

Health and Safety Executive Board Minutes

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Exemptions:	None		

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

HSE Board

Minutes of meeting of HSE Board held on Wednesday 1 October 2003, in the Fortune Room, Rose Court

Present

Sandra Caldwell
Paul Davies
Vivienne Dews
Adrian Ellis
Robert Humm
Sian Lewis
Justin McCracken
Alan Osborne
Nick Starling
Kate Timms
Timothy Walker
Chris Willby
Laurence Williams

Also attending

Item 3:
Kevin Allars

Item 4:
Kevin Allars
Steve Dennis

Item 5:
Kevin Allars
Steve Dennis

Shahmeen Sheikh - Secretariat

1 Draft minutes of the HSE Board meeting held on 3 September 2003; and matters arising (B/03/M15)

1.1 The minutes of the previous Board meetings were agreed.

2 Health & Safety. Oral report by Justin McCracken

2.1 The latest accident and ill health reports were presented. Initial indications are that reported incidents are continuing to decline. Cautious optimism was expressed over this; however, it was noted that the reduction coincided with the setting of targets to reduce incident rates. The importance of reporting all incidents was restated.

2.2 There have been two RIDDOR reportable incidents. One was a high potential incident at HSL which is being investigated. The Board asked that they were kept informed of the outcome of the investigation.

2.3 Manual handling incidents over the past 18 months have been reviewed. It was found that none of the incident involved those people whose jobs normally involve lifting operations. This has highlighted the importance of being aware of manual handling issues especially where office moves are concerned.

2.4 There has been an internal audit of HSE's internal management of health and safety. The findings have been helpful and have raised some key points. The Board asked that this topic be formally presented at the Board within the next few months. It was not known whether the internal audit report would be available externally.

Action Justin McCracken to return to Board with formal paper on health and safety arrangements in HSE.

Action Vivienne Dews to clarify status of the internal audit report.

2.5 The Board raised the following points in discussion:

- i Manual handling procedures were circulated to Board members. However, it was not clear how these fitted into the current health and safety documentation
- ii An update on progress to appointing co-ordinators for buildings, especially Rose Court, under the new arrangements was requested
- iii Concern was expressed regarding the increasing amount of sick leave taken for one day. It was not clear whether this was trend across all parts of the organisation
- iv It appears that although targets exist for reducing sickness absence levels, there is no strategy underpinning this

Action Justin McCracken to clarify position on the current structure of guidance and instructions on health and safety matters particularly with reference to manual handling.

Action Justin McCracken to update the Board on progress to appointing co-ordinators for buildings - including Rose Court,

Action Vivienne Dews to develop strategy on sickness absence for the Board by December

3 CSR – Final Report. Presented by Kevin Allars (B/03/064)

This was the final report from Kevin Allars but this does not mark the end of the workstreams associated with the project.

The following points were made in discussion:

- i The work from the CSR is important to HSE and is more than the estates review

- ii Communication of the CSR work to staff is important
- iii The targets of reducing corporate support to 4% is a milestone and not an end point in itself
- iv It is important that savings achieved are measured
- v Management spans are to be reduced. This has implications for promotion prospects
- vi Workforce planning project may also impact on this
- vii The T&S system is changing with less checking being done centrally. These changes reflect the increased accountability of line managers and claimants.
- viii It was felt important that feedback to the Board continues

The Board:

- i Noted the points raised in the paper and stated its intention that the work is seen through to completion.
- ii Noted the named SCS staff that have been identified as project leads in taking forward the work
- iii Will continue to encourage their staff to participate fully with the workstreams in order that the identified outputs can be realised as soon as practicable
- iv Agreed to disseminate the paper in order to ensure that staff are aware of the continuing work streams

Action Vivienne Dews to take communication aspects forward

Action Vivienne Dews to return to the Board with proposals on management spans and implications for promotion

Action Vivienne Dews to organise report back to the Board on progress at three monthly intervals.

4 CSR – Estates Review

Presented by Kevin Allars and Steve Dennis. (B/03/065)

This paper was introduced by Vivienne Dews.

During the discussion, it was noted that:

- i HSE has a space allowance of 17m² in its offices. This is in line with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
- ii It was agreed that this space allowance would be reviewed to reduce it to 14m²

- iii Space in Rose Court is not well utilised
- iv Certain staff would be better based outside London eg OSD
- v An interim report exists which refers to HSE's new MHQ as taking staff from London. The Lyons Review may not realise that HSE is relatively small and in terms would not be significant contributor to Lyons as they are looking for around 20 000 people to move
- vi It may not be a straightforward matter to move Policy out of Rose Court. If Policy posts were to move to Bootle, it would be important to identify career development paths for staff, this may include OGD's located in the North West of England
- vii It would be difficult for HSC/E to operate effectively from outside London
- viii Irrespective of the Lyons review, HSE does have a business need to move staff out of central London. This does not necessarily mean that the default location would be Bootle
- ix FOD London are part of the review; they do not need to be located in central London
- x Recognise that although this discussion is primarily about posts, it is difficult to separate posts from people
- xi Recognise that this is a sensitive staff issue, people will be kept informed – there is a meeting planned for staff early December in Rose Court

The Board:

- i notes and supports the current HSE estates strategy
- ii endorses the Director General's urgent signal to the Lyons' Review/DWP that whilst HSE is indeed carrying out a rigorous review of its activities in central London, there are strong business reasons for continuing to be a London-HQ-based organisation, and has no intentions of moving its top-tier HQ functions (the Commission and Executive, and relevant support staff) out of central London
- iii Agreed to advise staff of the stance agreed today, and to remind staff of its commitment to follow through the rigorous evaluation of central London staff roles and functions, but that any resulting staff relocation arrangements will only be undertaken after full consultation with those affected, and with their TU representatives and Line Management.
- iv Agreed that staff would not be recruited into London-based posts without first rigorously examining the options for locating those

staff out of London/South East

5 Proposals for Home/Flexible Working Pilots

Presented by Kevin Allars/Steve Dennis (B/03/059)

Note: Andrew Strawsons comments to Timothy Walker were made available to the Board.

The following points were raised in the discussion:

- i Important not to underestimate the management challenge posed by home working
- ii Important to consider impact on teams as well as individuals. Extensive home working can result in a greater burden being placed on those in the office.
- iii There are issues relating to insurance, tax liabilities and health & safety that will need to be addressed
- iv Trials of home working and hot desking are underway. These are reversible in that it is recognised that these work patterns will not suit everyone
- v In the Midlands, the management board has decided that the Worcester office is too close partly due to high running costs. Staff here have been given the option to homework. In this case, the reversibility option is limited although staff who do not wish to homework may work from another HSE office which may be the Birmingham office
- vi Both Home working and hot desking are voluntary activities
- vii Set up costs are covered by the BSD budget
- viii In terms of legal aspects of home working, there is limited legal right to home working. In addition, employers cannot insist that employees homework without the agreement of individual employees, as this would be termed as a significant change to people's contracts
- ix In view of the situation with office space and home working, Board members agreed to start to operate differently and lead by example

The Board:

- i note the property issues that BSD and FoD are seeking to resolve at Worcester and Bristol
- ii agree that the field pilots are undertaken using an appropriate variant of traditional hot-desking and 'team space'
- iii agree to plans for a limited home working pilot in Policy Group, exploring the issues of team working

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- iv note RPD's intention to identify somebody in BSD personally drive this work forward

6 Implementing the Communications Strategy

Presented by Kate Timms/Vivienne Dews (B/03/066)

Kate Timms introduced this paper.

The following points were made in discussion:

- i The communications considered appear very externally focussed
- ii Internal communication areas require development. This will be part of the remit of the new director of Communications
- iii Decisions to pause publications going to DIAS to make room for the new strategy and decisions of the new Director of Communications. Criteria for continuing work has been circulated by Timothy Walker

The Board noted the Star Alliance proposals for an emerging communications strategy and the planned discussion of communications at the SCS Awayday on 14/15 October.

8 AOB

No other matters raised.