HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

A Paper by Colin Douglas
Advisor(s): Shelagh Molloy
Cleared by Jonathan Rees on 15 July 2005

Issue

1.   This paper summarises progress since the March 2005 update.

Timing

2.   One of a series of quarterly updates.

Recommendation

3.   HSC to note developments set out in this report, communications research findings in Annex 1, and new research projects in Annex 2.

Background

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

- Promote the case for health and safety
- Present a clear picture of HSC/E's role and focus
- Build partnerships
- Put in place effective internal communications
- Establish a strategic communications approach
- Develop a communications culture

Promoting the case for health and safety and raising our profile

5.   Our strategy identified key target audiences and the initial 2004-5 focus on national government and key stakeholders was extended for 2005-6 to employers and employees. We track progress through a twice yearly MPs survey - the latest survey was deferred for the election and results are due end-July – and an annual MORI poll. Our February 2005 poll (1000 citizens, 2000 employees, 500 employers, 200 CEOs) showed broadly similar results to Jan 2005 with a drop in employer favourability ratings - hard to explain at this stage but EA and FSA also saw a dip in employer ratings. The survey included a sample of CEOs for the first time. CEO attitudes are particularly positive – 83% agree with HSE's vision and 78% think health and safety benefit their company. Results are summarised in Annex 1.

6.   **Sensible health and safety.** Lord Falconer gave the keynote speech at the HSC-hosted seminar on risk and compensation in March and trailed Government intentions to legislate against claims farmers, since announced in the Queens Speech as part of the Compensation Bill. HSC plans for a debate on sensible management of risk took shape while the Prime Minister in May called for a sensible

debate on risk management – closely reflecting one of our key corporate messages. We have made considerable progress in positioning HSC and HSE as central to the debate and agreed with key stakeholders how to contribute. Our House of Lords seminar on sensible risk management on 13 July was well attended, and prompted positive contributions and genuine debate. We used the occasion to launch the public safety discussion document and associated web forum. We explored through focus groups public attitudes to enforcement and emergency services (results are summarised in Annex 1).

7.   **Corporate Campaigns**. Our campaign on the Business Case for health and safety which ran at the end of February had impact: it raised awareness (spontaneous awareness of advertising informing business of the benefits of good health and safety practices rose from 33% to 48%); it was recognised (42% recognised at least one ad); and it shifted attitudes significantly among the target group (larger companies). After the campaign:

- 86% disagreed that health and safety hampered their business (compared with 74% pre-campaign)
- 87% felt that health and safety requirements saved them money (compared with 69% pre-campaign)
- 95% agreed health and safety benefited the company (87% pre-campaign)

8.   Radio and press advertising for the Backs! campaign ran for 4 weeks and is being evaluated during the second half of July. Media coverage has been good - a survey comparing male and female absences for MSD attracting a high level of press attention. Public relations activity will continue to run as will trade press coverage through August and a full evaluation will be done in September. Online results are for the first 19 days of the campaign (with full evaluation of e-advertising and website activity in August):

- over 22000 visitors with over 3000 repeat visits
- 72% of visitors from GB, the rest from 94 different countries
- more than half of all visitors were first time visits
- 828 people requested booklet online

9.   **Media relations.** Media tracking data is available for April and May. Volume of coverage picked up in May after a dip in April with regional reporting in particular up. HSE's rating is down a little from last quarter's average with growing antipathy in the national media to health and safety standards and regulations. The 'HSE is overzealous and bureaucracy gone mad' message featured more heavily than we would wish, but was outweighed by the 'good partner' message. June coverage should reflect positives from the Backs campaign.

10.   A three-month pilot in Yorkshire & Humberside Region ran from January to test the impact of allocating more resources to media relations. The Government News Network helped FOD staff turn their experiences into media stories. Results (in the table below) show a major impact on the quantity of coverage. The favourability rating was affected by a heavy load of adverse press in January in response to a closure of a Harrogate swimming pool. As a result, the favourability score fell from 54.6 to 54 – both relatively positive scores in comparison to ECHO comparative data. However, had it not been for the Harrogate swimming pool story, the average favourability score would have been even more positive. The impact has extended beyond the trial period with volume still up in April and ratings top of the regional league by May.

Results of Yorkshire & Humberside media relations pilot Jan-March 2005

	Oct – Dec 2004 (monthly average)	Jan – March 2005 (monthly average)
Number of articles:	58.7	92.3
Audience reach (millions):	2.87	4.13

The pilot which cost £30K for additional GNN support will be rolled out to other FOD regions during the year but with a substantially lower resource investment

11.   **Other developments**. The Chief Press Officer recruitment has had to be re-run with interviews to be held at end-July.

12.   **Online activity.** HSE's Website has now adopted the Corporate Brand and incorporated International and UK Government web standards to make our webpages more easily accessible for people with disabilities and those using a range of technologies. The standards also make it easier to manage over 20,000 files and 450,000 links on HSE's Website.

13.   HSE' s Website takes 4th place in a June 05 report which ranks Government websites (75 central government and 450 local government sites) for accessibility. It's our highest to date - and ahead of many Departments (e.g MOD, DWP, NHS, DTI), the Disability Rights Commission, and DWP's site for information on disability (disability.gov). However, the real test is whether people with disabilities can use our sites easily, so we are planning another 'practical' assessment soon.

14.   Accessibility is distinct from usability but a sound base on which to tackle other big improvements (including the HSE Intranet); and it has played a part in consistently attracting more than half a million people to the HSE Website every month. The report available at http://www.onrec.com/content2/newsimages/sitemorse32.pdf

15.   **Commission activity.** Bill Callaghan attended an ORR Board, addressed the Royal College of Nurses and Association of Personal Injury Lawyers, judged Business in the Community Awards, launched a Wales Manufacturing Forum and with Timothy Walker continued the series of Strategy Roadshows in HSE offices. Judith Hackitt addressed the Institute of Directors conference; Margaret Burns contributed to HSE recruitment events, chaired RIAC, attended conferences including the Edinburgh leadership event, Offshore Europe and Royal Highland Show with Danny Carrigan who also addressed the EEF and attended a Stress in the City workshop; Hugh Robertson spoke at a partnership event; Judith Donovan at a best practice seminar and Sayeed Khan addressed the SOM. Commissioners also supported the HSL opening.

Building Partnerships

16.   Initial plans with key messages are now in place for engagement with 30 key corporate stakeholders. More detail is at Annex 3. Messages alerting all HSE staff to the arrangements and making them aware of the part they need to play were broadcast.

17.   19 MPs from three different parties worked with HSE to promote the Backs! Campaign.

Internal Communications

18.   Work in hand includes:

- Developing an Internal Communications strategy for the coming year;
- Developing a new corporate briefing system building on feedback about shortcomings in existing arrangements, scheduled for a July launch;
- More research and further improvements to Express, the house journal;
- Internal campaigns in support of the Strategic Programmes and Business Improvement programmes
- Redesigning the Intranet

Strategic Communications

19.   We have pressed on with work to coordinate, integrate and improve the impact of communications outputs:

- A communications message framework has been developed and market tested to ensure our messages are generated from a common 'brand proposition' and set of values. We can now devise new messages consistent with other messages and with stakeholder expectations and needs. Work is underway on a strategy to communicate the new approach and to prioritise and streamline approaches and messages to single organisations and sectors.
- the new brand design continues to be rolled out (currently to stationery)
- new research projects to explore stakeholder attitudes and to market test and evaluate the impact of communications products are listed at Annex 3

20.   **Commercial considerations**. HSE relies on generating £5million a year largely from its current range of publications, a greater challenge than selling new products. A new catalogue is being made available to recent customers and booksellers, and we are marketing specific products and offers to targeted customers. A new version of our best seller 'Essentials' is due for launch in October and we are developing a promotional campaign to generate income in the second half of the year.

21.   The HSE Board have asked for costed options on making more priced information free of charge. This project depends on decisions to be made in the context of implementing the Hampton Review recommendations on what information and advice HSE should provide.

Developing a communications culture

22.   Since March around 60 HSE staff from programme and other teams have had training in communications planning and communications slots have been included in induction programmes for new Band 4 staff in policy and FOD.   Meanwhile Account Managers continue to work closely with programme teams, developing communication plans and providing advice.

Consultation

23.   PEFD, Communications Delivery Service

Presentation

24.   None

Costs and benefits

25.   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

26.   Spend on Communications Directorate payroll and admin costs, plus support from the Government News Network for regional media coverage totalled £665k to end June. Spend on publications, publicity, and promotional activity to end-June (excluding Communications Delivery Service staff costs) was £1,927k (£954k on information,publicity, and online services, £973k 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.

27.   Staff costs of Communications Delivery Service were £489K to end-June. Income generated to end-June was £1,251k (£1,056K sale of priced publications and £195k royalties and copyright fees).

COMPLETED RESEARCH

MORI 2005

Scope: Annual poll of 1,000 citizens, 2,000 employees, 500 employers and 200 CEOs examining their attitudes towards HSE and health and safety matters. First poll was in January 2004 and CEOs were added to the 2005 poll. Very few changes were observed in the 2005 survey.

Results

- The majority feel they work in a safe environment.
- Research participants perceive health and safety in the generic sense and do not distinguish between health risks and safety risks.
- H&S concerns are taken seriously - approximately 70% of each audience perceive H&S as a cornerstone of society.
- Employers and CEOs feel h&s requirements make a positive contribution to the workplace: benefit company as a whole, save money in the long-term, provide defence against unjustified compensation claims, h&s requirements don't hamper their business and are not biased against small businesses.
- Awareness of HSE and favourability relatively high compared with similar organisations – particularly among CEOs.
- Smaller businesses have lower awareness, receive less communications and find H&S more burdensome.

CHANGES SINCE 2004

CITIZENS
– 	Increase in concern with H&S in the workplace (up from 53% to 61% in 2005)
– 	Also comparable increases in concern across the board (e.g. Toy Safety (47% to 55%) and Public Transport Safety (45% to 58%)

EMPLOYEES
– 	Those saying that H&S in the workplace is 'very important' (i.e. giving a '10' score) fell from 35% to 28%
– 	Increase in concern with H&S in the workplace (up from 53% to 61% in 2005)

EMPLOYERS
– 	Fall in proportion saying employer is responsible for Health and Safety risks in workplace (91% to 77%); and decline in those citing employee responsibility (55% to 36%)
– 	Increase in those citing caring for employees as an important consideration (58% to 64%) and decrease in those saying compliance with laws / regulations (60% to 54%) and company policy/ procedure (33% to 24%)
– 	Decline in proportion disagreeing that Health and Safety requirements seriously hamper the business (78% to 65%)
– 	Fall in proportion agreeing Health and Safety requirements benefit company as a whole (38% to 27%) and fall in those agreeing that health and safety requirements save money in the long-term (31% to 24% - corresponding increase in those who tend to agree 14% to 20%)

Construction

Scope: Research examined attitudes towards H&S/HSE within the Construction industry and evaluated how HSE can improve its communications with clients, contractors, designers and workers. There were two stages to the research – an initial qualitative phase consisting of

depths with contractors, designers, clients and workers and a second quantitative stage involving 900 interviews with contractors, designers, clients and roofers.

Results
- Barriers to the implementation of health and safety initiatives are more prevalent among smaller companies and less prevalent among larger contractors/large repeat clients. The biggest barriers are: seeing the guidelines as more relevant to large companies; clients' focus on price at the expense of health and safety; not getting to hear about change to guidelines.
- Primary motivators to following good h&s practice are: the need to protect company reputation; the opportunity to save time and money; concern about the public being affected; concern about being sued; the threat of prosecution and the inclination to turn down work rather than cut corners.
- Majority agree that HSE helps them to comply with guidelines, but far fewer agree that it covers the desired subject areas or provides the desired level of detail.
- Inspections are unlikely to have more than a short term effect on site behaviour.
- All groups indicate that accident and injury is more likely to be the result of incompetence than lack of awareness or knowledge.
- The health and safety risks that are more likely to be top of mind are those relating to accident or injury – particularly 'falling from heights' rather than health or welfare issues.

Occupational Health

Scope: 42 company 'audits' occurred with directors, senior managers, line managers and workers across a broad industry spectrum including construction, education, financial services, govt/public sector, health, manufacturing and communications.

Results
- The issue of workplace health is addressed in different ways according to the type and size of businesses:
    - smaller businesses are unlikely to have considered issues such as stress or managing workplace sickness in a formal manner and certainly not as part of health and safety
    - within larger businesses, the HR function is likely to deal with such issues with the support of specialist OH personnel.

- Barriers to dealing with health issues are:
    - a sense that the business does not have a problem in these areas
    - a sense that the issues are already being dealt with.

- Whilst larger businesses feel there is a wide range of sources of advice, smaller businesses are often unaware of the support and advice available.

- General lack of awareness of HSE's involvement in health, so HSE not a 'natural' organisation to contact for health at work advice.

- Overall businesses perceive HSE as an 'enforcer' a slightly negative association based around a sense of 'inapproachability'.

Public views on emergency services (ES)
Scope: Gauge public and inspector views towards enforcement of emergency services through focus groups and identify at what point HSE intervention should take place. First stage was with members of the public and consisted of eight groups spanning a range of life styles – young singles and couples with no children, parents, empty nesters and pensioners from all socio-economic groups. Second stage currently taking place with HSE inspectors.

Results with 'public': Public expressed concerns that h&s could impede the work of the emergency services. In particular:

- Prosecution was perceived as pointless but this perception was based on various assumptions including sufficient training for ES personnel, provision of adequate equipment, and a lack of pressure on ES staff to risk their safety. However if these assumptions were invalid, then prosecution could be viewed differently.
- Essentially it was the circumstances that led to an incident that should determine whether there was a case for enforcement and prosecution, not how negative the outcome has been.

WORK IN PROGRESS: NEW RESEARCH

COMMISSIONED SINCE APRIL 2005

Stakeholder research

Worker involvement
Research with employers and employees to investigate the key triggers and barriers to worker involvement in the public and food & beverage sectors. Recruitment currently under way.

Financial directors
HSE has been approached by CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants) to sponsor their public servant awards. This research should establish the extent to which financial directors in the public sector are concerned with sickness absence and able to influence public sector initiatives to combat the relatively high sickness levels that exist within the public sector.

Communications product testing

Workplace transport
Research commissioned to evaluate web-based examples (in HTML and Macromedia format) of good practice and determine whether any changes need to be implemented to the software.

Construction intranet
A new construction intranet is being produced which will act as a model of good practice for other parts of the intranet. De-brief of results in early July.

Falls from heights
New regulations and leaflet launched in April 2005. Research now required to gauge people's awareness of the regulations and whether the leaflet is the right vehicle and format for user needs. Proposals currently awaited.

Slips & trips
A 'slips & trips' campaign is launching in the autumn and research is being conducted to inform the messages and tone of the new campaign. Research proposal recently agreed and recruitment due to start shortly.

Noise/HAV
Research is being conducted to evaluate a new draft booklet and pocket book which are being produced for the new Noise regulations coming into force in March 2006. Agency not yet appointed.

Gas safety issues
Research is being commissioned to test the effectiveness of a gas safety leaflet targeting consumers. Brief not yet written.

Corporate Stakeholder	Generic key messages	Lead contact	Senior Champion
ACAS	1) HSE can work with you to build and maintain a healthy workforce.	Chris Rowe	Jane Willis
Association of British Insurers	1) Managing workers' safety and health is good business.	Neal Stone	Giles Denham
Cabinet Office	1) Managing workers' safety and health is good business; 2) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Teresa Quinn	Giles Denham
No 10	1) Managing workers' safety and health is good business; 2) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Steve Pointer	Bill Callaghan
CBI	1) Managing workers' safety and health is good business.	Laurence Golob	Justin McCracken
Chemical Industries Association	1) Managing workers' safety and health is good business.	Bob Woodward	Justin McCracken
Department of Health	1) HSE can work with you to build and maintain a healthy workforce.	Linda Varney	Jane Willis
DTI	1) Managing workers' safety and health is good business.	Laurence Golob	Jonathan Rees
DWP	1) HSE can work with you to build and maintain a healthy workforce; 2) Managing workers' safety and health is good business; 3) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Keith Wiley	Jonathan Rees

HM Treasury	1) HSE can work with you to build and maintain a healthy workforce; 2) Managing workers' safety and health is good business; 3) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Mark Dempsey	Vic Coleman
LACORS	1) Managing workers' safety and health is good business.	Allan Davies	Phil Scott
Media	1) Managing workers' safety and health is good business; 2) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Chief Press Officer	Colin Douglas
TUC	1) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Stuart Bristow	Jonathan Rees
Audit Commission	1) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Mark Dempsey	Vic Coleman
British Chambers of Commerce	1) Managing workers' safety and health is good business.	Sarah Mallagh	Sandra Caldwell
Chartered Institute of Envrionmental Health	1) Managing workers' safety and health is good business.	Allan Davies	Phil Scott
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development	1) HSE can work with you to build and maintain a healthy workforce.	Chris Rowe	Vivienne Dews
Development Agencies	1) Managing workers' safety and health is good business.	Sarah Mallagh	Sandra Caldwell
EEF	1) Managing workers' safety and health is good business.	James Barrett	Sandra Caldwell
Environment Agency	1) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Les Philpott	Justin McCracken

European Commission	1) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Malcolm Darvill	Jonathan Rees
Food Standards Agency	1) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Allan Davies	Phil Scott
IOSH	1) HSE can work with you to build and maintain a healthy workforce.	Liz Gibby	Peter Brown
Learning and Skills Council	1) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Roger Monaghan	Sandra Caldwell
Politicians	1) Managing workers' safety and health is good business; 2) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Steve Pointer	Bill Callaghan
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority	1) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Donald Goodhew	Giles Denham
ROSPA	1) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Liz Gibby	Peter Brown
Scottish Executive	1) HSE can work with you to build and maintain a healthy workforce; 2) Managing workers' safety and health is good business; 3) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	Sarah Jones-	Stewart Campbell
Sector Skills Development Agency	1) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.	James Barrett	Liz Gibby
Welsh Assembly	1) HSE can work with you to build and maintain a healthy	Chris Ward	Terry Rose

	workforce;		
	2) Managing workers' safety and health is good business;		
	3) Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.		

The corporate stakeholders marked in **bold** have been identified as being of the highest priority for action now.