

Health and Safety Executive Board Minutes		HSE/05/M03	
Meeting Date:	2 March 2005	Open Gov. Status:	Fully open
Type of Paper:	Minutes	Paper File Ref:	
Exemptions:	None		

## HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

### HSE Board

**Minutes of the HSE Board meeting held on Wednesday 2 March 2005 in the Perth Room, Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh, Scotland at 9.00am.**

#### Present

Timothy Walker  
Jonathan Rees  
Justin McCracken  
Alex Brett-Holt  
Chris Willby  
Jane Willis  
Vivienne Dews  
Sandra Caldwell  
Paul Davies  
Allan Sefton  
Colin Douglas  
Mike Weightman  
Giles Denham

#### Also attending

Item 5: Richard Lewis  
Item 6: Susan Mackenzie  
Item 7: Sarabjit Purewal, Mike Lacaille, Vic Coleman

Minutes – Nicola Walters

The Board expressed their thanks to Chris Willby, Director of HID for his contribution to HSE's work.

#### **1 Minutes of HSE Board held on 2 February 2005**

1.1 The minutes were agreed subject to rewording of item 6.3 and associated action.

#### **2 Health and Safety – presented by Justin McCracken**

2.1 Current figures indicate a high incident rate for 2004/2005. It was felt that more aspirational targets should be set for 2010. Clarity was requested on the bar chart axes.

2.2 There was a continued high rate of RIDDOR reports. Two over 3-day slip/trip accidents were reported to the Board, of which both are to be fully investigated.

- Whilst walking on one of HSL site roads, an HSL member of staff slipped and twisted her back as she tried to keep her balance. The road was icy at the time.
- A Refit member of staff was entering a lift when she lost her balance due to the floor level being lower than normal. At the time the lift was being repaired after an earlier, separate fault

had been noted. The lift also failed to stop at the floor selected.

2.3 The Board received information on a special report examining trends with DSE figures, to raise awareness of the extent of the problem prior to actions arising from the Corporate Health and Safety Committee meeting in March.

2.4 The report highlighted:

- DSE related ill health reports are decreasing however current figures indicate the need for continued improvement.
- Almost half of the reports received were persons with pre-existing conditions.
- There is significant scope for improved line management intervention.

2.5 Discussion raised the following points:

- Particular concern had been raised by users of voice recognition software over insufficient support
- All managers should ensure staff complete the DSE self-assessment package on the intranet.

**Action Justin McCracken to review bar chart data for accidents, incidents and ill health reports and targets for 2010.**

**Action Justin McCracken to audit progress with dealing with DSE issues and develop a suitable action plan.**

### **3 Review of HSE/LA approach to health and safety management – update – presented by Chris Willby – B/05/012**

3.1 The paper provided the Board with an interim report on the OMT review of HSE/LA approach to occupational health and safety management systems. The project aims to refresh the principles of occupational health and safety management and develop a toolkit to promote management principles in line with delivery of the strategy.

3.2 The Board welcomed the paper and recognised the importance of the project in underpinning HSE's business and implementation of the strategy.

The Board also welcomed the close working of operations and policy divisions and the involvement of Local Authorities in the project.

3.3 In discussion the Board raised the following points:

- The new health safety management model should incorporate and drive the principle of sensible and proportionate health and safety along with other key HSE messages.
- Consideration should be given to the training and development of staff that will deliver this and the close links to the workforce strategy.
- It is important that a single management system is adopted

and incorporates the message that good health and safety management is integral to business success.

- The Project Board and team should consider how to update and present to the Board as required.

**Action Justin McCracken and Jonathan Rees to identify a successor to Chris Willby as project sponsor, to oversee the completion of the first stage of the project, when a further report would be made.**

#### **4 Trust – presented by Colin Douglas**

4.1 The Board received an oral presentation on the current state of trust and co-operative working across the organisation.

#### **5 Freedom of Information: Initial experiences in HSE – presented by Richard Lewis – B/05/018**

5.1 The Board received a presentation and paper on the initial experiences by HSE of the implementation of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. Comparison was given with other departments and authorities.

5.2 In discussion the following points were raised:

- It was acknowledged that decision makers require further clarity on advice on disclosure and a clearer statement about HSE's desire to be more open within the FOI framework.
- Whilst only 15% of the total enquiries received are attributable to the FOI Act there is considerable implications with regard to increased demand on legal resources and increased time spent in the application of new management arrangements for dealing with FOI.
- Several FOI requests have fallen within the definition of unacceptable behaviour and are unable to be processed. A suitable response to offensive enquiries is required.
- Requests were often received for similar information and clarity is required on which FOI requests can be placed on the website.

5.3 The Board agreed:

- All Board members should be aware of FOI requests and development of current issues.
- Further resources may need to be considered with respect to legal advisers.
- Legal advice should be sought on handling offensive enquiries including suitable correspondence.
- Existing guidance and arrangements should be reviewed.

**Action S Caldwell and A Brett-Holt to produce an advice note to decision makers on the release of information concerning investigations and prosecutions.**

**Action V Dews and C Douglas to review what information can be made available on the website.**

## **6 Sickness absence management – presented by Susan Mackenzie**

6.1 The Board received an oral presentation on sickness absence management. The presentation included external trends and the current and proposed HSE interventions towards sickness absence management with benchmarking against the 7 recommendations from the Ministerial taskforce on sickness absence.

The Board was invited to discuss points raised in the presentation.

6.2 The Board welcomed the presentation.

6.3 Discussion raised the following points:

- HSE should be an exemplar in its policies towards sickness absence management.
- There is a clear requirement for managers to recognise and commit to their role in the sickness absence management rather than introduction of further new policies. There may be the requirement for the review of skills and training.
- The emphasis should be on wellness to work but HSE should not shrink from addressing the unacceptable attendance. This required senior management – including visible Board – commitment.
- There is a need to illustrate the impact of sickness absence on teams as well as the benefits to be gained from reduced absence.
- There is a need to obtain accurate information on sickness absence however the capability of existing IT systems was acknowledged.
- The Balance Scorecard indicator on sickness absence did not currently satisfy the Board's desire for simple, meaningful information on attendance.

6.4 The Board agreed:

- There should be strong managerial support and application of HSE's current sickness absence policies.
- This will require close working between PD and managers for a firm and balanced approach.
- Further planned work to amend trigger points should continue in consultation with the Trade Unions.
- PD should provide monthly updates on sickness absence to the Board.

**Action V Dews and J McCracken to add sickness absence to the monthly H&S report to the Board.**

## **7 Universal work recording – presented by Sarabjit Purewal, Mike Lacaille and Vic Coleman**

7.1 The board received a presentation on the business case for

universal work recording (UWR).

**8 Corporate stakeholders – plans for engagement – presented by Colin Douglas – B/05/016**

8.1 The paper provided an outline of the arrangements for engagement with key corporate stakeholders and senior champions and lead contacts from within HSE for each one.

The Board was asked to confirm details, ensure plans for each corporate stakeholder are completed by the end of March 2005 and agree communication arrangements.

8.2 The Board felt it was important to recognise that a senior champion does not complete all the work but rather teams of personnel are required for the engagement with each stakeholder.

8.3 The Board agreed the proposals with slight amendments to the corporate stakeholders list and senior champions.

**9 Any other business**

9.1 Thanks were expressed for Board members support of the pay talks.

9.2 PCS are to ballot on strike action over pensions. FDA and Prospect are not to ballot.

9.1 The board agenda for April was not discussed.

**Action DG's office to circulate agenda.**