

Health and Safety Commission Paper		HSC/04/120	
Meeting Date:	12 October 2004	Open Gov. Status:	Open
Type of Paper:	A/L	Paper File Ref:	SPD/216/1000/03-02
Exemptions:	None		

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

A strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond- an update on implementation

A Paper by Marion Cast

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Cleared by Brian Etheridge on 22nd September 2004

Issue

- 1) An interim progress report on the implementation of the Strategy.

Timing

- 2) Routine.

Recommendation

- 3) That the Commission notes the progress made so far in implementing 'A strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond'. All early deliverables are either met or on target. The Strategy has been generally well-received but there needs to be continued activity to engage with and explain to stakeholders. It is too early to expect outcomes.

Background

- 4) In February 2004, the then Minister, Des Browne, and Bill Callaghan launched the new HSC Strategy 'To 2010 and Beyond'. This Strategy promotes the HSC vision of 'making Health and Safety a cornerstone of a civilised society' through working with others in the Health and Safety system.
- 5) The Strategy has been seen as innovative and forward thinking by a number of organisations and was also mentioned in the budget speech as an example of the way in which regulators should act. Since the launch, work has commenced on implementing the Strategy and working towards the ten-year vision. Although it is still early days, this report aims to provide an update on progress. A full report describing

progress during the first year will be published in 2005 and, in due course, a full evaluation of the impact of Strategy will also be undertaken.

Argument

- 6) The Strategy comprises four strategic themes, which contain key points to support them and also nine early deliverables. This update looks first at the progress of the early deliverables and then at the implementation of the strategic themes in more general terms.
- 7) Early Deliverables (ED)

Early Deliverable	Current Position
1. A statement on worker involvement by March 2004.	Met. The statement was published in early March 2004.
2. The collection of further evidence to demonstrate the business case for health and safety and its publication, with case studies, on a new website in Summer 2004.	Met. Nineteen case studies were published on the worker involvement website earlier in the year. The new website is due to be launched w/c 20 th September 2004.
3. Proposals for models of occupational health and safety support, based on those currently being piloted, by spring 2004.	Met. Proposals were included as part of the Better Health at Work Partnership Strategic Programme presented to the Delivery Board ¹ on 24 th May 2004. The pilots are continuing.
4. High-level strategic programme plans by May 2004.	Met. High-level plans were presented to the Delivery Board on 24 th May 2004.
5. An indication of those well-understood and managed areas where HSE will not be proactive: proposals for consultation by August 2004.	On target. Proposals went to the Commission on 8 th September. Consultation to be published shortly.
6. A high-level partnership agreement between HSE and Local Authorities by September 2004.	Met. The statement was agreed at the strategic partners meeting on 19 th July and published on the internet in September.
7. Proposals for accessible channels of advice and guidance free from the perceived fear of enforcement by September 2004.	Met. A statement has been agreed and will be published on both the intranet and the internet. Bill Callaghan to launch the statement in his speech at the QMW Public Policy Seminar on 22 nd September.
8. An interventions strategy by the end of 2004.	On target. Proposals went to the Commission on 8 th September. Consultation to be published shortly.
9. Consultation on our role regarding public safety issues by the end of 2004 to encourage a wider debate across Government with the aim of greater clarity of responsibilities for agencies involved in public safety issues.	On target. The working group has met to discuss questions for the focus groups and the way forward. Focus groups are proposed for late autumn.

- 8) This next section gives a brief outline of progress with the four strategic themes and the underpinning key points. As mentioned in the Strategy, HSE has developed five strategic programmes as a vehicle for implementing the Strategy and delivering the targets.

These are:

¹ The Delivery Board is accountable for and manages HSE's delivery of the overall targets, and is responsible for the allocation of resources across the Strategic Programmes

- i) The Major Hazards Strategic Programme - aims to work with business to prevent catastrophic failures in major hazard industries.
- ii) The Sectors Strategic Programme – aims to secure sustainable improvement in health and safety performance by taking a holistic approach to the specific needs of identified industrial sectors.
- iii) The Health and Safety Hazards Strategic Programme – aims to target resources on 7 Health and Safety Hazards to make a significant contribution to the targets.
- iv) The Local Authority Strategic Programme – aims to develop a true partnership between HSE and Local Authorities.
- v) The Better Health at Work Partnership Strategic Programme - aims to develop and use new methods to tackle work-related ill health including a national occupational health service.

a) Developing closer partnerships

i) Working with and through others

This work is being taken forward through a combination of the strategic programmes and core work². Progress so far includes:

- Partnership with the Learning and Skills Council being developed.
- Building on initial discussions with the National Healthy School standard.
- Tools to help employers collect record and measure sickness absence, also how to manage sickness absence and support returning to work.
- Meeting of the Government Setting an Example³ task force on 13th September. A workplan is now being developed.

ii) HSE and Local Authorities (LAs) working together

This work is being taken forward through the LA strategic programme. Progress so far includes:

- High-level statement agreed and launched at Chartered Institute of Environmental Health annual congress in September.
- HSE has appointed regional partnership managers to support the partnership locally and seconded Environmental Health Officers will join the regional teams soon.
- Considerable buy-in from LAs including council members and also across HSE.
- A Programme Steering Group of Local Authority elected members has been established chaired by Joyce Edmond-Smith.

iii) Rising to the challenge of Occupational Health

This work is being taken forward through the Better Health Partnership at Work Strategic Programme

- HSE and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) have each contributed £200k to Constructing Better Health, an occupational health support pilot for the construction industry. The pilot will cover the Leicestershire area and will be launched in October.
- A programme of further pilots is being planned to test the impact of our model for delivering occupational health and safety support. The pilots will be designed to provide robust test of what works and why and how we can use this knowledge to develop further services to deliver what employers and workers really want and need and the benefits of further investment to roll out support provision across the country.

²

Core is that work which HSE has to undertake e.g. (inspection, investigation, new regulations etc).

³

Government Setting an Example – this is a programme within the Sectors Strategic Programme which aims to establish the public sectors management of health and safety as the standard that all employers in the UK should match

- Work with DWP underway to develop help and guidance. HSE's approach to managing sickness absence and return to work is to be launched on 27th October 2004 at DWP's Vocational Rehabilitation event. There will be new pages on the HSE website, including guides, desk aides and case studies. Also commissioning a web based distance-learning programme based on the guides to be available in Spring 2005.

b) Helping people to benefit from effective health and safety management and a sensible health and safety culture

i) Understanding the benefits of health and safety

This work is being taken forward through Strategic Programmes and Core work

- The Business Case web page, including a foreword by Bill Callaghan outlining the moral case for health and safety management, has been finalised and is now being prepared for publishing.
- Evaluation of 'Reducing Risk Protecting People' (R2P2)⁴ has been completed. Further work in simplifying and summarising R2P2 has started. The risk website is close to completion - "ALARP⁵ at a glance" and key risk messages produced and being trialed internally. Evaluation of 5-steps to risk assessment in progress, results available in New Year.
- Paper to HSE Board in October 2004. This will outline the implications for inspector training and on HSE's publications policies.
- Ministerial task force met on 13th September. Aims of the meeting were to agree content and mechanism of delivery of the review of long-term absence in the public sector as requested by the Chancellor in the SR2004. announcement. A workplan for the Task Force is currently being developed.

ii) Involving the workforce

This work is being taken forward through the Better Health at Work Strategic Programme

- Worker statement published. Challenge fund winners have been announced.

iii) Providing accessible advice and support

Being taken forward through the Better Health at Work Strategic Programme and core work.

- Statement cleared by Commission will be published on intranet and internet and launched by Bill Callaghan on 22 September 2004.
- Communication plan produced. Engagement of stakeholders being taken forward by the Occupational Health Reference Group.

c) Focussing on our core business and the right interventions where we are best placed to reduce workplace injury and ill health

We have agreed a Strategic Direction Statement with DWP, which identifies the main thrust of our business over the next few years.

i) Being clear about priorities

⁴ R2P2 is a document published in 2001 which sets out the decision-making process that the Health and Safety Commission and the Health and Safety Executive use.

⁵ ALARP – is short for "as far as is reasonably practicable" and describes the level to which workplace risks are controlled

Being taken forward through the LA Strategic Programme. Major Hazards Strategic Programme and Core Work.

- Work on early deliverable 5 is progressing to plan.
- The Commission is using its open meeting to progress the debate on its involvement in broader public safety issues.
- The major hazards strategic programme continues to provide assurance that the risks within the major hazard industries are being properly managed. There has been impact on the number of precursor⁶ incidents taking place
- The working group has met and discussed the way forward with regard to both the focus groups and more generally.

ii) An interventions strategy

This work is being progressed through a mixture of core work and strategic programme input.

- Research on factors which influence health and safety intervention and enforcement has been commissioned. The findings will be discussed at a workshop in the winter.
- The Commission has approved a consultation document on an interventions strategy.
- Where appropriate the HSE continues to develop/implement new legislation.
- HSE's Corporate Science and Analytical Services Directorate are leading a programme to realign scientific and technical resources, changing the mix of staff, new working arrangements, developing a three-year science strategy, renewing current partnerships and developing new partnerships
- The major hazards Strategic Programme has identified a number of crosscutting issues that will benefit from a programme approach.

iii) Continuing to enforce where appropriate

- Enforcement continues to be used appropriately with blitzes and ongoing inspection continuing. The effectiveness of blitzes is currently being evaluated.
- Although Field Operations Directorate has the major role to play in this piece of work, the input of the LA Strategic Programme is also important in ensuring that this work is undertaken in partnership. The latest report from the LA Strategic Programme indicates that there is already a shift in perception and that LAs are being seen more as partners.

d) **Communicating the Vision**

i) Communicating Effectively

- Corporate Communications Strategy is agreed and being implemented
- New visual identity being rolled out across the range of stationary, web, publicity and promotional material that we produce.
- Health and Safety fringe meetings organised at each party conference and we are exhibiting at a range of other conferences including the TUC, CBI and CIPD.
- Key stakeholders have been identified and we are actively targeting them to communicate messages around sensible health and safety and, where appropriate, developing partnership working.
- Consistent key messages being repeated through a wide range of communication activities.

⁶ Precursor incidents are those incidents which if left unchecked could lead to a catastrophic event. The management and prevention of these incidents is therefore essential to ensuring the proper management of the major hazard industries.

- Inaccurate media coverage regularly rebutted through the letters page and web site.
- Communications research programme in place to build our knowledge of key audiences.
- Strategic Programmes are being supported in building communications into the heart of their work.
- Communication partners have been put in place in each Directorate and Division to champion the importance of communications.
- Wide range of improvements made to internal communications – the in-house journal ('express') has been revamped, new weekly electronic newsletter launched and corporate cascade briefing introduced.

9) The Select Committee Inquiry into HSC and HSE

The Select Committee Inquiry into HSC and HSE published its report on 25th July 2004. The Government's response to the report is due to be submitted to the Select Committee on 11th October.

Consultation

10) Strategic Programme Directors and Programme Managers.

Presentation

11) The publishing of the Strategy has produced considerable interest. The monitoring of progress is also likely to produce some interest from Ministers, Corporate Stakeholders (CBI, TUC etc), Trade press and possibly some pressure groups.

Costs and Benefits

12) None.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

13) None.

Environmental Implications

14) None.

Other Implications

15) None.

Action

16) Commission to note the progress so far.

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