

Meeting Date:	3 December 2003	Open Gov. Status:	Fully Open
Type of Paper:	Minutes (agreed)	Paper File Ref:	
Exemptions:			

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

HSE Board

Minutes of meeting of HSE Board held on Wednesday 3 December 2003, in the Rose Room, Rose Court

Present

Sandra Caldwell
Paul Davies
Vivienne Dews
Colin Douglas
Adrian Ellis
Justin McCracken
Allan Sefton
Kate Timms
Timothy Walker
Chris Willby
Laurence Williams
Jane Willis

Shahmeen Sheikh - Secretariat
Paul Kloss - Observer

Also attending

Item 4: Brian Etheridge

Item 5: John Gould

Item 6: Steve Dennis
Neil Goldsmith

Apologies: Robert Humm
Sian Lewis
Nick Starling

1 Minutes of the HSE Board meeting held on 5 November 2003 (B/03/M18) and matters arising

- 1.1 The minutes of the previous Board meeting were agreed with minor amendments. The action log was reviewed and updated.
- 1.2 The Board welcomed Colin Douglas, Director of Communications.
- 1.3 Timothy Walker reported to the Board that DWP have agreed to changes to the role of Commissioners. It was felt that it would be beneficial if Bill Callaghan came and talked to the Board on this matter.

2 Health & Safety. Oral report by Justin McCracken

- 2.1 There has been another RIDDOR incident. This was to do with manual handling and was particularly disappointing, as manual handling is an area already identified as one to focus on. Again, the use of professional movers is emphasised.

- 2.2 The action tracking system is working well and the Board thanked those involved.
- 2.3 The Drug and alcohol policy has been reviewed after a request to allow random testing on HSE staff by a company. HSE does not support random testing on its staff. Awareness training is to be provided to managers next year via the occupational health providers.
- 2.4 The law on mobile phones has changed – HSE’s policy is that phones should not be used when driving whether handheld or otherwise.
- 2.5 There was a brief discussion regarding the possibility of a no alcohol at work policy.

Action Board members to cascade HSE’s mobile phone policy.

Action Vivienne Dews to bring a paper to the Board regarding a no alcohol policy.

3 Update on Strategy. Presented by Brian Etheridge, Steve Pointer and Phil Kemball & Liz Gyngell (B/03/075)

Brian Etheridge gave a presentation on ‘Finalising the Strategy’.

The following points were made in discussion:

- i Changes have been made to the strategy document as a result of the consultation and a statement to that effect should be included in the revised document
- ii The TUC did not formally respond & HSE TUs have expressed some reservations
- iii There should be mention of working with DWP and working with them
- iv It was felt that it would be beneficial to include a clearer demonstration of the evidence base
- v Worker involvement and compliance of individuals should be included
- vi Where health and safety risks lie in the ALARP region state that HSE will be the ‘voice of common sense’ in instances such as banning of conkers
- vii Section on Major hazard needs to be changed to reflect the role of major hazards work and public safety
- viii Need to demonstrate links to SR2004
- ix There may be some scope for further changes to the document after the HSC meeting

- Action** HSE Trade Union response to be circulated to the Board by Brian Etheridge
- Action** Changes to be made to Strategy document reflecting Board's comments: Brain Etheridge
- Action** Colin Douglas/Timothy Walker/Justin McCracken to review final draft
- Action** Colin Douglas to develop a plan to communicate the strategy

4 Communications: Updating the Board. Presented by Kate Timms (B/03/074)

This paper was introduced by Kate Timms.

The following points were discussed:

- i The publications moratorium is not about stopping publications, but about stopping work to produce them
- ii There appears to be a misconception that these publications will go ahead after 1 April 2004
- iii The publications moratorium is part of changing the Communications Strategy rather than stopping publications per se
- iv Need to identify the best channel for communicating the strategy rather than leaflet production
- v Take up of SCS training has been low
- vi There are issues related to the Press Office. The number of Press Notices being issued needs to be reviewed. This may need to be broadened to include HSE's approach to publicity matters
- vii HID has a strategy of using third party publication such as trade magazines to communicate their message. These activities are not affected by the publications moratorium.

The Board:

- i Noted and endorsed developments in respect of the Director of Communications post; work on a communications strategy; the direction of the DIAS review and further work on the publications moratorium
- ii Recognised that the work of the new 'communications partners' will require a commitment of time. Board Members gave their full support in the development of this important role
- iii The Board asked that the CSG to endorse all exemptions from the moratorium until a definitive procedure is in place

- iv The Board endorsed the 'next steps' outlined in para 13 of the paper

Action Timothy Walker to send message to staff reinforcing the moratorium

Action Colin Douglas & Vivienne Dews to review training opportunities

Action Colin Douglas to review Press Notices and HSE's approach to publicity.

Action Board members to encourage SCS colleagues to participate in leadership training modules; Board members to participate also

5 Early Years Review. Presented by Wayne Crumpton and David Green (B/03/063)

This paper was introduced by Justin McCracken.

The following points were discussed:

- i A 'nested' approach was suggested that identifies what type of training HSE needs to give to all staff and so what can be common training across the board. This can then be followed up by identifying specific areas such as regulatory, policy, finance and planning
- ii There should be a map of common areas to give a 'philosophy' of HSE
- iii There needs to be a balance of competencies to address the requirements of the new strategy
- iv Want to continue the approach of getting people out in the field early in their training
- v There should be a statement of what competencies staff interacting with the public require, what competencies inspectors require and what competencies those involved in wider contact work require.

The Board:

- i Agreed that the 'nested' approach should be adopted
- ii Asked that the paper returns to Board members via correspondence

Action Justin McCracken/Sandra Caldwell/Wayne Crumpton to develop project taking into account nested approach and competency requirements

6 COIN. Presented by Steve Dennis and Neil Goldsmith (B/03/067)

This paper was introduced by Justin McCracken.

The following points were made in discussion:

- i The project has been discussed with DWP who are broadly supportive
- ii COIN should provide a more structured method of interrogating historical data and so RIDDOR data processing should be easily accommodated without increased cost
- iii SID have been involved with COIN from its beginning
- iv Timescales are that the prototype trials should start in January and end in May 2004 with main rollout in September

The Board:

- i Emphasised that in order for this project to be successful, it required buy in from all. The Board needed to be confident that individual D/D's would not request their own custom made packages. All D/Ds heads present agreed that they were supportive of this project and were confident that they could use the bought in product
- ii Gave assent for Option 5 as presented to the Board. This is subject to formal agreement by Timothy Walker as Accounting Officer

Action Vivienne Dews/Steve Dennis to provide formal papers for Timothy Walker to sign

7 Career Development. Presented by J Gould & Susan Mackenzie (B/03/076)

This paper was introduced by Laurence Williams who expressed his thanks to John Gould and his team..

The following points were made in discussion:

- i Career Review Groups exist to facilitate matters, they meet regularly but not frequently and should not prevent any other process from moving forward
- ii There is an expectation that staff will move after five years, although this is flexible
- iii There are certain areas where specialists may not want to move and there are also premium pay barriers
- iv For SCS members, the time in post is agreed at the start of the posting with milestones at one and three years. At four years, they need to 'move or comply' as the Cabinet Office are terming it
- v The Board felt that they wished to reserve the right to move individual without their consent if there was a clear business

need, although it was envisaged that this would be extremely rare occurrence

Action Justin McCracken/Susan Mackenzie to draft communication to staff regarding moves after five years

8 Workforce Strategy. Presented orally by J Gould

The following points were made in discussion:

- i It was agreed that flexible ways of working and projects that had been successful would be identified, thus enabling a profile of a flexible worker to be developed
- ii It was not clear what was meant by a flexible worker and whether that meant a highly trained individual, a person who was geographically mobile, or someone who adapted as situations changed
- iii It was felt that it was important to define the reason that a flexible workforce was required
- iv There may be project management experience in the organisation that has not been identified as being such, as it has been gained on work which was not formally badged as project management i.e. managing large/complex investigations
- v There should be clear links from the Strategy
- vi It is not necessary for every member of staff to be able to do every job in the organisation. That is not the type of flexibility required

The Board:

- i Asked that the reasons why a flexible workforce is required as considered, and that this information is used to develop the work
- ii Asked that Board Members act in a peer review role

Action Board Members to send examples of ways of working, projects and workers that are good illustrations of flexible working to the project team

Action John Gould to facilitate Board Members acting as peer reviewers

9 Sickness Absence Strategy in HSE. Oral Presentation by J Gould & Susan Mackenzie

The Board:

- i Discussed the differences in sickness absence between HSE, the civil service as a whole and the private sector
- ii The differences between the HSE/Civil Service arrangements for dealing with sickness absence and those of the private sector

dealing with sickness absence and those of the private sector were discussed

- iii There was a brief discussion as to the effectiveness of the different ways of managing sickness absence
- iv For long-term absence, it is important to keep touch with staff and to be flexible when people begin the process of returning to work
- v There is a program of surgeries being held for managers to discuss a range of personnel issues including sickness absence. There are also training seminars being held on the topic
- vi Experience shows that having an Occupational Health provider available can be valuable in managing long term absence
- vii Changes to the current procedures were proposed. These would include a change to the point at which review interviews are held, changes to the number of spells of sick leave, earlier referral to the new Occupational Health provider in the case of long-term absence
- viii It was also proposed that better guidance is available for managers on when to discount an absence

The Board broadly supported the proposed changes, although more detailed proposals will be needed along with suitable consultation with the TUs

Action All Board Members to check that they have Individual Sickness Absence Records, and that all people reporting directly to them have such records

10 Retirement Policy. Presented by J Gould in HSE. Presented orally by J Gould & Susan Mackenzie (B/03/077)

This paper was introduced by Vivienne Dews.

The following points were made in discussion:

- i HSE currently has a different retirement policy to DWP
- ii Changes to retirement age will be announced in 2006, but it is not yet known what the changes to UK law will be
- iii There was a brief discussion on whether it was consistent with HSE's values to keep the current policy of retirement at 60 in HSE when it is known that this age may be increased in the near future
- iv The current SCS retirement age is still 60, but from 2006, this will rise to 65
- v If the retirement age is changed, this has cost implications to the cost of HSE

rest of HSE

- vi After discussion, the Board agreed that the accompanying paper would remain open, recognising that this is an issue of importance to many staff

The Board agreed that the retirement age would change, but that the changes to UK law would act as a guide. As such, the changes to the current HSE retirement age will be made after it is known what changes are being made to UK law as a result of the European Equal Treatment Directive

11 Any Other Business

Vivienne Dews reported back on a Cabinet Office project 'A More Professional Civil Service'

Board Members felt it would be helpful to have hard copies of overheads of oral presentations available in the meeting room beforehand.