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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

The HSE Board

Draft Workforce Strategy to 2010

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Issue

1. Development of HSE's workforce strategy to support delivery of HSE's Business plan 2005/06 –2007/08 and in turn HSC's Strategy to 2010 and beyond.

Timing

2. Routine

Recommendation

3. The Board approves the draft Workforce Strategy (Annex 1) and the proposal that Personnel Division produces a three-year plan of work setting out the delivery programme for the Strategy for Board consideration and approval at the May Board meeting.

Background

4. The Board has considered a series of papers on developing of the strategy over the last eighteen months or so. The Board held a workshop to discuss the strategy on 22 December 2004 and it was a key feature of the recent SCS Edinburgh conference.
5. This draft consolidates the outputs from both events.

Argument

6. The draft strategy provides a framework to ensure HSE achieves the “right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time” to deliver HSE’s Business Plan 2005/06 –2007/08 and in turn HSC’s Strategy to 2010 and beyond.
7. The outcome of the strategy will be a workforce that has greater flexibility, increased diversity, flatter structures, fewer /better line managers, a new approach to pay and reward and a range of career development paths. This will be a challenging message for HSE’s managers to deliver. We must fully engage with this key group to support and sell this message.
8. PD will work with Communications Directorate to develop a package to support HSE’s managers in communicating this message, explaining the strategy, receiving feedback and preparing for the implementation.
9. This strategy will provide many opportunities but may be perceived as a challenge to the ways HSE staff currently see their careers progressing. This risk will become much more real if the interrelationship between elements become disconnected. For example if we move quickly to better/fewer managers but we are much slower in developing alternative career development routes or reward package.
10. There are numerous risks to the delivery of the strategy especially the present industrial relations situation, HSE’s culture, initiative fatigue, opposition to change and lack of trust. We must fully engage with the Trade Unions as we prepare to roll out the strategy as part of our risk management activities.
11. We must manage delivery as an overall programme rather than a suite of discrete projects. To ensure prompt delivery we must be vigilant to deliver fit for purpose processes and procedures and not allow gold plating or excessively rigid procedures that delay future management decisions.
12. Personnel Division is developing a detailed a three-year plan to realise the Strategy. We propose to submit the plan to the Board at the May meeting for you to be assured of the adequacy of delivery programmes and subsequently approve the plan.

Consultation

13. Previous iterations of the strategy have been consulted on widely. The Trade Unions have received a copy of the Vision Statement.

Presentation

14. Aspects of the strategy will be contentious; we need to carefully sell the package to both staff and Trade Unions. We should not underestimate the challenge nor the risks in the present industrial relations climate.

Costs and Benefits

15. Developing and implementing the strategy is a key element of Personnel Division’s programme of work and will be resourced accordingly. The benefits will be gained by HSE as a whole and reflected in HSE’s overall performance and reputation and also by individual members of HSE’s staff.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

16. The individual elements of the strategy will incur costs and but also efficiencies. Careful programme management and possibly Board level oversight will be key to ensure we remain within the present financial envelope.

Action

17. PD will also produce a three-year plan that sets out the delivery programme, incorporating a communications package, for the Strategy for Board consideration and approval at the May Board meeting.
18. Delivery of the strategy will require contributions from many others in HSE, Personnel Division will work in partnership with the Board, the SCS and Directorates to implement the plan.

Workforce and Pay Strategy to 2010

Personnel Division's role in delivering HSC's Strategy

HSC's Strategy sets out how HSE, local authorities (LAs) and other stakeholders in the health and safety system could work together more effectively to improve health and safety in Great Britain. The Strategy's four themes underlie the development of the strategic programmes and the achievement of the targets:

- Developing closer partnerships
- Helping people to benefit from effective health and safety
- Focusing on our core business and the right interventions where we are best placed to reduce workplace injury and ill health
- Communicating effectively.

Targets

Targets for health and safety improvements were first set out in 'Revitalising Health and Safety', published by the Government in 2000. The RHS indicators have been translated and adopted in a new Public Service Agreement (PSA) committing DWP to:

"Improve health and safety outcomes in Great Britain by 2008, through progressive improvement in the control of risks from the workplace."

HSE's Strategic Programmes

HSE has set up Strategic Programmes as the main mechanism for delivery of the Workplace Strategy and the health and safety outcomes necessary to deliver the PSA. Two Strategic Delivery Programmes, Fit for work, fit for life, fit for tomorrow, and Major Hazards, will be supported by four Strategic Enabling Programmes, business involvement, worker involvement, LAs/HSE partnership and enforcement.

HSE's Business needs

Delivery of the Strategy requires we build on those activities and interventions that have delivered the improved standards of health and safety since 1974. We will continue to secure compliance with the legislation, to carry out research, to propose new laws and guidance and to provide information and advice.

To drive further improvement in health and safety performance we need to adopt a wider range of interventions such as communications, marketing influencing and negotiating. To strengthen our performance and secure the expected results we need more effort in some specialisms and skills, e.g. programme and project management, statisticians economists and social scientists.

We need to acquire new specialist skills, a more diverse workforce (both in terms of experience and background) and more flexible ways of working to reflect the changes in industry, the hazards we need to deal with and the demographics of the workplace.

Business operating environment

Present government priorities are delivery of improved public services by more efficient departments, agencies and NDPBs. Efficiencies are to be achieved by moving away from London and the South East and overall reduction in staff numbers across Government.

There is significant pressure from the Treasury and the private sector to reduce burdens on Industry. The Chancellor, in the Budget statement, announced the findings of the Hampton review. The Review endorses the approach taken in the Commission's Strategy and sets out some additional responsibilities for HSE.

Civil service unions are challenging Treasury's pay and particularly the pensions agenda.

Cabinet Office is driving the professionalising of government staff forward with urgency through the Professional Skills for Government initiative.

Our Vision for HSE's Work Force

We want to build on our existing strengths of professional expertise, commitment, national coverage and having policy and operational activity in one delivery body.

We want a more open, diverse and cohesive workforce, which is less hierarchical, more flexible, and encourages both internal and external interchange.

We want to ensure that all staff are helped to realise their potential through continuous development and recognised and rewarded for their contribution to delivering of our business objectives.

This means by 2010 we want to have:

1. Career development processes that actively identify and deliver the skills, competences and behaviours we need to both deliver the business and effectively manage the business by:
 - Greater movement in, out and around HSE, achieved through secondments and exchanges with other Government Departments (OGDs), regulators, local authorities, non-Governmental organisations and the private sector.
 - Capitalising on our ability to offer a mix of policy and operational delivery work – together with integrated scientific and analytical support, as a key strength in attracting new talent.
 - Career structures and progression that enable all staff to fulfil their potential irrespective of the career path they choose.
 - Training and development opportunities more closely linked to the needs of the organisation.

- Being explicit about the type of experience required to achieve more senior positions in HSE.
 - Honest sharing of expectations between line managers and individuals about progression aspirations.
2. A workforce that is responsive to change, has the skills, specialisms, experience and credibility to deliver the business both directly by their actions and particularly in partnership with others. This means:
- Building on existing competences and securing the new skills needed to improve delivery.
 - Strengthening leadership capacity and management capability.
 - Strengthening communication and influencing skills throughout HSE.
 - Corporate skills will be professionalised by recruiting and developing specialist skills in HR, Finance, IT, procurement and project management as well as other disciplines and by forging links with OGDs to provide wider career opportunities.
 - Specialist skills will continue to be valued and increasingly used as a corporate resource.
 - Developing a breadth of skills so those in policy will have knowledge of delivery in the field and operational staff will have policy know-how.
2. An organisation that is set up to deliver the business and enables staff to be both flexible in the way we work and where work is done by:
- Developing working practices that encourage a diverse workforce at all levels within HSE.
 - Further dispersal of a wider range of opportunities in regional centres.
 - Further organising our work into projects and programmes where that supports delivery.
 - Establishing a clearer management responsibility for delivery and a less hierarchical culture.
 - Working to maintain the high degree of commitment of our staff to our mission.
4. A reward strategy that fairly rewards performance, recognises the complete employment package and encourages staff to achieve a greater diversity of experience. This will mean:
- Being explicit about the performance expected of individuals and appraise people firmly but fairly.
 - Establishing clear links between reward and performance.
 - Terms and conditions underpinning the employment relationship that clearly set out and reflect the need for greater flexibility.

HSE's workforce – where are we now

HSE's workforce is both expert and experienced and consequently on average more highly graded than other Government departments. Most are loyal and committed to delivering better health and safety, less are flexible and receptive to change but:

- Our workforce is aging and static
- Research shows our members of staff have commitments that are less able to move geographically or have a different outlook on the work/life balance.
- Most people recognise and understand the need for change but remain resistant to its application to them personally.
- Our managers need to be more effective in managing performance and developing staff. We need to improve management competence and reduce the number of line managers
- Our HR policies and procedures are perceived as not being as helpful as they could be to 'getting the right people in the right place at the right time'
- Our workforce planning is not closely aligned to our business needs – for example our recruitment tends to be immediately reactive to fill the post that has been vacated rather than to fill the post that may be needed for the future.
- Our training and development is expensive with a focus on personal development rather than fulfilling business needs
- Our pay and reward system (e.g., salary, hours of work, annual leave, pensions, sick pay, etc) has in the past enabled HSE to recruit and retain most of the various kinds of staff that it needs. It does not presently best serve the needs of the organisation or the staff in facilitating flexibility and career progression. It is difficult and time consuming to introduce change. It is also perceived as inhibiting changes in the organisation.
- Our performance pay system doesn't significantly reward staff for their contribution to HSE - e.g. performance and results achieved, developing specific competencies nor displaying behaviours valued by HSE.

Delivering the right workforce

Our priorities for delivering the workforce we need in 2010 are:

- Establishing medium and longer term workforce planning to ensure we have identified the present and future skills and competences required for delivery of HSE business.
- Developing career structures that fit the needs of the business, in particular delivering the flexibility the business needs.
- Establishing career development procedures, aligned with the principles of Professional Skills for Government (PSG), that will deliver the managers, specialists and operational delivery staff we need to deliver the business.

- Developing a competency framework that defines competencies, standards and behaviours, which enables performance appraisal, post filling and career development decisions to be made fairly and in line with business need. The framework will closely align with those being prepared for Band 2 staff and Senior Civil Servants within the PSG exercise.
- Updating the reward package to best fit the changes in ways of working, career structures, job definitions, competencies and behaviours and to reward their delivery appropriately.
- Developing and providing management information that enables us to set targets and trajectories and subsequently manage the delivery of our priorities.