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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

The HSE Board

HSE Staff Survey – The Way Forward

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Issue

1. To provide an update to the 2006 Staff Survey and recommend timings and a way forward for the next survey

Timing

2. For agreement at the board meeting on 1 August.

Recommendation

3. The staff survey should return to a biennial basis, with the next survey carried out in autumn 2008.

Background

4. The HSE Staff Survey was introduced in 1995 on a biennial basis and moved to annual basis from 2005. The overall findings of 2005 and 2006 surveys showed little difference and suggested that we still have much to do on a number of areas including perception of management and change. In 2006 the staff and stress survey were combined.

5. The combined survey was carried out with a close date of 15 December 2006, with the raw data results received from the survey providers by the end of 2006. The results of the survey were presented in 36 individual narrative reports received between January and April 2007. The staff and stress survey results were presented separately.

6. Directorates/Divisions (D/Ds) are still carrying out dissemination of results and gaining staff input to activities. Via the HR Business Partners, D/Ds have now provided the first up-date and these are now available on the intranet. There is evidence to suggest that D/Ds have integrated objectives within existing operating plans.

7. The Stress Working Group has decided to produce a separate Board paper due to be presented in August which addresses specific Directorate concerns related to reduction in stress related ill health. They will recommend that the next stress survey is carried out in 2008.

Argument

Survey timing Annual versus Biennial

8. A decision is now required on the timing of the next survey. HRD recommendation is that it should return to a biennial basis for a number of reasons:

Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There has been little time to embed improvements and convince staff that the Board have listened to what they have said
Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Little change from 2005 and 2006 surveys• People lose faith that the survey will be acted upon• Staff could be influenced by issues of the day
External Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supplier costs at around £56,000
Internal Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administration and resource intensive• Communications to staff both before and after survey – action plans etc.

9. It is intended that regular up-dates will be provided via the Intranet site so that staff can see for themselves the various activities carried out by D/Ds as a result of 2006 survey. By allowing more time for responses to bed in will provide an opportunity to influence opinions for the next survey.

10. It is also suggested that further employee engagement could be achieved via either a Working or FOCUS group.

11. Staff who have questions and wish to express concerns regarding the How and Where We Work Programme have the opportunity to do this via a specific e-mail account, FOCUS groups and the HR Service Centre route

12. By carrying out the next survey in 2008 it will provide HR with opportunity to timetable and prepare work in advance avoiding conflicting priorities such as HWWW activities.

Consultation

13. HRD has consulted various stakeholders on the issues raised in this paper, HR Business Partners, Internal Communications and Stress Working Group.

Presentation

14. Although this could provide an opportunity to embed current changes staff may become suspicious and so, if a return to a biennial basis is agreed, there needs to be a clear message to staff why this is happening.

15. The Cabinet-Office has confirmed that although most departments still operate an annual staff survey, they are currently looking at the best way to carry out a Civil Service wide Employee Engagement survey. They have considered implications and one approach may be to introduce a core set of questions to include in departmental surveys. They will develop a framework which is hoped will be flexible but with a common approach across the Civil Service. The timescale is an up-date in September with a decision early in the New Year with implementation in the new

financial period. This perhaps is another argument to delay HSE's next survey until the full implications are known.

Costs

16. The direct cost of 2006 Survey was in the region of £56,000.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

17. The introduction of a Civil Service Wide Employee Engagement and core set of questions including analysis may add to costs. However, the alternative is a separate questionnaire which could lead to questionnaire fatigue.