

Health and Safety Executive Board Paper		HSE/05/042	
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## HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

### The HSE Board

#### Summary of discussion from half-day health and safety training for Board members that took place on 6 July 2005

#### A Paper by Justin McCracken & Tim Beaumont

Cleared by Justin McCracken on

#### Issue

1. The outcomes of the half day of health and safety training that board members received on 6 July 2005

#### Timing

2. For discussion at this meeting

#### Recommendation

3. That the board agrees
  - i. To recommit to being an 'exemplar'<sup>1</sup> health and safety employer by taking a proportionate approach to the health, safety and well being of staff.
  - ii. To review HSE's governance structures for health and safety to see if improvements can be made.
  - iii. To support the development of a suite of measures of success appropriate to HSE as an organisation. These measures should include leading indicators, e.g. staff attitudes, as well as the current incident based targets.
  - iv. To support the development of a robust set of arrangements to assess compliance with our own policies, procedures, and guidance, including a

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<sup>1</sup> We define Exemplary performance as: "Exemplary performance in H&S management means having in place effective management arrangements that ensure the well being of our staff, and minimise the losses (financial and to our reputation) to our business from ill health and injury. It requires that we search out, adopt and update best practice relevant to and proportionate to the risks we and our staff face, and that we follow our own guidance for relevant activities."

systematic plan of monitoring and reviewing health and safety performance in HSE.

- v. To support raising the profile of health and safety performance in HSE through publicising existing health and safety procedures.
- vi. To support increased staff involvement in health and safety management in HSE.

## **Background**

4. The 'Coppell report' presented to the board in 2004 (HSE/04/026) requested that the board "...should take the lead by ensuring all its members have appropriate health & safety management training, that they personally give a high profile to their health & safety management and that they show a personal lead in communication on health & safety issues."

This requirement was incorporated into HSE's corporate plan for health and safety 2005/06 at point A1.1: "Board and other key stakeholders to receive effective training in occupational health and safety management."

A half-day course was arranged by the Health and Safety Advisor and was attended by the majority of the board. Two sessions of training were delivered. Prof Frank Wright and Nicola Jones from Warwick Legal Training, HSE's contracted legal training provider, delivered a session on the latest legal developments regarding board level responsibilities. This included some case studies involving 'worst case scenarios' which encouraged the board to think about our existing performance.

George Kirk, the Group Health and Safety manager from Scottish Power then delivered a session on his experience at improving board level involvement in health and safety. This focused on the board behaviours that had been successful in Scottish Power at improving health and safety performance and accountability.

Following the two sets of presentations, the Board discussed what they could take forward from the day. This paper is an initial summary of that discussion.

## **Argument**

5. The discussion had three broad themes – improvements to health and safety practise, policy and communication. The following sections summarise some of the comments made regarding each them
  - Improvements to health and safety practise
    - Incorporate details of health and safety risks into new business cases.
    - Find and preserve examples of good practise, and where appropriate spread throughout the organisation.
    - Consider involving the Commission in reviewing health and safety performance in HSE.
    - Introduce a health and safety component to the performance agreements for SCS.
    - Increase the level of TU safety rep involvement.

- Ensure that any benchmarking with other departments is appropriate and robust.
- Use climate survey tools to measure health and safety culture.
- Formally record the outcomes of any board health and safety inspection.
- Audits to be used as a key performance measure.
- Improvements to health and safety policy
  - Ensure that policies are being applied consistently.
  - Ensure that the health and safety implications of all business cases are considered.
  - Consider an integrated approach to health & safety and wellbeing.
  - Consider whether the current model for health and safety management in the HSE can be improved.
  - Clarify what effective health and safety management in HSE 'looks like'.
  - Define Board behaviours that promote a positive health and safety culture.
- Improvements to health and safety communication
  - Ensure that information flows in both directions in the organisation.
  - There is a lot of exception or deficiency monitoring but less compliance monitoring. HSE structures need to get better at sending information upwards to the board.
  - Board involvement in health and safety communication needs to have an element of proactivity. Staff need to believe that health and safety is a board priority.
  - All health and safety communication needs to be transparent in its nature.

These general comments were summarised into the six points listed under the recommendations. The board needs to agree how this work continues to develop.

### **Consultation**

6. This report is a rapid response for the board after the training event. Consultation (using our existing arrangements) will take place after the board has considered these issues further.

### **Presentation**

7. There will be benefit to HSE's reputation if we are seen to 'practise what we preach'. It is increasingly likely to that we will be asked about our internal arrangements for health and safety.

### **Costs, Benefits & Financial/Resource Implications for HSE**

8. This work is at an early stage so it is difficult to quantify. The costs & resource implications would be in proportion to the scale of any changes agreed.

## **Environmental & other Implications**

9. No anticipated environmental or other costs.

### **Action**

10. The Board must clarify what happens next with this piece of work. Six broad proposals have been set out in the Recommendations. The Board is advised to take the following actions:

*i. Recommitment to exemplar principles*

For the board to agree at this meeting and a decision to be made about publicising this commitment through all available internal communication channels

*ii. Examination of governance structures*

To be taken forward by the Board Champion in association with the interim Audit manager. The Coppell paper looked more at HSE wide issues, not how the governance structures may help or hinder health and safety management. Appraising these structures would be a timely action.

*iii. Development of success measures for HSE*

To be taken forward by the Health and Safety Advisor and Corporate Health and Safety Committee in association with relevant programme managers.

*iv. Assessment of performance against our own policies, procedures, and guidance*

To be taken forward by the Board Champion supported by the Audit Manager and Corporate Health and safety Committee. This takes place already in some instances (e.g. with road risk). The need would be to ensure this happens whenever HSE produces new policy on risks that our own staff face.

*v. Raising the profile of health and safety*

Work is already underway to improve the intranet and a communications campaign has been recently launched. The further action is how can staff health and safety feature more prominently in the warp and weft of the organisation.

*vi. Supporting increasing worker involvement*

To be taken forward by the Corporate Health and Safety Committee and the Health and Safety Advisor.

The board needs to agree these and any it may deem necessary to add. Although the action points are on specific individuals/committees the Board should continue the process started by the training day of self-evaluation and improvement regarding health and safety management.