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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

A Paper by Colin Douglas

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Issue

1. This paper summarises progress since the December 2004 update.

Timing

2. One of a series of quarterly updates.

Recommendation

3. HSC to:
 - a) agree Communication Objectives to 2007/8 as set out in Annex 1
 - b) note developments set out in this report and forward programme in Annex 2

Background

4. The Communication strategy agreed by HSC is built on objectives and milestones about:

- Promoting the case for health and safety
- Presenting a clear picture of HSC/E's role and focus
- Building partnerships
- Putting in place effective internal communications
- Establishing a strategic communications approach
- Developing a communications culture

The milestones attached to the Strategy agreed last February have been updated and rolled forward to 2007/8. They are below in the Annex 1.

Promoting the case for health and safety and raising our profile

5. Our strategy identified key target audiences and messages with an initial focus in 2004-5 on national government and key stakeholders. It is too early to see clear results but one potential indication of success comes from a survey of MPs which showed an increase in the proportion of MPs regarding HSE as effective from 29% in June 2004 to 39% in January 2005.

6. **Corporate Campaigns.** A campaign on the Business Case for health and safety started on 21 February with national and trade press and radio advertising. Supported by direct mail and a website, the campaign is based on case studies and its themes will be developed at later events in the year such as the IOD conference, National Business Award and the CBI conference.

7. With the target audience extended from April to employers and employees post election an MSD communications campaign will run in parallel with a FOD MSD blitz. Research will start this month to inform messages and communications channels. A Slips and Trips campaign will follow later in the year
8. **Media relations.** New media tracking data showed a fairly even division over the 3rd quarter of the year between favourable (45%) and neutral (48%) reporting with around 7% negative coverage. Positive messages heavily outweighed the negative with the favourability rating higher in trade and regional press than in national media.
9. HSE performs well according to this data source against a range of private and public sector comparators in volume and rating. We came second out of 12 organisations in volume and favourability rating: with a rating of 53.5 compared to 55.9 for the highest rated company (a utility) and 50.1 for the lowest (a defence contractor).
10. Bill Callaghan emerged as HSC/E's leading spokesperson with 73 mentions. The same data shows HSC/E messages starting to penetrate: the two outstanding messages identified in the media tracking report are 'We are committed to being a good partner – working with others to improve health and safety' (254 mentions) and 'sensible health and safety is a cornerstone of a civilised society' (183).
11. We continue to promote sensible health and safety by rebutting negative stories and promoting positive ones. For example, Justin McCracken was interviewed on the BBC 2's Daily Politics Show about paddling pools – strongly rebutting any suggestion that HSE or a sensible approach to health and safety would cause local authorities to close such pools. A press release about our guidance on school trips was issued whilst the debate on the safety of such trips was raging, and has been picked up by the Press Association and a number of regional newspapers.
12. **Other developments:**
- positive early feedback from a 3 month pilot in Yorkshire to test the impact of investing in proactive media work – results will show up in media tracking data from January
 - strong start to the Business Case campaign with an FT piece sub headed 'the senior regulator wants a sense of proportion in assessing hazards and an end to over-zealous red tape'
 - new Chief Press Officer to take up post at the start of April
13. **Online activity.** Since the last update, HSE's website had 1.9 million visits (by over 600,000 visitors) in a month - the highest ever number of monthly visits. The target is to attract a visitor every second – a 50% increase on today's figures. Further details will be provided in the miscellaneous paper MISC/05/10.
14. **Commission activity.** The Chair and Commissioners have fronted key events: Bill Callaghan chaired the roundtable debate on risk in January, addressed CBI at a stress management event, and the construction industry event at the 24th February Summit, and with Timothy Walker continued the series of Strategy Roadshows in regional HSE offices. Judith Donovan and Joyce Edmond-Smith supported Local Authority events and Margaret Burns played a major role in the launch of the Health and Safety Committee for Scotland.
15. We are now producing weekly Press Reports for the Commission and Board, setting out the key activities over the month ahead, summarising significant current media issues, and providing consistent lines to take. Commissioners are invited to let the Press Office know how useful this information is.

Building Partnerships

16. Key developments since December include:
- Construction Summit on 24th February, addressed by Bill Callaghan and Jane Kennedy
 - A January roundtable dinner event with key interests is a start to a new initiative to lead a debate on risk issues.
 - Writing to MPs and key stakeholders about launch of business benefits campaign.
 - Launch, with the IOD, of the director case studies
 - Stakeholders have been prioritised and lead contacts appointed (see HSC/05/42).
 - Stakeholder toolkit rolled out to help HSE teams plan engagement strategies.
 - a new Heads of Communications group from key interests (IOSH, ROSPA, ABI, TUC, ACAS, CBI etc) met and agreed to coordinate messages for impact.
 - Discussions with a number of individual key stakeholders about strengthening communication links.
17. Work on partnership needs a firm foundation of understanding of attitudes and perceptions about HSE. Current surveys of Local Authority Chief Executives, elected members and environmental health officials will provide the evidence to develop the right position, robust messages, communication channels and tailored communications. We have similar work underway in the construction sector and with health interests.

Internal Communications

18. Work in hand includes:
- major communications initiatives on pay, new Merseyside HQ, the new Fit 3 programme and a health and safety campaign;
 - reviews of internal communications channels, such as Cascade briefing, global emails, bulletin boards and a readership survey of the house journal, Express;
 - a new Bulletin service for the HSE Board on single topics.
 - on-going staff strategy roadshows
 - launch of DG's area of website, giving staff the opportunity to ask questions of the DG online.

Strategic Communications

19. Continuing effort to coordinate and integrate communications outputs have included:
- the Board agreed a new Commercial strategy (more information in MISC/05/10) and work is starting to convert priced and non-priced publications for the web.
 - new Account Managers have taken on the role of project managing major campaigns and managing relationships with internal 'clients'
 - the new brand design is being implemented on all new publications and on the website, and our approach to partnership branding was presented to last month's Commission meeting as a below the line paper
 - new research projects to explore attitudes to health issues (stress, MSD, rehabilitation), stress pilots experience, and emergency services enforcement issues, have been commissioned in the last three months. A MORI opinion poll in February is a rerun of last year's survey.

Developing a communications culture

20. The first of 4 training sessions for the Senior Civil Service was held in early February to raise awareness of the benefits of 'media neutral' communications planning. By end-March all SCS will have had strategic communications training. Extensive contact with teams in the course of the business planning process and new Account Manager arrangements to provide support to programme teams are helping develop more understanding of the contribution communications can make to the delivery of HSC/E objectives.

Consultation

21. PEFD, CDS

Presentation

22. None

Costs and benefits

23. Our resources on communications are allocated to communications activity within programmes and core work aimed at changing awareness, understanding, attitudes and behaviours, and to building a sound platform for that activity by creating a positive public image for HSC/E, good relationships with stakeholders, and effective internal communications.

Financial implications for HSE

24. Spend on Communications Directorate payroll and admin costs, plus support from the Government News Network for regional media coverage totalled £1.48m to end January. Spend on publications, publicity, and promotional activity to end-January (excluding CDS staff costs) was £2,064k (£1,295k on information and publicity; £247k on online services, £522k on print and publications). Committed spend on research so far this year is around £1,100k. We expect to remain within budget to year-end.

Staff costs of CDS were £1,401k to end-January. Income generated to end-January was £3,683K (£3,269K sale of priced publications and £414k royalties and copyright fees).

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY – OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Objectives	2005/6 outcomes	2006/7 outcomes	2007/8 outcomes
<p>1. <i>Promote the case for sensible health & safety by communicating its benefits</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have extended the message of sensible health and safety beyond key stakeholders and opinion leaders and are targeting this more extensively to employers and employees. • Not only are we communicating the health and safety message but the partnerships we have successfully developed are starting to do so likewise – either with us or on their own. • We are fully utilising Commissioners as a voice for HSC and sensible health and safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The case for health and safety has been widely disseminated across the economy – with major employers and employee representatives willing to take the lead on the matter. • Sensible health and safety is increasingly being seen as an important dimension of a high performing workplace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have managed to significantly raise awareness and change behaviour among employers and employees across a range of health and safety issues.
<p>2. <i>Present a clear picture of our role and priorities – reinforcing this by constantly communicating the work we do</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have communicated the successes of the new ways of working, demonstrating that HSC/E has lived up to what we promised and is becoming a model regulator. • We have identified and promoted supporters who are willing to speak out in defence of sensible health and safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key stakeholders know what our priorities are, and are clear about the role we would like them to play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have continued to extend the range of stakeholders who have a clear picture of our role and priorities.
<p>3. <i>Help to build and solidify partnerships by better communicating with, and through, a growing band of partners</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are developing excellent, shared communication systems with our partners. • We have substantially broadened our reach by working with partners to spread key messages. • Our key regulatory partners are clear about how we are changing, and how we wish to work in partnership with them to promote health & safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSE is supporting a wide range of effective partnerships, which are actively communicating the benefits and proper approach to sensible health and safety. • We have built a network of partners who are actively speaking up in defence of sensible health and safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have further extended our range of partners speaking up in defence of sensible health and safety

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our partners are also beginning to use the phrase “sensible health and safety” in promoting our common cause. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSC/E’s commitment to partnership working is widely recognised. 	
4. <i>Put in place effective internal communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers are confidently and effectively communicating key messages to staff and receiving feedback. • Staff are feeling better informed about the priorities and activities of HSE. • Commissioners are kept informed about key issues and HSE staff are clearer about the priorities of Commissioners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff see themselves as part of ‘one HSE’, rather than identifying their roles only in relation to their specific directorate and team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff develop effective internal communications as a dimension to all main initiatives.
5. <i>Establish a strong and dynamic strategic communication approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication planning systems are in place, and we are targeting resources more effectively. • We have learnt lessons from the previous year, and have used them to further strengthen our communication activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are prioritising communication efforts effectively, by ensuring strong links between such activities and our strategic goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have accumulated detailed research on our key audiences. • Our communication outputs are evidence-based – focusing on audiences and delivering messages that we know to be effective.
6. <i>Develop a communication culture across the HSC/E</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers across the HSE are engaging with the communications process – sharing information and discussing tactics with the Communications Directorate at an early stage. • There is a large network of managers and staff who are aware of the benefits and principles of communications, and are active supporters. • We have in place a network of senior staff who are skilled in communications and, alongside Commissioners, act as spokespeople. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across HSE strategic communications thinking is constantly being applied at the front-end of the development of initiatives and programmes. The organisation is not only supportive of communication but also communication savvy. • We have substantially improved the communication competence of HSE staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers across HSE are confident communicators – with a good understanding of the principles of strategic communications. • Staff are accessing communications support in a timely way – spotting the right issues where proactive or reactive communication support is most needed.

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORATE COMING EVENTS MAR-MAY 2005 (March 2005)		
Date	Event	Lead
In w/c 28 Feb	Fact-finding blitz by FOD on issues relating to waste collection	HSE
Tues 1st	Bilbao Agency meeting	EU
Tues 1 st	Joint HSE/EEF and Bond & Pearce Solicitors Conference – ‘Compensation Culture, myths & realities’ – Lord Falconer, DCA, and Bill Callaghan speaking. To examine ways of reducing cost following accidents and investigating the benefits of occ health and rehabilitation (non-media event)	HSE/EEF and Bond & Pearce Solicitors
Wed 2nd	Info sheet on laying kerb stones – emphasis on mechanical laying equipment – press release	HSE
Wed 2nd	Rail Safety & Standards Board/Rail Passenger Council report – ‘health and safety effects of crowding’	Non-HSE (RSSB/RPC)
Fri 4 th	SHAD (Safety and Health Awareness Day) Aintree racecourse, Merseyside	HSE
Fri 4th	‘Healthy Working Lives’ – Frontline meeting – FOD Scotland	HSE
Fri 4 th – Sun 6 th	Scottish Labour Party Conf	
Fri 4 th – Sun 6 th	Liberal Democrat Party Spring Conf, Harrogate	
Mon 7th	Slips & Trips seminar, Crystal Palace	HSE
Tues 8 th , Weds 9 th	Farm Safety Awareness Day, local event in Barnstaple, Devon	HSE
Weds 9 th	Mesothelioma Summit to be held at BMA House London; attendees include Melanie Johnston MP (Minister for health, including cancers)	Non-HSE (British Lung Foundation (BLF))
Thurs 10 th	‘COSHH – Current and Developing Issues’ British Occupational Hygiene Society Seminar, Edinburgh	Non-HSE (British Occ Hygiene Society)
Fri 11 th	Seminar and Launch of thermal comfort in the workplace website; press release to be issued	HSE
Fri 11th	Sentencing in manslaughter case of modern apprentice killed in explosion at garage	CPS in lead
Fri 11 th	‘Healthy Working Lives – The Challenge for Scotland’ Society for Occupational Medicine, Scotland conference.	Non-HSE (Society for Occupational Medicine)
Sat 12 th – Sun 13 th	Scottish National Party Conf	
Weds 16 th	National Route Crime Group (NRCG) host ‘Tackling Crime and ASB on Britain’s Rail Network, held at Aston Villa FC – (Stephen Williams’ attendance tbc)	Non-HSE (NRCG)
Wed 16th	Fish Farming Conf – FOD Scotland	HSE
Fri 18 th	M&E Fit Out ladders & Steps Safety and Health Awareness Day (SHAD), Sheffield	HSE (Construction Division)
Fri 18 th	Safety & Health Awareness Day (SHAD), East London	HSE (Construction Division)
Fri 18th	Scottish Conservative Party Conf	

Weds 23 rd	Health Handling, Safety & Health Awareness Day (SHAD), Barnsley	HSE
Weds 23 rd	HSE conference – setting up Health & Safety Committee for Scotland. Margaret Burns HSC to chair	HSE
Thurs 24th	House of Commons Easter Recess	
Wed 30 th – 1 April	Offshore Oil & Gas Safety Conf, inc reception for international regulators forum at Buckingham Palace	HSE
Thurs 31st	Signals Passed at Danger – report for February – website publication	
	Also in March: - Initial findings from public debate over HSC's role in and approach to public safety - HSE Backs! – 2005 initiative – launch in Cardiff	
	April 2005	
Fri 1st	Workers Safety Awards event	HSE
Fri 1st	Inst of Directors conf – HSE Seminar	
Mon 4th	House of Commons Returns	
Wed 6th	Common Commencement date for Regs on: H&S fees (update); simplified regs on explosives; Work at Heights; COSHH; anthrax; revised framework for occ exposure levels; exposure limits for RCF and subtilins	HSE
Thurs 14 th & Fri 15th	Clean Hospital Summit (Patients Association)	
Sun 17 th – Tues 19th	IOSH Conf 'Red Tape Green Light'	
Mon 18 th – Wed 20th	Scottish TUC conf	
Tues 19 th – Thurs 21st	British Occ Hygiene Soc cont 'Occ Hygiene 2005', Manchester	
Wed 27th	Work at Heights Regulations launch	HSE
Wed 27 th -Thurs 28th	IOSH conf, Cardiff	
Thurs 28th	Workers' Memorial Day and ILO World Health and Safety Day (construction theme)	Unions ILO
Fri 29th	Signals Passed at Danger report for March	HSE
	May 2005	
Tues 10th	Camarthen SHAD	HSE
Tues 10th	Airdie Designer Awareness Day (construction)	HSE
Tues 17 th – Thurs 19th	Health and Safety Expo, NEC	Non-HSE
Wed 18th	HSL Buxton official opening day	
Mon 23rd	Start of Noise Action Week	Non -HSE
Thurs 26th	House of Commons Whitsun Recess	
Tues 31st	Signals Passed at Danger report for April	HSE