

LAs and HSE Working Together STEP Progress Report

Activities in the Regions

North West

During 2004/5, the partnership team in the NW concentrated on getting to know and understand the overall needs and priorities of NW LAs. The team has met with individuals or groups representing senior managers across all 43 LAs and is working towards developing a regional forum.

There are five health and safety liaison groups in the NW. They meet on average six times per year. A member of the partnership team attends each liaison meeting. To improve information sharing across the region a partnership newsletter has been developed.

LAs that have adopted topic inspection approaches are being supported by the provision of seminars designed to develop a consistent approach between LAs and between LAs and HSE.

A number of examples of partnership working have been developed, for example

- **North West Contact Centre Project:** This was developed from the successful Merseyside Contact Centres Project. Funded by DTI, the project involves representatives of TUC, call centres, LAs and HSE in improving health, safety and productivity through innovative approaches. Two sub-projects are proposed on developing accurate sickness absence data recording and targeting musculo skeletal disorders and stress in emergency services' call centres.
- **Contribution to the Backs! Campaign:** NW is targeting higher risk manual handling activities at airports in partnership with Manchester City Council, Civil Aviation Authority and Manchester Airport Group.
- **Falls from height in warehouses:** Cheshire LAs are undertaking two projects on falls from height in warehousing/storage facilities. A project plan has been jointly developed with the partnership team and a leaflet has been produced for local businesses; an inspection programme will follow.

So far LA professionals have been very positive about the potential for partnership working and further joint planning and development of partnership working is proposed. For the future work to ensure closer involvement of elected members is proposed.

East and South East

ESE held 3 events in 2005 for Senior Managers and elected members to introduce the programme. These led to 50 of the 115 LAs signing a statement

of intent with HSE. Contact with groups of Chief Officers is ongoing and the PM team is arranging visits to individual LAs to explain the programme.

As ESE has 12 Liaison Groups emphasis has been given to the formation of Regional Groups. In the South East the Chairs/Secretaries of the Liaison Groups meet with LACORS Forum members and HSE staff in the South East Partnership Forum (SEPF). This engagement has resulted in a proactive group who are keen to pursue regional strategies. In the Eastern Region attempts to form a similar group are ongoing.

In the South East arrangements are in development so that HSE and LAs can commence planning partnership activities from 2006/07. The proposals set up a framework for planning that all enforcing authorities can work within, and ensure that discussions take account of strategic matters relevant to both HSC priorities and local objectives.

ESE has coordinated initiatives including:

- Kent and Medway – Transporting Food Safely;
- East Anglia White Goods initiative;
- Southampton transport project;
- Falls from Height in Watford and Three Rivers.

Four of ESE's offices have local arrangements for buddying/partnering between HSE and LA staff – this is assisting with technical support to initiatives and sharing of skills on topic inspection.

As part of the work on National Warrants a pilot is underway to test new arrangements for the joint authorization of HSE inspectors and LA Officers by running a 6-month project in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. This work should:

1. Increase the flexibility and responsiveness of health and safety regulators to situations of significant risk
2. Remove inefficiencies in administration that result from the prescription of the Enforcing Authority Regulations
3. Improve communication and cooperation between health and safety regulators
4. Facilitate the collective use of resources to increase the effectiveness of the regulatory system.

Yorkshire and the North East

The development of partnership working in YNE has been taken forward by a group formed from local LACoRS Health and Safety Policy Forum members and HSE representatives. The formation of the group is in itself a clear indication of a partnership to develop working arrangements. However, the commitment shown by the members has also been a powerful lever to encourage the wider engagement of LAs across the region.

Publicising the programme Statement of Intent (Sol) and the principles it embodies has been a core activity. Two major events, each attended by a Commissioner, were held in late 2004. At these events senior LA representatives were invited to demonstrate their commitment to partnership working by signing a local agreement together with HSE's Divisional Director. In mid March 05 an event examining the theory and practice of partnership working was held at the Leeds Armoury. There were contributors from LAs who discussed their experiences of partnership working and how partnerships could be fostered and developed. There were also contributions from academics and representatives of industry who explored the practical problems of developing partnerships between complex organisations. The event was well attended, attracting delegates from across the country. The event was also the venue for the formal launch of the "Building on best practice" guide by the keynote speaker, Judith Donovan.

Scotland

In September 04 the Sol was launched to Elected Members at a meeting of the Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) and to environmental health professionals at the Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland (REHIS) annual update event. REHIS also considered the aims and outlines of the programme at this event.

The Scotland programme roll out event was held on 3/12/04. This event was attended by representatives of all 32 Scottish LAs, including Chief Executives, Elected Members and Chief Officers.

Scotland has four liaison groups and a national HASCOG. These groups have discussed partnership work and where necessary sessions have covered detailed work on partnership issues such as planning joint working.

All of the 32 Scottish local authorities are involved in partnership work the regional projects including:

Care Homes: A common topic inspection approach to premises where enforcement is currently divided between both HSE and LA.

Transport and Warehousing: Initially topic inspections of selected companies from warehousing through to delivery.

Outdoor leisure amenities: Two events for people working in these industries to i) raise their awareness of accident and ill health risks and how to avoid them ii) improve their knowledge of health and safety topics and iii) signpost them to relevant sources of information and advice.

Backs!: involvement in the backs campaign.

The Health and Safety Committee for Scotland (now Health and Safety at Work in Scotland-HASWIS) will provide a forum to give a clear focus for health and safety for Scotland. The Committee will enhance delivery through better integrated intelligence and offers a mechanism to co-ordinate partnership action in line with HSC's strategy. The practical aim is to share best practice and to plan joint working between the whole range of stakeholders who can contribute to improving health and safety in Scotland.

Midlands

All 10 Midlands Counties have liaison and Chief officer groups. A Midlands Liaison Group has also been created to respond to the programme. This group consists of either the Chair or Secretary of each County Group and is chaired by the LACoRs Policy Forum representative for the East Midlands.

There has been a strong focus on engaging elected members. Initial contacts were arranged via the Chief Officer groups. Over 120 elected members have now been seen. A key element of all these contacts has been to explain and discuss the Statement of Intent and raise awareness of the links between health and safety enforcement activities and the wider strategic objectives of LAs.

Developing competence and ensuring consistency between HSE and LA staff have also been key issues. A number of training events, especially on topic priorities including workplace transport, stress and working at height have been arranged. A highlight has been work to develop investigation skills. This has involved the West Midlands LAs. Together they developed an investigation skills workshop. This involved LA Inspectors 'role playing' a variety of roles involved in the scenario. Delegates undertook a simulated investigation with actual physical and documentary evidence available to them. They then drew up conclusions and suggested action and received feedback on their performance from experienced LA staff. The scheme was so well received within the West Midlands that it was decided to develop this and make it available across the whole of the area. This was an excellent example of larger LAs being prepared to support smaller LAs to develop capacity with relatively little help from HSE.

A project dealing with all the Builders Merchants (BMs) across the Midlands is underway. Enforcement responsibility for BMs is shared between LAs and HSE. In general LAs deal with the premises and HSE deliveries to and from the premises. This project aims to bring alignment of inspection standards and approaches between HSE and LAs based around the priority topics. The project involves inviting small and medium sized BMs to attend seminars at which standards are set out by LA, HSE and industry representatives. Businesses attending the seminars will then not be inspected by either LAs or HSE for an agreed period. The big 4 national BM businesses (Jewsons, Travis Perkins, Build Base and Build Centre) will be audit inspected against the standards set out at the presentations by LA staff later on in the year. LA Inspectors will then make presentations to the management boards on their findings.

South West

Visits to the eight County Liaison Groups and to Chief EHO meetings are almost complete. The purpose is to publicise the aims, objectives and activities of the partnership team, the prime objectives being to set up regional communication channels and mechanisms to support future partnership working.

A Forum for Regional Excellence in Safety and Health (FRESH) at which HSE and LA inspectors meet to discuss and agree approaches to operational issues, policies, training and joint working has been set up. The Chair will pass to a LA Chief EHO from the autumn 2005 and other Chief EHOs will be invited to become involved in joint planning for 06-07.

LA representatives have also attended an HSE work planning meeting for the first time, as a step towards coordinating priority setting and planning.

Under the auspices of FRESH, and as part of the Backs! campaign, a regional joint project to examine MSD and transport risks in the furniture delivery industry has been initiated. EHOs and HSE inspectors included furniture retail, manufacturing and transport firms in their visits for the campaign, and shadowed delivery crews on their rounds. Joint visits were used where needed to avoid enforcement allocation ambiguities.

A local Statement of Intent to be signed by, respectively, the HSE Divisional Director and the relevant LA elected member, has been sent to each LA in the region. Publicity for those signing up will be linked to a local joint exercise such as ladders week in autumn 2005.

Three other types of event have been welcomed by LAs and are planned; first, briefings by HSL to inform EHOs about the services HSL can offer; second, at the year end, an update covering legal and technical issues and plans for 06-07; third, a workshop in October for all Chief EHOs to bring them together to discuss and agree ways of jointly making better use of their, and HSE's, common resources in regulating health and safety within the region.

This work supports, and runs in parallel with, existing partnership working in the region which has included jointly run seminars for local SMEs; joint, targeted visits; training for EHOs; and, of course, continuing liaison and support to LAs from the HSE ELOs.

Wales

Working with LAs in Wales has been taken forward on four main fronts

1. **Joint LA:HSE audits.** All 22 Welsh LAs have participated in this process, pairing up with a neighboring authority, and auditing each other against the S18 guidance. HSE staff have been involved in moderating the process, and FOD Wales has itself been audited by an LA team against the same S18 criteria. The final report will be available in the Autumn. The work itself has established close links between LA and HSE staff and has demonstrated HSE's willingness to develop a more open relationship with LAs.

2. **Chief Executive/Elected Member contacts** Visits have been paid to 18 of the 22 LAs to meet CEO's and (in about half of the cases), Directors, CEHO's and elected Members to seek support for partnership working, and discuss audit findings. CEO's generally supportive, and mindful of the links to be made to other strategies in Wales - most commonly the Community Strategy, and Health Challenge Wales. These contacts have raised the profile of health and safety, and most LAs are now looking to build on the opening provided. This work has also stimulated support from LA senior managers for a pilot to explore options for closer working with HSE in Wales to explore post-Hampton thinking and possible efficiency gains from shared service provision. How this could be taken forward is being discussed with Welsh LAs.

3. **Joint planning and delivery.** There are three Welsh regional LA panels. Each has submitted project proposals to a joint LA/HSE/CIEH/WLGA steering group. For 04/05 there were 14 such proposals, with most linked to RHS priorities - some local, some regional, and including one all Wales project, where LA and HSE Inspectors carried out a joint inspection initiative looking at manual handling in care homes. Some 200 + homes were visited using the Wales Manual Handling passport scheme as the benchmark to assess compliance with training requirements. Evaluation is by HSL, and is based in part on the use of a climate survey tool.

4. **Developmental activities.** Work to develop consistent approaches between LA and HSE inspectors has been central to these activities. An enforcement liaison conference was attended by 75 LA staff and covered drafting of enforcement notices, working at heights, and COSHH. This work has been supplemented by LA and HSE staff sharing experience and enforcement practice and standards during a series of joint inspections.

London

Partnership working has developed on several fronts across London, but work done to develop a major project, Moving Goods Safely (MGS), exemplifies much of the progress made.

HSE in London has worked with two already-existing LA groups, the London Health and Safety Liaison Group (LLG) and the Association of London Environmental Health Managers (ALEHM) to develop the MGS project. This project addresses the hazards (slips and trips, falls from height, workplace transport and MSD) associated with the delivery of goods to wholesale and retail premises and subsequently to commercial and domestic users. At different points along this chain the enforcement responsibility transfers back and forth between LAs and HSE. Consequently, agreeing consistent standards and approaches offers considerable benefit to enforcers and dutyholders alike and representatives of LLG, ALEHM, SE Region TUC, British Retail Consortium (BRC) and HSE are all represented on the project team. The MGS project board is chaired by Joyce Edmond-Smith.

The MGS project is being taken forward by twelve joint LA-HSE teams. Each team is taking a dedicated approach to working with an individual multi-site retailer. This approach will help in establishing how best to coordinate approaches to larger companies where enforcement responsibilities are shared between several LAs and with HSE. This coordination of approaches to nationally-operating companies has been particularly welcomed by BRC's Risk and Safety Committee.

As the project has developed other smaller projects have been commenced to look at cross-pavement deliveries, stone handling in Camden and Brent and airport shop logistics at Heathrow airport, all areas where there is overlap between LA and HSE enforcement responsibility.

In addition to this current project other joint projects have been concluded, these include

- "Stress and the City" work with two London boroughs (Corporation of London and Tower Hamlets) with responsibility for many major financial services and the London Chamber of Commerce to produce seminar and workshops to support HSE's Stress Programme.
- "Window Cleaning Safety" Joint work between Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and the Corporation of London. These boroughs all contain numerous large office developments where window cleaning is procured and controlled by a limited number of managing agents. This event brought together these agents and set out the standards expected of them.