The HSC Chemicals  Strategy

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HSE
ILL HEALTH CAUSED BY HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AT WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Cases - total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower respiratory disease</td>
<td>200 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin disease</td>
<td>66 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pneumoconiosis</td>
<td>19 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>3000 - 12 000 per year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Occupational Asthma: SWORD/OPRA Cases

SWORD/OPRA Estimated Cases (UK)
The role of the Regulator

- Standard setting
- Information gathering
- Behaviour modification
Statutory Regulatory Framework

- CAD
- CHIP
- COSHH
- OES
- MEL
- IOELV
- REACH
- CHAN
- ACOP
Employer’s duties

- Identify hazards
- Assess risks
- Decide what precautions are needed
- Prevent or adequately control exposure
- Ensure measures are used and maintained
- Carry out appropriate monitoring and health surveillance
- Provide information and training
Firms using chemicals awareness of legal requirements

- unaware/other: 84%
- comply with COSHH: 4%
- mention OELs: 12%
Sources of information used to establish if a substance is harmful

- labelling
- experience
- SDS/Rphrases
- supplier lit
- HSE lit
- other
- EH 40
- no answer

(all users) (heavy users)
Understanding small firms

- Safety data sheets often not used
- Management structures are not hierarchical
- Communication is by word of mouth
- Consider the chemicals they work with pose little or no risk – poor knowledge of possible long term effects
- 30% have reading age below 11 years – applies to managers and employees
Tools available to help employers

- Safety data sheets
- Occupational exposure limits
- HSE guidance?
- Industry guidance?
Safety Data Sheets

Research shows:
- 35% contain significant inaccuracies
- Too long and too technical
- Lack useful information
- Unclear
- Conflict with user’s experience
Small firms and health risks from chemicals

Research shows:

- Very limited understanding of legal requirements
- Wanted to be told what they do, and do not, need to do;
- HSE literature did not reach them;
- Distinctions government make between health, safety and environment are irrelevant to them.
Firms using chemicals sometimes
Firms using chemical daily
Present HSE policy
The role of the Regulator

- Standard setting - setting OELs
  - hazard identification

- Information gathering - ill health data

- Behaviour modification - emerging
  - COSHH Essentials
  - new approach to OELs
Future Direction of HSE Policy

- Bring together health and safety
- Fulfil statutory functions - including work on EU directives
- Prioritising work into programmes – asthma, cancer and skin disease
- Robust compliance strategy linked to good practice
- Communications / education drive
- Energetic Substances
CONCLUSION

HSE is determined to reduce ill health from chemicals in the workplace by:

- Concentrating on a range of initiatives to make a difference in the workplace;
- Focusing on helping small firms
- Enabling enforcement
- Focus on Outcomes
- Project and Programme Working