element will be the continuous exchange of information between these strands and other wider work, where learning in one area will feed into and support other work.

7. **Strategic Co-ordinators** (previously called national account managers). There is already a wide range of senior strategic relationships with large organisations. HSE will build a modest but worthwhile increase in this portfolio, with a particular focus on the leadership objective of the Strategy. The new relationships will be a mix of those with potential strategic or partnership benefits, and those aimed at health and safety performance improvement. The list of those who made the Strategy Pledge will provide a useful quarry for these new relationships. We are aiming to establish a cohort of senior staff, including those with existing relationships, to help shape the initiative and to share experiences. A small cross-HSE group of senior managers will develop initial criteria for engagement with a subsequent gradual development from

the initial six or so relationships leading to a target of 20-25 at the end of the financial year (2010/2011).

8. The possibility of creating Strategic Co-ordinators (or a similar role within LAs) is to be discussed at the LACORS Health and Safety policy forum on 10th February. If this goes forward, LACORS and HSE will agree how to ensure a continued exchange of information.

9. **Tailored approaches to industry sectors** with the aim of enabling the industry leaders to take the initiative to improve health and safety performance. Work is underway in a number of sectors which will be continued into 2010/11. For example:

- We will engage and work with stakeholders and intermediaries across the major hazard sectors to promote the approach which has proved successful in the process safety sector; where the Process Safety Leadership Group, on the back of the publication of their 'leadership principles' have made good progress on linking leadership to performance measurement;
- In the Construction Sector, where leadership is often more complex due to contracted and sub-contracted arrangements, we will continue to work with stakeholders on this issue, including in the context of the Olympic build, and Inspectors' site visits will address leadership issues where appropriate.
- High level interventions and audits involving Boards of NHS trusts - to explore their approach to governance in more detail and to assess the evidence base to capture what really works and use it in discussion with other Boards;
- In our work with manufacturing trade bodies we will help them to identify exemplars, communicating and disseminating good practice and encouraging wider participation and improvement. The long term potential for injury reduction of such an approach has been demonstrated in the food and drinks industry which has seen injuries halve over the last decade. Similarly some major quarry companies are now achieving their zero target for fatal and serious injuries.
- We will support the ports industry's Ports and Shipping Partnership. This will also involve work with the Dept for Transport on their Ports Policy which has a significant influence on safety standards in ports.

10. The Board asked HSE to **prioritise the public sector and, in particular, local authorities** and their leadership role across all facets of business – ie as employers, commissioners of services and clients for infrastructure/construction work. We will address this by developing existing partnerships in sectors and by location. Key examples are:

- In March 2010 the Public Services Sector Team will hold a GB-wide workshop to facilitate local government representatives (employers and unions) to identify a plan of action to take forward the HSE Strategy in their role as employers.
- Encouraging/targeting the education system in the promotion of sensible and proportionate risk management including engagement with national training providers (eg the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services");
- Developing case studies/tools to share good practice in health and safety leadership in schools;
- Inspecting LAs against the guidance available in respect of their role as clients in waste and recycling for municipal waste collection contracts;

- Building on the work HSE did to engage the leaders in the police and fire and rescue services, gaining their involvement, commitment and support to the publication of high-level statements of principles explaining how they can balance their operational and health and safety duties.
- Pilot work to look at commissioners of services in health and social care to see how well they understand their role and how well they are meeting their legal obligations, with an emphasis on how their leaders are leading on the topic.

In addition, we will identify and establish improved arrangements for maintaining high level contact within the multi-site central government organisations; targeting a limited number of interventions where we can achieve the greatest impact, informed by the incident history and the health and safety performance of the organisation. For example, we are developing a partnership to secure continuing improvement in health, safety and wellbeing within DWP and its associated agencies through central engagement with HSE; and are at the early stages of developing a similar approach with MOD.

11. Evaluating leadership by putting the assessment of effective health and safety management at the heart of all proactive inspections. HSE Inspectors and LA officers already use a range of techniques to influence leaders. However, a recent analysis by FOD identified that it would be worthwhile to do some work to provide confidence that current best practice is applied consistently. We will provide a coherent support package for regulators that draws together existing practices, with any necessary benchmarks, enhanced guidance, training and mentoring. The Managing for Health and Safety project is a key focus for this work, with FOD, HID and others, to help increase the competence and confidence of regulators' work.

- FOD proactive work in 2010/11 will be geared to assess the quality of Health & Safety management and in so doing to evaluate the quality of leadership, worker involvement and the availability and use of competent advice. To support this; whilst allowing for a build up of confidence and improved competence of regulators over time, FOD will launch the above revised guidance and enhanced tools. Current thinking is that briefings along the lines of those done for the LPG campaign will set a baseline for regulators to develop and share existing skills and lead to improved performance over time.
- Nuclear Directorate (ND) have run a number of leadership initiatives over the years, so that there is now a mature approach based on the Regulatory Nuclear Interface Protocol, signed by all the Chief Executives, on common vision and behaviours. There are regular senior level contacts between ND and licensee senior managers (including Chief executives and Boards) and meetings between ND and licensees' managers at all levels – including an annual review with the site director. ND will run Inspector training workshops around the ND Leadership and management for safety strategy, which draw on lessons learnt from major events and near misses.
- HID will be working with the chemical industry trade associations on the method and arrangements they will adopt to demonstrate implementation of the high standards for process leadership that they have set. This will be supplemented by a pilot on the use of a process safety leadership inspection/audit protocol within a sample of sites across all non-nuclear major hazard sectors.

- LAs will mainly look at leadership as an aspect of their work on duty to manage asbestos and when dealing with stress or work related violence issues.

12. All the above will be supported by work to **build on the HSE/loD *Leading Health and Safety at Work* guidance**, to better define and communicate what effective leadership behaviours for both health and safety look like in practice.

- We have identified areas for further research to follow on from the findings of the research on leadership behaviours carried out by Databuild in three surveys in 2008-9. Directors said that they find that some of the leadership actions described in the guidance are not clear, or not relevant. Also, there was evidence that what directors mean when they say they are taking the actions varies. We need to explore more fully where the problems arise – ie is it that the guidance itself is simply unclear or that in certain sectors, risk profile or size of organisation there are genuine difficulties that prevent directors taking action?
- In particular, we found smaller firms are more likely to find the current guidance does not seem relevant for them. We will work with SBTAF and with the wider SME strategy work to incorporate the right messages about leadership/good management in other guidance.
- We want to gather information about what can be learnt and applied more widely from incidents where there have been leadership failings.
- In parallel, we will seek new case studies that will clarify for different size of organisations and sectors what these actions look like in practice. For example, we will want to find personal testimonies of what prompted leaders to want to achieve excellence in health and safety. The CBI has volunteered to assist us in this work. We also anticipate planned sector-targeted work will provide examples of good practice.
- There will be an exchange of information between the research and case study work and the Strategic Co-ordinators and sector-targeted work on what really works. We anticipate holding an event for the stakeholders that have assisted us with this work in early 2011 to share our findings, making the connections across and between sectors. This will act as a springboard for further promotional work.

13. Finally, we will continue to look to opportunities for further innovative work, particularly involving others. For example, we are exploring what we can offer to business students, focussing on the potential leaders of tomorrow, on best practice health and safety performance.

Action

14. To note the updated summary of plans to deliver the Strategy's leadership theme.

Paper clearance

15. This paper was cleared by SMT on 3 February 2010.