

Health and Safety Executive Board		Paper No: HSE/09/23	
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<b>WORKFORCE STRATEGY</b>			

### Purpose of the paper

1. The Board is invited to consider this general update on HSE's workforce as the first in an annual series requested by the Board's Performance Reporting Sub-Group. Any advice or steer that the Board wishes to offer on meeting the future challenges HSE faces would be welcome.

### Background

2. The current year (2008/09) has been dominated by three 'R's – recruitment, re-deployment and reward. Most of the external attention has been on the number of frontline inspectors and the shortage of specialist skills in specific sectors (eg construction, nuclear and offshore), but the relocation of functions to Redgrave Court under How and Where we Work (HWWW) requiring significant re-deployment in London and recruitment in Bootle, has also been a strong feature; as has the preparation and negotiation of HSE's pay offer.

3. Attached at Annexes 1 to 3 are breakdowns and charts of HSE's workforce showing staff in post, starters and leavers. The figures are based on full time equivalent staff currently on payroll, and exclude HSL who have separate workforce planning arrangements.

### Progress on recruitment in 2009/09

4. HSE has put considerable effort into recruitment and resourcing issues over the current year. In particular we have:

- improved our recruitment processes and recruited most of the staff needed – including meeting the ministerial red-line by end March 2009;
- successfully staffed up the functions that transferred to Redgrave Court under the HWWW programme and helped to re-deploy 80 staff from Rose Court;
- restructured how we organise and deploy specialists to make the best use of available resources;
- introduced a pilot scheme to develop our own chartered engineers;
- opened up opportunities to encourage staff to work beyond 60 in recognition of our age profile;
- initiated a strategic review to address long standing difficulties in recruiting, developing and retaining certain types of discipline specialists.

5. Because of the need to reduce staff numbers to rein back expenditure under SR 2005, limited external recruitment took place in 2006/07 and 2007/08 (usually only for discipline specialists in chargeable or front line posts). By early 2008 staffing numbers had returned to affordable levels, but the recruitment restrictions had a knock-on effect in maintaining inspector numbers and providing training for the increase in recruits in 2008/09.

6. Each Directorate prepared recruitment plans for 2008/09 to build up numbers in certain areas and to anticipate future leavers, based on historic trends. Chart 1

(Annexe 2) shows that the number of new staff recruited increased steadily in the second half of the year. By June 08 we had recruited 66 staff, but this increased to 186 by the end of January 09 and we forecast that it will be 290 by April<sup>1</sup>.

7. Steady progress was made in:

- building up the number of inspectors to reach the red-line target of 1283 staff by the end of March 2009. We also recruited 25 nuclear inspectors, which is close to double what we have previously managed to recruit in any single year, (recognising that this still leaves a considerable shortfall for the challenge ahead);
- recruiting high calibre staff to HWWW posts relocated to Bootle. We filled 80 policy adviser posts, staffed up a law team, and recruited economists and social researchers - this was particularly satisfying as there had been concerns about whether we would be able to recruit to these types of posts in the North West.

8. HSE has an ageing specialist workforce. The risk is that increasing numbers of inspectors and specialists will retire over the next three to five years, with a consequential loss of expertise and experience. Our tactics are to recruit staff to replace them in advance of retirement so that they can transfer their skills and knowledge to the new staff.

9. Table 6 (Annexe 1) shows that 296 (21%) of regulatory specialists and discipline specialists are aged 56 or over. However the profile varies widely across disciplines from 57 per cent of mines inspectors to 13 per cent of regulatory specialists. This position is mirrored in firms in the engineering sector, who also face problems of ageing workforces.

10. HSE is seeking to recruit a wider range of recruits into specialist disciplines to achieve a more balanced age distribution. We have featured case studies of newer and more experienced inspectors in advertising material; have been more flexible about experience requirements; and encouraged applications from people who have yet to gain full professional chartered status. We have had some limited success. The average age of specialist recruits in 2008/09 varied from 37 for policy advisers to 42 for discipline specialists.

11. However, the UK labour pool of engineers under the age of 30 is limited and is expected to contract even further over the next few years as a result of demographic changes. As part of a strategic review of meeting our need for discipline specialists we are exploring options to restructure roles to introduce trainee or graduate level entry posts.

12. HSE encourages older staff to stay on beyond 60 by considering applications from staff who want to work part-time<sup>2</sup>. Over the last couple of years about half of inspectors who turned 60 have stayed on and about 40 per cent of them reduced their hours to about 25 hours a week. This has been particularly useful in areas of scarce skills and many have welcomed the opportunity to pass on their knowledge to the new generation.

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<sup>1</sup> The figures for February and March include recruits who have accepted job offers but have not started or are still discussing the final terms of job offers. A number of campaigns are currently at final interview or job offer stage and could yield more recruits.

<sup>2</sup> Civil servants aged 60 will not have their pensions abated if they work reduced hours or at a lower band

## Turnover

13. Average turnover has been about 7.1 per cent over the last three years (2005/06 to 2007/08)<sup>3</sup>. It was slightly higher in 2007/08 (7.5%) but this was largely due to the HWWW programme.

14. Chart 2 (Annexe 3) shows leavers since April 2008. As at 11 February there were 267 known leavers. The figures for February and March are obviously incomplete; and under HWWW we expect a number of staff to leave under flexible early release terms in March.

15. The main discipline groups of the leavers were: administrators/policy advisers (124), regulatory inspectors (44), scientific (13), offshore (12) and specialist inspector (9). Resignations accounted for 100 (37%) of leavers, transfers to other government departments for 80 (30%), and retirements for 52 (19%). Other reasons for leaving included reaching the end of fixed term appointments and dismissal for inefficiency.

## **Future resourcing strategy**

16. There are several components to our resourcing strategy, detailed below:

- recruitment plan
- pay strategy
- developing our own
- utilising specialist resources more effectively
- discipline specialist review

## Recruitment Plan

17. Over the next two years we expect to recruit similar numbers of staff to those recruited in 2008/09. There will be substantial recruitment programmes for regulatory inspectors, discipline specialists and jobs transferred under HWWW to Redgrave Court.

18. Our recruitment plan will build on developments introduced in 2008/09, including:

- running web-based continuous recruitment campaigns
- running flagship campaigns for big volume recruitment, such as trainee inspectors
- further developing partnerships with specialist recruitment agencies to recruit staff with scarce skills (advertising and headhunting)
- developing closer partnerships with universities, sector skills councils, etc, to raise HSE's profile as an employer
- taking forward a new employer branding campaign to promote HSE as an employer of choice.

## Pay strategy

19. A pay deal is currently being negotiated with HSE trade unions. The offer is one of the biggest deals approved by Treasury in recent years. A key objective of the deal is to target pay increases at staff in those specialisms where HSE has significant recruitment and retention issues. Because of the focus on specialists the deal may not be as attractive to other staff (but it compares well with the deals in other government departments).

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<sup>3</sup> The longer term turnover rate – back to 2000/01- is also about 7%.

### Developing our own

20. To address continuing recruitment difficulties for certain types of discipline specialists, we are exploring options to select staff recruited as general inspectors or scientists, who have relevant degrees, to develop to chartered status. In 2008/09 we introduced a small pilot scheme to develop four staff to become chartered mechanical engineers. We are considering extending the scheme to other areas, including electrical, control and instrumentation, and predictive/risk assessor.

21. We are improving how we deliver learning and development to accommodate the increased demands resulting from the increased recruitment of staff in all directorates. One initiative is aimed at encouraging retired staff to return and train and mentor new discipline specialists.

22. For experienced regulatory specialists we recently rolled out a major competence project across FOD, HID and the local authorities; which will be further developed over the next few months to cover discipline specialists across HSE. The project has developed competence standards for health and safety regulation, and delivered a range of tools to help staff and managers to identify and prioritise development needs in line with business needs. This enables development activities to be targeted in a cost effective way to maximise the return on our substantial investment in learning and development.

### Utilising specialist resources more effectively

23. FOD, HID and CSD have introduced changes to how they deploy and manage specialist resources. They have created national based teams to give them the flexibility to focus available resources more effectively to meet priority business needs. They have also developed team leader and senior specialist roles based on the relative line management and technical specialist strengths of band 2 specialists

24. D/Ds have also deconstructed some roles to identify how work could be better managed and delivered. For example, FOD examined all aspects of how they handle complaints. The work was split between band 3 inspectors and band 5 administrative staff. FOD have now restructured it to be delivered by trained band 5 staff, releasing inspector resource to other work.

25. Arrangements are being introduced to better utilise front line specialists. HSE supports inspectors spending time in other parts of the business to broaden their understanding and development. It also benefits HSE to have inspectors apply their specialist knowledge in other areas of the business, such as policy development and finance and planning. However it is important that expensively recruited and developed specialists spend most of their careers in inspection related roles. To achieve this two new management principles are being developed to limit the number of inspectors in posts away from the frontline at any one time; and to limit the amount of time inspectors may stay in non front-line roles.

### Discipline specialist review

26. A task and finish senior management group has been formed, to take a wider and longer term look at how to resource the specialist disciplines. The group is taking a set of papers to the SMT residential on 17 and 18 February. We will give an oral report of the outcome of the discussions on 25 February.

27. The subgroup is looking at the following issues:

- range of skills and experience that HSE will need in the future
- deconstruction of roles and tasks to identify core skills requirements

- whether the grading structure supports recruitment and development of specialists
- how to open up recruitment to attract a wider range of applicants
- range of available career options and how that can be improved for the benefit of HSE and staff

28. The subgroup will consult widely in undertaking research and developing proposals. Changes will be introduced carefully so as to enhance HSE's reputation and to secure the engagement of staff.

## **Conclusion**

29. The various components of the future strategy will be aligned to focus on meeting the challenges of the new strategy. In particular we want to develop staff so that they have the necessary skills and confidence to help employers to develop the leadership qualities and competencies needed to take forward health and safety. We will also improve line and performance management so that we continue to deliver in the leaner times ahead over the next few years. Finally, to inform our workforce strategy, we will run an employee engagement survey (as part of a civil service wide initiative) in the autumn to assess our preparedness and identify where action is required.

## **Action**

30. The Board is asked to support the proposed future resourcing strategy as the best way of ensuring that HSE has the skilled workforce it needs to deliver to the strategy. Although there can be no guarantees about future staffing levels, we expect to be able to recruit the numbers of staff needed to meet the ministerial red-line and broader skill requirements, but longer term solutions need to be developed to tackle persistent shortages in a few very hard to fill scarce disciplines.

## **Paper clearance**

31. The paper has been cleared by Geoffrey Podger.

## Annexe 1

### WORKFORCE TABLES (full time equivalent staff in post at 5 February 2009)

**NB: Some recent organisational changes have yet to be submitted to HR**

**Table 1: Staff in post by job band and directorate**

Directorate/Division	SCS	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Grand Total
Chief Scientific Adviser's Group	3	6	19	8	15	7	7	66
Communications Directorate	1	1	5	11	29	8	9	64
Deputy Chief Executive	2		7	19	22	32	45	127
Field Operations Directorate	8	25	136	496	83	182	248	1178
Hazardous Installations Directorate.	5	16	96	241	15	35	86	494
Legal Advisors Office	4	7	4	4	1	7	2	28
Local Authority Unit		1	2	2	3	2	1	11
Nuclear Directorate	6	28	118	59	12	30	53	307
Operational Policy & Support	1	1	3	2	5	6		17
Pesticides Safety Directorate	3	1	13	32	66	28	31	174
Policy Group	5	8	52	98	73	31	18	285
Resources Planning Directorate	3	6	21	29	35	49	45	188
Science & Technology Group	1	6	35	60	28	10	20	161
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>1062</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>3100</b>

**Table 2: Gender and job band**

Numbers

Job Band	Female	Male	Grand Total
SCS	11	31	42
Band 1	25	82	107
Band 2	99	412	511
Band 3	373	689	1062
Band 4	196	191	388
Band 5	303	123	426
Band 6	396	170	566
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1402</b>	<b>1698</b>	<b>3100</b>

Percentage

Job Band	Female	Male	Grand Total
SCS	25%	75%	100%
Band 1	23%	77%	100%
Band 2	19%	81%	100%
Band 3	35%	65%	100%
Band 4	51%	49%	100%
Band 5	71%	29%	100%
Band 6	70%	30%	100%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3: Race and job band**

Numbers

Job Band	White	BME	Non participant	Unknown	Grand Total
SCS	32		8	2	42
Band 1	77	3	23	4	107
Band 2	312	13	159	27	511
Band 3	615	46	326	75	1062
Band 4	216	18	95	58	388
Band 5	252	36	120	18	426
Band 6	277	26	208	54	566
<b>Total</b>	<b>1782</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>3100</b>

Percentage

Job Band	White	BME	Non participant	Unknown	Grand Total
SCS	77%	0%	18%	5%	100%
Band 1	72%	2%	22%	3%	100%
Band 2	61%	2%	31%	5%	100%
Band 3	58%	4%	31%	7%	100%
Band 4	56%	5%	25%	15%	100%
Band 5	59%	8%	28%	4%	100%
Band 6	49%	5%	37%	10%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4: Disability and job band**

Numbers				Percentage					
Job Band	No Disability	Has Disability	Unknown	Grand Total	Job Band	No Disability	Has Disability	Unknown	Grand Total
SCS	39	1	2	42	SCS	93%	2%	5%	100%
Band 1	99	4	4	107	Band 1	93%	4%	3%	100%
Band 2	467	17	27	511	Band 2	92%	3%	5%	100%
Band 3	958	29	75	1062	Band 3	90%	3%	7%	100%
Band 4	308	22	58	388	Band 4	79%	6%	15%	100%
Band 5	390	19	18	426	Band 5	91%	4%	4%	100%
Band 6	467	44	54	566	Band 6	83%	8%	10%	100%
Grand Total	2728	135	237	3100	Grand Total	88%	4%	8%	100%

**Table 5: Age and job band**

Percentage							Grand Total
Job Band	<20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	>60	Grand Total
SCS	0%	0%	0%	23%	71%	6%	100%
Band 1	0%	0%	3%	28%	64%	5%	100%
Band 2	0%	1%	6%	31%	56%	6%	100%
Band 3	0%	3%	28%	38%	28%	3%	100%
Band 4	0%	10%	27%	42%	21%	0%	100%
Band 5	0%	6%	22%	43%	26%	3%	100%
Band 6	0%	10%	18%	36%	31%	4%	100%
Grand Total	0%	5%	20%	37%	34%	4%	100%

**Table 6: Proportion of inspectors aged 56 or over**

Discipline	Staff	Percentage
Mines	8	57
Quarries	5	50
Offshore	51	44
Nuclear	56	34
Medical	2	29
Specialist inspector	63	27
Regulatory specialist	111	13
All	296	21

## Workforce Recruitment

Chart 1: known and expected recruitment starts in 2008/09

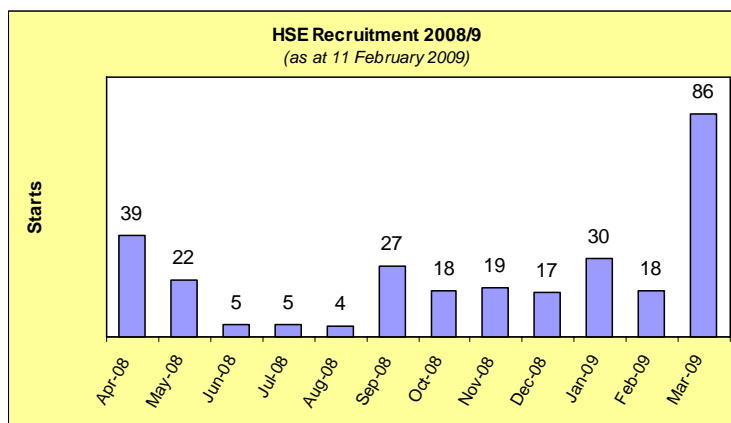


Table 7: Staff recruited by discipline group in 2008/09 (full details held on e-HR at 11 February 2009)

Discipline Group	Staff
Administration	101.0
Economist	4.8
Information Technology	0.0
Legal	8.6
Mines	3.0
Nuclear	15.8
Offshore	4.0
Professional/Technical	1.0
PSD Info Technology	0.0
Regulatory Specialist*	40.9
Scientific	4.0
Specialist Inspector	15.0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>198.1</b>

\*not including the March 2009 intake

## Workforce leavers

Chart 2: HSE leavers April 08 to March 09

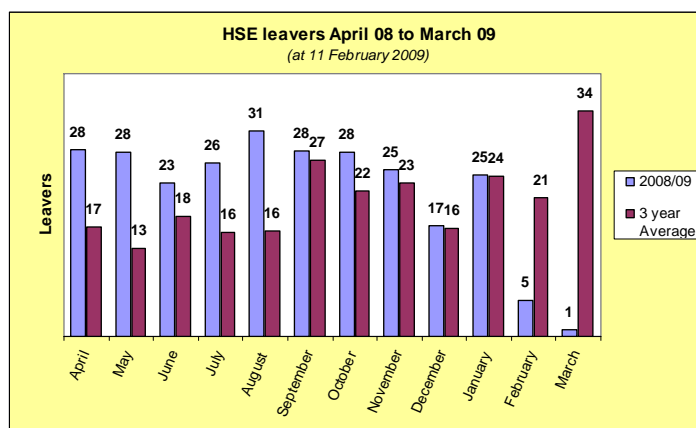


Table 8: leavers by discipline group (full details on e-HR system) at 11 February 2009

Discipline Group	Total
Administration	126.6
Economist	2.0
Foundation	1.0
Information Officer	2.0
Information Technology	1.0
Legal	9.5
Mines	4.0
Nuclear	6.0
Occupational Health	0.4
Offshore	11.8
Professional/Technical	1.0
Regulatory Specialist	47.9
Scientific	12.8
Social Researcher	1.0
Specialist Inspector	8.6
Statistician	2.0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>237.6</b>