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HELA

Inspection/visit Data Collection from Local Authorities

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Cleared by Elaine Harbour on 9 January 2013

Issue

1. This paper provides HELA with a report on local authorities' (LAs') inspection/visit data sourced from the half year LAE1 return covering the period April to September 2012.

Timing

2. For discussion at the meeting on 17 January 2013

Recommendation

3. That HELA considers their role in helping LAs to deliver the Government's regulatory reforms.

Background

4. On 21 March 2011 the Government's plans for reform of the health and safety system were published in "*Good Health and Safety, Good for Everyone*". The most significant aspect of these reforms for health and safety regulators is the shift in focus of HSE and LA activity away from businesses that do the right thing, to concentrate on higher risk areas and dealing with serious health and safety breaches.
5. Within "*Good Health and Safety, Good for Everyone*" LAs were asked to reduce the number of proactive inspection visits by at least one third per annum and to improve the targeting of such inspections. With this mandate joint guidance for LAs on how to achieve this was published by HSE and the LG Group effective from 1 April 2011.
6. At the June 2012 HELA meeting the results of the end of year LAE1 data collection for 2011/12 were discussed (Paper H13/02 Inspection/ visit data collection from Local Authorities). The return illustrated that LAs were collectively on target to meet the net reductions in inspections in line with the Government reforms outlined in *Good Health & Safety, Good for Everyone*. However, the data also suggested continued inspection of relatively lower risk sites.

7. HELA noted that the 2011/12 outturn may have reflected delivery plans for the work year set before the Joint HSE/LGA guidance on reduced proactive inspection was issued in May 2011 which would not necessarily have been subsequently amended in-year. HELA also discussed possible distortion of the data due to variances in recording which would be better addressed with the new format of LAE1 data collection effective from 2012/13.
8. Data collection in 2012/13 was therefore expected to provide a better insight into LA response to the reforms. HELA requested LAU to undertake a half year data collection to provide in-year feedback on trends and targeting of LA inspections.

Discussion

9. Half year voluntary LAE1 data was received from 288 LAs local authorities (75% return rate) for the period 1 April - 30 September 2012. This data was statistically modelled to provide an estimate of the full year projected visit numbers and suggests that LAs collectively will undertake around 16,176 inspections during 2012/13. This is a drop of 77% against the 2011/12 figures (71K inspections) and an 86% drop against the baseline year of 2009/10 (118k inspections).
10. A breakdown of inspection data by category of premises is also now available from the LAE1 returns. This breakdown indicates that inspections appear to be continuing at lower risk premises suggesting that targeting remains an issue. However, this is relatively smaller in scale given the overall net reduction in activity. Detailed analysis is provided at Annex 1.

Action

11. HELA members are asked to
 - a) note the data;
 - b) comment on any underlying qualitative intelligence/factors
 - c) discuss how to respond to the issues raised by the emerging picture; and
 - d) discuss how to assist LAs in the segmentation of delivery of their business plans going forward.
12. LAU to publish the LAE1 data.

Contact

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