

| Health and Safety Executive Board |                | HSE/11/31   |      |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------------|------|
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## Review of health and safety guidance

### Purpose of the paper

This paper provides a summary of an ambitious programme of work to review HSE's guidance. The purpose of the paper is to update the Board on the review including work on the use of HSE brand on guidance and in partnership marketing.

### Background

1. There are a number of internal and external drivers to the review of guidance:
  - The need to ensure our offer remains focused and fit for purpose;
  - The Common Sense, Common Safety report with the focus on simplifying requirements for low risk businesses;
  - The Government's growth agenda to ensure that guidance is proportionate and focused on compliance;
  - The Government's approach to regulation and opportunities to include 'soft law' as an 'out' for the purposes of 'one in, one out';
  - The replacement of Infoline with a web-based service;
  - The rationalisation of Government websites.
2. Recent work as a result of the Common Sense, Common Safety report has resulted in online guidance and tools being provided for low risk businesses (ie *Health and Safety Made Simple*, and risk assessment tools for offices, shops, classrooms and voluntary organisations).

### Argument

3. **Review scope and priorities.** HSE currently has approximately 1,000 publications and leaflets and approximately 20,000 web pages. The review will overhaul this guidance portfolio to ensure it represents a practical, proportionate approach for organisations to help them comply with health and safety law. This will be achieved by ensuring the guidance;
  - Focuses on compliance and avoids unnecessary duplication;
  - Is proportionate to the risk;
  - Maintains health and safety standards; and
  - Preserves important information and messages that have been developed over many years which currently work for stakeholders.

Prioritisation for the review will be based on:

- The level of health and safety risk the guidance is looking to address and the prevalence of the risk;
- Audience size and the potential to reduce burdens on businesses;
- The level of duplication across the portfolio and opportunities to consolidate guidance.

HSE will look to influence key stakeholders' attitudes towards guidance so that effective guidance is produced where it is needed. HSE will continue to work closely with key stakeholders to ensure the aims and priorities for the review are clearly understood and remain focused and that changes that affect them are clearly communicated. ACoPs and guidance provided for major hazard industries will not be included in the review.

4. **Review methodology.** The review approach builds on recent successful guidance developed for particular sectors (eg motor vehicle repair guidance and woodworking website). These pieces of guidance provide an overview of the risks in a particular sector in a series of short statements (approximately 100 to 150 words). These statements are made up of generic information on the risks with specific information added to highlight important sector context. The guidance is also used to signpost further, more detailed information, should that be required. The generic information contained in these short statements will be used across the portfolio to ensure consistency. The review process is defined in terms of reference and includes assessment of;
  - a. The current/future need for the guidance and consistency of message with other guidance; and
  - b. Whether the guidance helps dutyholders comply with the law in a proportionate manner using appropriate language.

The review will ensure that important messages are retained, the guidance withstands legal scrutiny and standards for health and safety are maintained.

5. **HSE brand and ownership.** HSE currently publishes some guidance in collaboration with key stakeholders. HSE is currently developing policy to ensure that collaborative guidance, containing HSE logo, stands up to the same level of scrutiny that is applied to HSE's own guidance as defined in paragraph 4. Additionally, HSE is developing policy on the use of its logo for partnership marketing (ie communicating HSE messages through partners).

### **Action**

6. The Board is asked to note:
  - the scope and methodology for the review of external guidance; and
  - the use of HSE brand on guidance and in partnership marketing.
  - A further update on progress will be provided in the autumn.

### **Paper clearance**

7. Cleared by Jane Willis and Sally Sykes on 28 April 2011 and SMT on 4 May 2011.