

Health and Safety Executive Board Minutes			HSE/B/07/12
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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the HSE Board meeting held on Wednesday 5th December 2007, Hope Room, Rose Court, London

Present

Geoffrey Podger	Justin McCracken	Alex Brett-Holt	Sandra Caldwell
Giles Denham	Vivienne Dews	Colin Douglas	Patrick McDonald
Eddie Morland	Kevin Myers	Jane Willis	

Apologies

Jonathan Rees	Mike Weightman	Bill Gunneyon
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Also attending

Peter Buckley and Anne Robinson (all items), Steve Dennis and Gaynor Coldrick (for items 2 – 4), Tim Beaumont and Peter Brown (for item 4), Pauline Hughes (for item 5) and Richard Daniels and Trevor Johnson (for item 7).

Minutes René McTaggart

Introductory Remarks

Prior to discussing the agenda items Geoffrey Podger took the opportunity to wish, on behalf of the Board, Colin Douglas (the Communications Director) every success in his new role at the National Health Service. Geoffrey commended Colin for his high levels of competence and his kind nature and commented that HSE's loss was very much the NHS's gain. The Board were also informed that following Colin's departure that Jane Willis would take on the role of Race Champion on behalf of the Board.

In addition to the departure of Colin Douglas, the Board were also informed that as part of the restructuring of the senior management team Jonathan Rees would also be leaving the HSE before Christmas. The Board thanked Jonathan for his work over the last three years and expressed its best wishes for the future.

1 Draft Minutes of the HSE Board held on 7 November and action points

1.1 The Board agreed the minutes subject to an amendment to para 3.4 which should now read:

“The Board agreed that further campaigns would not be appropriate though some slight increases in resources in key areas (including an extra £500K spend on the Slips, Trips & Falls campaign) would be welcomed so long as the extra spend would be good VfM and completed by financial end year.”

2 Agenda item 2 – Monthly Finance and Staffing update – October out-turn (Paper B/07/118– Closed)

This part of the minutes is closed.

3 Agenda Item 3 – Ways forward for HSL (Paper No B/07/110 - Closed)

This part of the minutes is closed.

4 Agenda Item 4 – Monthly health and safety statistics including discussion on managing sickness absence (Paper No B/07/120)

4.1 Vivienne Dews, Peter Brown, Gaynor Coldrick and Tim Beaumont introduced the paper and made the following comments:

- a. There is continuing concern across the public sector that the sickness

absence performance is not improving. HSE, as a leader in the public sector, is at risk of damaging its reputation, as we are not on track to deliver our target reduction.

- b. The Board were asked whether they were content to continue to wait for policies to bed in before taking additional action to reduce the number of days lost due to sickness absence.
- c. The Board were also informed of the pilot being delivered within RPD (that could be rolled out across HSE if it proves to be a success) and the 'bite sized' training planned to include the use of e-HR in respect of managing absence.

4.2 The Board thanked Vivienne, Peter, Gaynor and Tim for the paper and introduction and made the following comments in response:

- a. The Board agreed that there is a general need to ensure managers have the training and support they need to manage sickness absence (for example 'difficult discussions' with staff is a known weakness). However, the Board also agreed that a blanket approach may have a demotivating effect on staff who have undertaken good work to address their/their teams' performance.
- b. The Board agreed that a detailed breakdown of where the absence 'hotspots' are would help target efforts. That said, the Board also acknowledged that it was important to ensure that no group is unfairly isolated as a problem group.
- c. The Board agreed not to rule out seeking outside help to analyse our absence data, and that additional further internal research was required.
- d. The Board agreed to consider setting targets for improvements for individual staff and managers that demonstrate that staff have done what is expected of them to manage their and their staff's sickness absence.

Action point 109 **Gaynor Coldrick to consider external assistance with analysis, and what targets can be set for staff and report back to the Board.**

5 Agenda Item 5 – Tackling Rogues (B/07/122)

5.1 Sandra Caldwell and Pauline Hughes introduced the paper and made the following comments:

- a. The 2005 Hampton Review characterised 'rogues' as businesses operating beneath the vision of regulators and tax authorities. While appreciating the difficulty in targeting and tackling rogues, Hampton indicated that more should be done to deter persistent offenders.
- b. HSE's StEP Enforcement Programme has provided a lead for 'rogues' issues to date, but this programme is due to close shortly. The Board were asked to:
 - Endorse the draft rogues position statement (Annex A to the paper).
 - Endorse the proposals for a rogues focal point within Operations group.
 - Provide a steer on the scale of activity to tackle rogues.
- c. Sandra also gave her view that a firmer grip is needed on persistent offenders and that key to achieving this is closer working with the Police.

5.2 The Board thanked Sandra and her team for the paper and made the following comments:

- a. The Board agreed that a firmer grip was needed but was concerned that intelligence on the 'grey economy' was not sufficient to warrant excessive resource being allocated to this problem.

- b. The Board agreed that it would be beneficial to undertake a pilot exercise to establish whether it would prove value for money to spend extra resource in this area.
- c. The Board agreed the need to sensitize staff to the need to try and identify criminal activity but that it should be made clear that they should not put themselves at unnecessary risk in doing so.
- d. The Board were also aware of the need for HSE not to become associated with being the solution to this problem especially as it is unlikely that this is a problem that HSE alone can solve.

5.3 Geoffrey summarised the discussion by agreeing:

- a. To endorse the proposed HSE position statement on 'rogues' subject to the inclusion of a reference to the use of intelligence from RIDDOR notifications and complaints and any drafting suggestions from Board members.
- b. That the term 'Rogue' was not the best description for criminal activity.
- c. That any focal point for this work would be best situated in Operations – the Operations Management Team to decide where.
- d. The Operations Management Team will also need to decide on the scale and scope of a pilot to ascertain the benefits in health and safety terms of tackling rogues.

Action point 110 **Board Members to provide Pauline Hughes with any detailed comments on the statement within two weeks.**

Action Point 111 **Justin McCracken to consult operations Directors and agree where the focal point should be within operations and the scale and scope of any pilot.**

6 **Agenda Item 6 – Draft Agenda for January meeting (B/08/A01)**

6.1 The agenda was agreed subject to the inclusion of an item on planning.

7 **Any Other Business**

This part of the minutes is closed.