

Health and Safety Executive Senior Management Team Paper		SMT/10/41	
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**CROSS-GOVERNMENT WORK ON HEALTH, WORK AND WELL-BEING – AN UPDATE
ON PROGRESS AND HSE INVOLVEMENT**

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Cleared by Jane Willis

Issue

1. The attached paper asks the Board to note the progress being made in delivering the Government response to Dame Carol Black's report and HSE's involvement with the Health, Work and Well-being (HWWB) agenda.

Timing

2. For clearance at the 3 March 2010 SMT meeting prior to the HSE Board Meeting on 31 March 2010.

Recommendation

3. The Senior Management Team is asked to approve the attached paper for submission to the HSE Board.

Background

4. See paragraphs 4 to 8 in the attached paper, further detailed background information can be found at Annex 1.

Consultation

5. Consultation has taken place with internal stakeholders, see paragraph 9 in the attached paper for further details.

Health and Safety Executive Board		HSE/10/	
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Cross-Government work on health, work and well-being – an update on progress and HSE involvement

Issue

6. To update the Board on progress with delivering the Government response to Dame Carol Black's report and HSE's involvement with the Health, Work and Well-being (HWWB) agenda.

Timing

7. Routine.

Recommendation

8. The Board is asked to:
 - Note progress with a number of initiatives which seek to implement the recommendations in Dame Carol Black's report
 - Note HSE's contribution to the development and delivery of these initiatives.

Background

4. The Government's response to the report *Working for a healthier tomorrow; Review of the health of Britain's working age population* by Dame Carol Black, National Director for Health and Work, included a number of key initiatives. Brief details of these, and HSE's involvement in their development and delivery, are provided at Annex 1.
5. The HWWB Strategy is a Government-led initiative to protect and improve the health and well-being of working age people. The work is overseen by a cross-department HWWB Executive involving the Health and Safety Executive, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department of Health, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government. Wider interests are engaged through the HWWB Stakeholder Council – HSE Board members Hugh Robertson and Sayeed Khan are members of this group.
- 9.
6. As an active member of the HWWB Executive, HSE has the opportunity to influence other government departments in relation to the effective management of work-related ill health and, in particular, to communicate the importance of preventing the causes of occupational ill health to a wide audience within the working age population. Membership also enables HSE to be part of a broader debate on the impact of the workplace in relation to public health and wellbeing and to work with key stakeholders on relevant issues.
- 10.
7. Since the Board was last updated on progress in December 2008, there has been a number of significant developments. These include:
 - An agreed date (April 2010) for the launch of the revised medical statement (the "Fit note")
 - Announcement of ten Fit For Work Initiative pilot sites
 - Roll out of a National Education Programme for GPs

- Creation of a national network of Regional Health, Work and Well-being Co-ordinators
 - Launch of an Occupational Health advice line for SMEs
 - Publication of Dr Steve Boorman's Review of the Health and Well-being of NHS Staff
 - Establishment of the Council for Work and Health
 - Publication of Standards for Provision of Occupational Health Services
- 11.
8. HSE has been closely involved in the development and delivery of much of the HWWB agenda. A summary of the particular issues to note is below:
- 12.
- 8.1. Reformed Medical Statement
- 8.1.1. Scheduled to be introduced in April 2010, the reformed medical statement (the 'Fit Note') introduces an approach whereby GPs will assess whether patients 'may be fit for some work now', rather than the previous 'fit to work' / 'not fit to work' assessment.
- 13.
- 8.1.2. Guidance for GPs, employees and employers regarding this significant change has been produced. HSE has contributed to this to give clarity regarding whether employers will need to undertake a further risk assessment for a returning employee who has been assessed as 'may be fit for some work now'.
- 14.
- 8.1.3. The risk assessment issues highlighted by the new 'Fit Note' may result in HSE becoming involved in disputes between employers, employees and GPs. HSE has issued guidance for all staff who visit workplaces on the 'Fit Note' and the appropriateness of risk assessments when a 'Fit Note' is issued.
- 15.
- 8.1.4. HSE will work with DWP to help monitor how the 'Fit Note' is being implemented and will be involved in any changes to the guidance. HSE favours an early review of the efficacy of the suite of guidance documentation.
- 16.
- 8.1.5. HSE had hoped that the 'Fit Note' would provide an opportunity to establish a knowledge base for future study on the causes and incidence of work-related ill health. Representations for the 'Fit Note' to record patient's occupation, the industry in which they work and whether the GP considers the ill health of the patient to be work-related were made during the consultation exercise but these details were not included by DWP due to the additional costs involved.
- 17.
- 8.2. National Centre for Working-age Health and Well-being
- 8.2.1. The new National Centre will gather, collate and analyse information and evidence relating to working age health and well-being; and identify interventions required to support policy implementation.
- 18.
- 8.2.2. The remit of the National Centre has clear overlaps with HSE's work and there is a risk of duplication with HSE research and evidence analysis. HSE has worked with other HWWB partners to refine the remit of the National Centre to minimise such problems. Further close working will be required to ensure that the respective roles and work of the National Centre and HSE are sufficiently aligned.
- 19.
- 8.2.3. The invitation to tender for the National Centre is being finalised and the successful applicant (or partnership) for the National Centre is expected to be announced in summer 2010.

8.3. Review of the health and well-being of the NHS workforce in England (The Boorman Review)

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8.3.1. Dr Steve Boorman (the Chief Medical Adviser to Royal Mail) was appointed by the Secretary of State to lead on a review of the health and well-being of the NHS workforce in England. The final report was published in November 2010. HSE provided comments and suggested areas of focus throughout the conduct of the review.

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8.3.2. The final report focussed on the importance of leadership in contributing to the health and well-being of staff. There are obvious links with the HSE Strategy on the importance of leadership and delivering through partners, and it is important that HSE continues working to influence the implementation of the report within the NHS in England.

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8.3.3. The success of the Boorman Review, which identified the way forward for staff health and well-being for the largest single employer in Great Britain, could influence other organisations to undertake similar initiatives. This is an area that HSE will continue to monitor for opportunities to influence stakeholders.

8.4. Challenge Fund

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8.4.1. A Challenge Fund has been launched to encourage initiatives that improve workplace health and well-being in SMEs through innovative approaches. Practical initiatives for mental health and well-being will be a particular focus, with successful projects awarded between £1,000 and £50,000 a year. The Fund will be administered by the new regional Health Work and Well-being Co-ordinators, with funding becoming available from March 2010. A second, and final, round of funding will become available from March 2011.

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8.4.2. As Board members will recall, due to the lack of suitable legislation within DWP's remit, a memorandum of agreement between HSE and DWP, signed in October 2009, has given DWP the ability to use the powers of the HSWA Act to administer the Challenge Fund. HSE will not have any financial or administrative burdens as a result of this MoA.

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8.4.3. There is a risk that the awarding of Challenge Funds will divert attention away from good health and safety management to the wider area of health promotion. HSE will work with DWP to ensure that the Challenge Fund participants are aware of their responsibilities regarding health and safety in the workplace. We are also keen to see projects that feature worker involvement prominently.

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8.4.4. HSE Regional Directors have been, and will continue to be, kept informed of the progress being made by the Fund, including information on any relevant awarding of funds.

8.5. Working with devolved Administrations

8.5.1. Using contacts on the HWWB Executive with the Scottish and Welsh Devolved Administrations HSE has been able to further develop our understanding of and contribute to the work they are doing to provide more integrated models of health and work, such as the SME 'Health Works' initiative being undertaken by the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives. Although the experiences from the devolved administrations may not be directly replicable in England, HSE will continue to build on these important

networks to ensure that lessons are learned from the initiatives being undertaken.

Consultation

9. Consultation has taken place within CCID and CSAG.

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Conclusion

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10. HSE's involvement as a member of the HWWB Executive has enabled us to contribute positively to an important area of work that has clear relevance to the HSE Strategy and has positive benefits for national approaches to occupational health issues.

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11. In the longer term, the direction of the HWWB agenda is less certain. We will maintain a close watch on developments and seek the Board's views on the nature and level of HSE's future involvement when a clearer picture emerges.

Annex 1 – Summary of HWWB Key Initiatives

1. Reforming the Medical Statement

Due to be introduced in April 2010, the reformed medical statement (the 'Fit Note') introduces the concept of GPs assessing whether patients 'may be fit for some work now', rather than a simple 'fit to work' – 'not fit to work' assessment.

2. National Education Programme for GPs

The National Education Programme for GPs is planned to improve GPs' knowledge, skills and confidence when dealing with health and work issues. This is intended to help GPs with their new responsibilities regarding the 'fit note'.

3. Regional Health, Work and Well-being Co-ordinators

Regional Health, Work and Well-being Co-ordinators have been appointed in the English regions and in Scotland and Wales. The Co-ordinators will champion action on HWWB issues in their areas, facilitate an integration between health and employment networks with specific reference to this agenda and offer advice and support to help local partnerships and engagement with smaller businesses in particular.

HSE Regional Directors have been, and will continue to be, kept informed of the progress being made by the Regional Co-ordinators.

4. Challenge Fund

A challenge fund has been launched to encourage initiatives that improve workplace health and well-being in SMEs through innovative approaches. Practical initiatives for mental health and well-being will be a particular focus, with successful projects awarded between £1,000 and £50,000 a year.

5. National Centre for Working-Age Health and Well-being

Dame Carol Black's review proposed setting up a National Centre for Working-Age Health and Well-being. The general purpose of the Centre would be to gather, collate and analyse information and evidence with regard to working age health and well-being; and to identify interventions required to support policy implementation.

6. Business Healthcheck Tool

The Business HealthCheck tool is a form of ready reckoner that can help businesses can use to measure and report on the benefits of an investment in the health and well-being of their workforce. This tool is due to be launched in March 2010.

7. NHS Plus Programme

NHS Plus is a network of 115 occupational health providers across England delivering services to NHS employers and their staff. Through a £20 million Capital Fund, the Government is helping to establish 11 demonstration sites throughout the country, within this NHS Plus platform, to test out the most innovative ways of offering NHS occupational health services cost-effectively to SMEs. To develop this work, and spread good practice through the NHS Plus network, the NHS Plus programme is being funded for a further three years.

8. Review of the health and well-being of the NHS workforce in England

Steve Boorman (Chief Medical Adviser to Royal Mail) was appointed by the Secretary of State to lead on a review of the health and well-being of the NHS workforce in England. The final report was published in November 2010. An Implementation Review Group has been set up and will meet in February 2010 to oversee how implementation is progressing in the NHS.

9. Occupational Health Adviceline

The Occupational Health adviceline offers help to smaller businesses by providing business hours access to professional occupational health advice for individual employee health

issues. Nine pilot sites across GB launched on 7 December 2009 and will run until March 2011. The service is being provided by NHS Plus in England, with the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives providing the service in Scotland and the Welsh Assembly Government managing the service in Wales. The pilot sites in England are region-specific, the pilots in Wales and Scotland are national.

HSE is a member of the stakeholder group for this project and has shared its data derived from experiences with Workplace Health Connect.

10. Mental Health and Employment Strategy

'Working our way to better mental health: a framework for action', the Government's national strategy for mental health and employment, was published in December 2009. Overseen by Dame Carol Black and an independent expert group chaired by Dame Carol, the framework for action is designed to identify how employers can help those with mental health conditions to return to, and subsequently achieve well-being, at work.

The management standards on work-related stress are specifically mentioned in the framework. HSE is also committed in the framework to promote the management standards on work-related stress and the line manager competency tool.

11. Public Sector as an Exemplar

Central government, local government and the National Health Service are three of the largest employers in the country and have some of the highest levels of sickness absence and work-related stress. Reversing these would make a significant impact on the overall profile of health and well-being and showcase the Government as a more credible advocate of good practice to other employers and stakeholders.

HSE will work to ensure that any specific HSE-led work in this area aligns with the various HWWB initiatives.

12. Fit For Work Service Pilots

The principal focus of the Fit For Work Service pilots will be to provide personalised back-to-work support to sickness absentees to assist them in their recovery and support them to return to sustained work more quickly than they otherwise would. It is anticipated that the sites will become fully operational / providing a complete service by March 2010. The impact of the pilot sites is expected to be evaluated by April 2011.

HSE assisted the delivery of the Pilots by ensuring, through the initial application questionnaires, that those applying were aware of the legislative requirements for appropriate risk assessments and possible workplace adjustments for those returning to work, or entering it for the first time.

13. Employment Advisors within the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Pilot

DH runs the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme, which offers effective 'talking therapies' intervention and treatment choices to people with depression and anxiety disorders.

14. Pathways Advisory Service employment advisors in GP surgeries

DWP are piloting, through their Pathways Advisory Service, the use of Employment Advisors in GP surgeries. People visiting a surgery or medical centre can be referred to an advice session with a Jobcentre Plus Adviser by their GP or they can ask for an advice session themselves from the Employment Adviser in the surgery.

15. Social Marketing Strategy

The HWWB Executive aims to develop a social marketing strategy that will improve awareness of the benefits of work to health, knowledge of the steps that can be taken to

improve health and work and lead to relevant behaviour changes that support the other initiatives delivered by the HWWB Executive.

HSE is a member of the stakeholder group for this Strategy and will continue to work to maximise the potential for HSE and HWWB campaigns to provide mutual benefits, where appropriate.

16. Measuring Progress

The Government acknowledged that there were gaps in its knowledge when it came to measuring progress against the various initiatives laid out in the Government response to Dame Carol's report. HSE is a member of the Analytical Steering Group, which has been set up to develop, monitor and report progress on existing data sources, whilst also developing new indicators and, where necessary, new survey variables.

HSE has co-funded with HWWB a survey of employees quality of working life. By working together to co-fund this survey, the sample size that the survey is drawing from has doubled. The survey is due to report in March 2010.

HSE also contribute to this work through our ongoing statistical work that is relevant to HWWB areas of interest.

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29. A number of projects relevant to HSE's prevention agenda were laid out in the Government response without being identified as a 'key initiative'. Contributing to a number of these projects has been of strategic value to HSE:

a) Trade union health and safety representatives

HSE has provided some further training to TU Safety Representatives so that they are better equipped to discuss work-related stress with the employer and work together with them to take effective action. HSE has also agreed with TUC to develop some web-based training to ensure that these skills reach more Safety Representatives in 2010.

b) Council for Work and Health

The Council for Work and Health is an organisation for medical practitioners to discuss ways in which their professional organisations ensure that people have the best opportunities to benefit from the positive health impacts of employment, and that workers are not injured or made ill by the work that they undertake.

HSE has observer status at the Council and will work to ensure that HSE and the Council's work is, where appropriate, complementary of the other.

c) Accreditation of health, work and well-being services

The Faculty of Occupational Medicine led work to develop standards for Occupational Health Services which define the standards and minimum requirements that apply, and provides Occupational Health Services with a framework for quality assurance. The standards were launched on 13 January 2010. HSE were active participants on the Stakeholder Group who advised on the development of the standards.

The standards will apply to Occupational Health Services that participate in the voluntary United Kingdom accreditation scheme which will become available in 2011.