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## HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

### The HSE Board

#### Chief Scientist's Road Shows: Feedback

#### A paper by Patrick McDonald

#### Issue

- 1 The purpose of this paper is to update the Board on the feedback from the series of road shows I carried out during March – May 07 including a summary of the main themes and issues, which were discussed.

#### Timing

- 2 For circulation to the Board before the meeting on 4 July 07.

#### Background

- 3 I carried out the road shows during March-May 07. The main aims were to introduce myself to staff, in particular those within the S & T Community and to discuss with staff the general issues affecting HSE's science and the Making Best Use of Science Project (MBUS). I arranged to gather feedback from the meetings:
  - a. To check how well they were received, and
  - b. To confirm the main issues and concerns of our staff about S&T.
- 4 A sample number of attendees from each of the 10 venues were invited to respond to a pre-set questionnaire. In total 31 responses were received.

#### Discussion

- 5 There was overwhelming support for the events. Staff welcomed the opportunity to discuss S&T issues face-to-face but were sceptical about the likelihood of positive action arising from current initiatives on S&T.
- 6 The road shows provided me with an ideal opportunity to develop my role as the Chief Scientific Advisor and they reinforced my view that cultural and behavioural attitudes will be the key to successful change. We have many well qualified and dedicated specialists who have become disillusioned through a number of abortive attempts to re-structure HSE's science and as a result are feeling under valued. There is though a willingness to engage with the MBUS project with a keenness to see things change sooner rather than later.
- 7 The issues raised by staff at the events did vary from place to place but discussions often focused on a small number of key issues. These were as follows:

#### **Organisational change:**

- future of Specialists Groups (SGs);

- management structure, future of pools and the operational benefits of replacing/ repairing SGs;
- numbers of specialists in SG disciplines and arrangements for accessing specialists;
- meeting the differing professional needs of specialists;
- professional integrity;
- role of specialist.

#### ***Progress on MBUS***

- regular updates required;
- impact of HSE's budget on MBUS outcomes;
- rationale for change needs to be clear, improvements on current position should be explained.

#### ***Professional development:***

- opportunities for advancement;
- line management;
- career progression;
- discipline conferences;
- head of discipline role;
- loss of expertise due to natural wastage;
- discipline champions should be encouraged as a voice to engage with on relevant matters;
- recruitment, retention and training;
- standards work

#### ***Interaction with HSL***

- partnership working;
- financing HSL;
- commissioning work;
- more information on links with universities or industrial research.

#### ***Communications***

- support for targeted and interactive information exchange;
- continuation of road shows as an opportunity for face-to-face briefings.

8 Many of these issues will be dealt with by the MBUS project. Others I will sweep up in my wider work on S&T issues in HSE. I am convinced of the need to develop and maintain effective communication with S&T staff. As a result, I intend to carry out a similar series of road shows in 2008.