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TEXTILES INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

GOVERNMENT'S REPOSE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF WORK AND PENSIONS SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE WORK OF HSC/E

Recommendation

The Committee recommends a wide ranging and open review of the role and effectiveness of HSC's Industry Advisory Committees to help to address concerns that they are being downgraded. (Paragraph 72)

Response

The Government and HSC greatly value the contribution of its Advisory Committees (ACs) and have no plans to downgrade them. It believes it right, however, that HSC has an effective mechanism for constant review to ensure that ACs remain relevant to the changing industrial and commercial landscape, and focused on delivering outcomes in the form of improved health and safety.

ACs provide HSC with an additional and major source of expertise and advice on specific health and safety issues, and have a key role in delivering HSC's workplace strategy. ACs may be concerned with health and safety in a particular industry or sector, or with particular hazards that may be present across a range of industry sectors, but all ACs support HSC's aims by:

- translating and disseminating HSC's priorities to their constituencies; and
- engaging stakeholders in appropriate accident/ill-health reduction programmes.

All ACs are periodically reconstituted, at which time they are reviewed. In 2003, HSC considered how ACs were managed, and the criteria against which they should be reviewed. Its views are set out in a guidance note, 'A Guide to managing HSC Advisory Committees' (GAP 2), which is available on HSE's web site at www.hse.gov.uk.

HSC wants all ACs to now concentrate on how they can best improve health and safety performance in the sphere for which they have responsibility. Proposals to constitute or reconstitute an AC should explain how it will contribute to achieving strategic outcomes and the planned timescale, so that progress can be monitored. Such proposals also have to demonstrate that indicative criteria, developed by HSC to use as a basis for prioritising resources to support ACs, have been met. These criteria are also set out in GAP2. It is also important to be sure that an AC, as a specific form of stakeholder engagement, is the most appropriate for the particular sector.

Between 2003 and 2005, all existing ACs will have undergone this review process. A number, such as agriculture, construction and health services, have already been reconstituted.

A copy of the full response may be found at <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmworpen/1137/113702.htm> - click on 'appendix'