

Health and Safety Executive Board Paper

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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

The HSE Board

Support for Commissioners

A Paper by Colin Douglas

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Cleared by Colin Douglas on 8 April 2004

Issue

1. The HSE Board meeting on 4 February discussed new ways of working with the Commission. As part of this discussion it was agreed that Colin Douglas and Mark Dempsey would look at the support Commissioners would require in order to discharge their new role.

Timing

2. It is desirable to progress this as soon as the Strategic Programmes and Corporate Communications Plan is in place so that Commissioners can undertake the role in championing the outputs of the new Strategy.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that the Board:
 - agrees the approach set out in paragraphs 5-12 below;
 - reviews the resource requirements of the Secretariat in six months time in the light of experience in implementing this new approach.

Background

4. It is intended to give Commissioners a stronger role in championing the cause of sensible health and safety among key stakeholders. In order to do this, they will require

effective support from officials to ensure that they are well briefed on issues and that diaries are effectively co-ordinated.

Argument

Communication role

5. The following is a list of the support mechanisms that will need to be put in place in order to support Commissioners in their role in championing sensible health and safety to key stakeholders:
6. The Communications Directorate will provide a forward programme of events and communication issues so that Commissioners can identify which ones they would wish to be involved in, or need briefing on in order to communicate with relevant stakeholders.
7. The Communications Directorate to provide regular updates to Commissioners on significant announcements affecting health and safety and lines to take on these issues where relevant.
8. A member of the Secretariat to be appointed as a Communications Partner for Commissioners, assuming the role of co-ordinating support to Commissioners in their ambassadorial responsibilities. This role will be carried out by Paul Denman who co-ordinates Commission business.
9. A number of staff within the Secretariat have attended courses on effective speech writing and will be able to provide some speech writing support for Commissioners speaking at key external events. In addition, support will need to be provided by Communications in producing power-point (or other multi-media) support material for such presentations. The DIAS review will look at how best to resource this requirement in the future.

Strategic Non-Executive role

10. In addition, the following support will be required in order to ensure that Commissioners are able to maximise their role in providing strategic guidance and constructive challenge to the Executive:
11. Commissioners should meet with the Strategic Programme Directors for their portfolios and confirm how best to involve them in the Programme. The Secretariat will attend these meetings.
12. A forward calendar for Commission meetings has been developed to ensure that key strategic issues are addressed in a timely way. Directors will need to ensure that papers are produced in line with this schedule and that Commission portfolio holders are appropriately involved in discussions leading up to finalising those papers. Managing the flow of Commission business is already assuming a higher profile. Forward looks at agendas will be circulated to Board members so that planning of meetings can be better co-ordinated.

Presentation

13. It will be important for these issues to be communicated to HSE staff – especially the SCS who will play a particularly key role in supporting these new ways of working. Externally, this new approach would be seen as nothing less than an obvious and sensible way of working. Therefore, we need to communicate this approach by doing it rather than talking about it.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

14. It is too early to indicate whether additional resources will be needed within the Secretariat to support this new way of working and, if they are, what shape this might take. This should be reviewed in six months time.

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