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## HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

Senior Management Team

### **Workforce Strategy 2008 to 2011**

A Paper by Gaynor Coldrick

Advisor: John Rowson

Cleared by Gaynor Coldrick on 25 March 2008

#### **Issue**

1. To consider and inform the future direction of HSE's workforce strategy for 2008 to 2011.

#### **Timing**

2. Immediate. A number of workforce issues require a speedy corporate response, which it will take time to develop and implement.

#### **Recommendation**

3. The SMT is invited to consider the summary of corporate issues (see attached Annex) and support the following actions:

##### Next 3 months

- a. to continue with urgency recruiting in anticipation of staff leaving over the next 12 months.
- b. to explore opportunities to link recruitment campaigns to improve their reach and effectiveness and to promote HSE as an employer of choice
- c. to explore establishing a longer term relationship with a specialist recruitment consultancy to recruit specialists to hard to fill posts
- d. to try out arrangements for a Redgrave Court career review group with a band 2 pilot.

##### Next 3 to 6 months

- e. HR to research opportunities to develop more of our own specialists – expand the Grow Your Own initiative
- f. HR to lead a review of the early years training arrangements with D/Ds to accommodate an expected increase in recruitment activity
- g. to further develop HSE's employer brand to support more effective and cost efficient recruitment activity over the longer term.

#### **Background**

4. Following SR 2007, D/Ds are developing workforce plans to support their business plans over the next three years. In February, the (former HSE) Board discussed emerging recruitment needs over this period. Discussions have now

taken place with D/Ds about corporate workforce issues. D/Ds are aiming to produce their workforce plans by the end of April.

5. HR has carried out external labour market research. The forecasts all seem to point in the same direction. It is going to become increasingly difficult over the next 5 to 10 years to attract many of the types of specialist that HSE has traditionally recruited.

### **Argument**

6. There is a general consensus about the main corporate workforce issues facing HSE. These are summarised in the report in the Annex. This paper focuses on issues where action is proposed within the next 6 months. Other issues will come out of the detailed workforce plans, which we will bring to the SMT later.
7. The main issues are:
  - a. Increased recruitment needs for a wide range of specialists across HSE
  - b. increased turnover and an increasing age profile with potentially significant numbers of staff retiring over the next three years
  - c. impact of HWWW on all D/Ds in Redgrave Court
  - d. need to manage deployment of staff and job moves effectively
  - e. need to review aspects of the corporate learning and development arrangements
  - f. capacity at the centre and in D/Ds to support current and future recruitment, and learning and development activity.
8. The challenge is how to respond effectively to these overlapping issues. If staff shortages in certain areas are not addressed then business delivery could be compromised and it will become increasingly difficult to maintain the red line of 1283 inspectors.

### Recruitment

9. It was agreed that this recruitment is the **main workforce issue** facing HSE. Although we are reasonably successful in recruiting generalists, it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit specialists. Campaigns require a lot of management effort for limited returns. Subject to final approval, over 400 external recruits could be required over 2008/09 (we do not have recruitment numbers for beyond March 2009).
10. HR believes that we need to make significant changes to how we recruit. While there is always room for improvement, tweaking the process will not get the numbers required. We propose that we should: (i) link campaigns more effectively – to promote jobs and career in HSE ; (ii) review job specifications and person requirements – i.e., to open up the requirements; (iii) enter into a long term relationship with specialist recruitment consultants, and (iv) consider alternative ways to source the skills that HSE needs.

### Retention

11. Turnover is currently about 7.3%. This is higher than last year, when the rate was 6.2%. The three main groups of leavers are retirements, transfers to OGDs, and resignations.
12. There is increasing concern about the **age profile**. In a number of disciplines over a fifth of staff are 57 or older. Nearly 100 staff could retire each year for the

next three years. The number of staff **resigning** has increased slightly over the last 12 months to 228 staff. Finally, mainly in London, the number of staff **transferring to OGDs** increased to 34 (out of 44), which we assume is largely is due to HWWW.

13. The main concern about future retirements is that there will be a loss of corporate knowledge and memory and insufficient training of recruits (if they can be found). However it is also seen as an opportunity to refresh the culture of the organisation.
14. It is suggested that we need to look at the range of benefits we offer to staff to improve retention and put in place arrangements to manage the deployment of scarce specialists to areas of business priority.

#### Pay and terms and conditions of employment

15. A number of issues emerged about the overall employment proposition, which affect recruitment, retention, deployment and development. First, whether the overall banding structure is still fit for purpose, particularly in attracting, retaining and developing specialists. Second, difficulties in recruiting staff on the current pay ranges. Third, it was thought that we do not offer a sufficient range of career options to attract and retain younger staff. Fourth, different pay levels in HSE created a market (staff wanting to transfer to higher paying disciplines) which causes skills shortages in some areas.
16. Some of these issues are probably for longer term consideration. However we should ensure that we fully utilise the existing flexibilities in the starting pay on appointment arrangements, and build attractive career options to attract and engage staff

#### Deployment of staff

17. The shortages of specialists that are reaching significant levels in some disciplines and the impending impact on D/Ds in Redgrave Court have increased the need for **better managed internal career moves**. We should not rely upon solely filling posts by advertising vacancies.
18. Proposals for a **pilot band 2 career review group** in Redgrave Court are being finalised, which if successful will be extended to other job bands. There are already a number of career review groups across HSE. It is proposed that we should explore where we could help them to make more moves happen by providing support through the corporate staffing group.

#### Learning and development

19. There are currently five staff on the **“grow your own”** chartered specialist programme. There is support to extend the model but corporate support would be needed. It would fit in with a general aim to employ more staff who require further development, because of the tight labour market.
20. There are concerns that the existing **early years training** model will not be able to cope with anticipated levels of recruitment over the next three years. There is concern about the availability of **technical training**. If the planned recruitment is successful there is likely to be an increased need for such training.
21. HR proposes that further research to identify opportunities to grow our own specialists – not necessarily all to chartered status - should be explored with directorates. HR will review the early years model to see if there are ways to enable new recruits to develop the competencies they need, but which reduce

the burden on FOD. Finally, HR will review the technical training issues that D/Ds currently have to see if there is a better way of meeting their needs.

### **Consultation**

22. Extensive consultation has taken place with D/Ds about the corporate issues and to support the ongoing development of their three year workforce plans. The proposals in the paper either respond to suggestions they made or the issues they identified as needing a corporate response.

### **Presentation**

23. The paper has an internal focus, but there could be external interest in actions we take to recruit specialists because of the target of maintaining a front-line of 1283 inspectors.

### **Costs and Benefits**

24. N/A

### **Financial/Resource Implications for HSE**

25. The main costs fall in two areas: recruitment and dual running. To revise recruitment processes (website, advertisements etc) will cost about £50,000. To engage recruitment consultants would cost between 15% and 25% of the first year's salary for each appointment. If the service was only used in areas of greatest need, we estimate it would cost about £400,000 to recruit 50 specialists (assuming an average starting salary of £40,000).

26. If dual running was allowed to cover recruitment of, say, up to 50 posts, based on the ready-reckoner the maximum payroll costs would be £400,000 to £500,000 – i.e., 12 months' overlap of 50 incoming and 50 outgoing staff.

27. We need to do more costings for the "grow your own" development work, but initial guesstimates are that it would take 0.1 x band 3 and 0.1 x band 4 to develop proposals over the next 6 months, giving a total cost of £6,500. And 0.5 of a band 4 (£30,000 per annum) might be required to run the programme. To develop the employer brand would take 0.1 x band 2 and 0.1 x band 4 over 6 months, giving a total cost of £7,250.

### **Environmental implications**

28. N/A

### **Action**

29. Subject to the SMT's approval, the immediate actions will be to prepare a coordinated recruitment campaign for the next 6 months, to explore establishing a long term partnership with a recruitment consultant and to prepare to launch the pilot band 2 Redgrave Court career review group.

### **Contact**

John Rowson

HR, Workforce Planning and Internal Diversity

VPN 523 4049

## **SUMMARY OF CORPORATE workforce ISSUES**

### **Introduction**

1. This is a summary of corporate issues identified by directors, heads of division and HR business partners in recent discussions held to inform preparation of the workforce strategy paper for the 2<sup>nd</sup> April SMT meeting.
2. This version incorporates comments made by directorates on an earlier draft. Workforce statistics have also been added to the summary. The statistics do not include HSL, except for proposed recruitment activity in 2008/09, where their future vacancies are included to indicate the overall level of recruitment demand on HR.

### **Summary**

3. The main issues are:
  - a. increased recruitment needs for a wide range of specialists across D/Ds
  - b. increased turnover and an increasing age profile with potentially significant numbers of staff retiring over the next three years
  - c. impact of HWWW on all D/Ds in Redgrave Court
  - d. need to manage deployment of staff and job moves more effectively
  - e. need to review aspects of corporate learning and development, including the early years' training model
  - f. capacity at the centre and in D/Ds to support current and future recruitment, and learning and development activity.

## **Background**

4. D/Ds produced 12 month workforce plans for 2007/08, against a template developed by HR. This was the first time that plans had been produced. D/Ds found the process useful in helping them to consider workforce issues. However they found part of the template and reporting requirements to be bureaucratic.
5. Progress against plans was reviewed at the October 2007 (former HSE) Board meeting. The review covered progress in tackling workforce issues, such as recruiting and growing our own specialists, developing staff and organising how work is delivered.
6. The (former HSE) Board welcomed the progress report. The (former HSE) Board noted that affordable staffing plans had been the main workforce driver and asked that future workforce planning should be more strategic. (Former HSE) Board members asked to be more actively involved in the process.
7. The recent discussions took place before the finalisation of business plans, but on the basis that 2008/09 will largely be "business as usual" without significant changes. D/Ds advised that their detailed workforce plans should be completed by the end of April.

## **Purpose and scope of April SMT paper**

8. D/Ds agreed that the paper should focus on corporate workforce issues, rather than detailed workforce planning. It was suggested that the principle of "subsidiarity" should apply: D/Ds should be left to manage local workforce issues, and the centre should focus on corporate or cross-cutting issues (i.e., those that affect more than one directorate), but being mindful of potential linkages between activities carried out in D/Ds.
9. The paper will identify a number of issues and set out, for consideration, proposals to respond to them. The SMT's decisions will determine the future direction of HSE's workforce strategy over the next three years and possibly longer. The proposals will cover a number of areas, including recruitment, learning and development, and career management.

## Recruitment

10. Recruitment was identified as the single biggest issue, in particular protecting the numbers of front-line inspectors. There are problems in recruiting to replace staff who have left, and some D/Ds need to recruit to expand staff numbers. Recruitment is needed across a wide range of specialisms and D/Ds.
11. Table 1 shows that 37 staff have been recruited in 2007/08 (up to 14 March). This is a relatively modest number, but has required considerable effort from D/Ds and HR. For example, applications from over 150 candidates were processed for specialist vacancies in FOD and HID, which only resulted in 4 new staff being recruited.

Discipline	Number
Administration	5
Economist	3
Offshore Discipline	5
Offshore Wells	1
Policy adviser (start in May 08)	19
Scientific	1
Spec Const/Civil Engineer	1
Spec Control Systems	1
Spec Electrical Engineer	1
All	37

**Table 1: Number of recruits in 2007/08 (excluding HSL)**

12. The level of recruitment activity needed in 2008/09 will be higher than it has been for several years. This is against a recent record of reasonable success in recruiting generalists but of increasing difficulty in recruiting specialists.

D/D	Number	Disciplines
FOD	34	Head of Division, Chief Medical Inspector, Trainee Inspectors, Admin
CSD	4	Medical Inspectors
CoSAS	7	Head of Analytical Services, Economists, Social Researchers, Statisticians
HID	50	Wells, Offshore Regulatory, Human Factors, Diving Inspector, Process Safety, Structural engineers, Pipelines Specialist, Mines (General/Elec/ME), Biological Agents, Process Safety, Mechanical Eng, C&I, Predictive Risk assessors
HSL	75	Scientists + other disciplines
ND	46	Nuclear Specialists, Nuclear Security Insp, Fire Surveyors
PG	200	Policy advisers
STG	5	Radiation Specialist, Process Safety, Psychologist, Occupational Hygienists
Total	421	

**Table 2: Potential vacancies in 2008/09 (excluding HSL)**

13. Table 2 shows that D/Ds (including HSL) are looking to recruit over 420 staff across a wide range of disciplines. Some of the proposals have not yet been

approved by the Recruitment panel, and some are to fill current vacancies and others are in anticipation of needing to replace staff over the next 12 months.

14. It was suggested that HR should review how recruitment is managed, including looking at the targeting of vacancies and considering using specialist recruitment consultancies to help fill certain types of vacancies; and working with D/Ds to identify alternative ways of resourcing in hard-to-fill areas.
15. The list of specialisms with current or future recruitment needs is growing. Current major reviews and reports – e.g., Buncefield and Dame Carol Black's report on occupational health care – could lead to further recruitment demands. In addition, if responsibility for animal pathogens regulation comes to HSE, it could lead to a need to recruit veterinary surgeons – a completely new discipline.

#### Dual running

16. D/Ds said they need to recruit in advance of losing staff (mainly to retirement and HWWW redeployment) to maintain business continuity and facilitate skill and knowledge transfer.
17. This raises transitional funding issues, but there is a widely held view that there will be a time lag before current recruitment campaigns lead to new staff starting to work in HSE. It is thought that this could release funding to recruit in advance of planned departures, but the need to manage payroll carefully over three years is recognised.

#### Pay and Reward

18. There are long standing concerns about our ability to recruit certain types of specialists on the current pay ranges. It was suggested that if we cannot recruit in the numbers required then we should offer higher salaries to current staff to improve retention and maintain their engagement and commitment.
19. However it was also thought that we do not always make the best use of existing flexibilities in the pay system. For example higher starting salaries than those currently offered can be paid, provided they remain within the pay range. It is recognised though that internal relativities need to be considered.

20. There are also location issues. It has always been harder to recruit certain types of specialists in London and the South East (and Aberdeen) but it is becoming even more difficult. Reference was made to the emergence of a North/South divide in the availability of specialists.
21. Questions were also asked about whether the banding structure is still fit for purpose, particularly in relation to whether it supports the effective recruitment of specialists. There are also issues about how we provide career paths for different types of specialists and how we support and encourage specialists to move between roles.

#### Post and person specifications

22. It was suggested that we should review the levels of professional qualifications required. For example, should we accept more people below chartered status? The value of chartered status in giving credibility within the industry is recognised. But it was said that after staff are recruited further checks are not usually carried out to see if they maintain their status, which raised questions about the extent to which it is needed in all roles.
23. It was said that for many specialists we are a relatively smaller buyer in the respective labour market and will not influence external salary levels. Often though we want to recruit from the top end of the market. This makes it harder and more expensive to recruit staff. In some areas we may need to start recruiting in different markets with the consequent need to do more internal development after requirement (see section on Grow Your Own).
24. Some D/Ds suggested that we should look to recruit at other job bands – e.g. direct recruitment of more specialists at band 2; and possibly recruiting people with relevant qualifications and experience to be general inspectors at band 3.
25. In some areas it is difficult to anticipate staffing requirements over the next five years, or longer. It was suggested that more use should be made of fixed term contracts and other ways of resourcing the delivery of work. It is thought that this could help to reduce what is sometimes thought to be a “stop/start” approach to recruitment in a number of areas, which hindered longer term workforce

planning. However, the downside of this approach is the potential erosion of corporate knowledge and our ability to train new people.

### HR capacity

26. There are concerns about HR's capacity to deliver recruitment at the levels required. D/Ds wonder whether a more corporate and planned approach is needed. There seemed to be a number of campaigns for singleton or small numbers of recruits, where it should be possible to gain synergies and savings from linking them together.
27. Conversely, some D/Ds are concerned that their requirements for small numbers of different types of specialists will always take second place to major campaigns for, say, trainee general inspectors or policy advisers. It was suggested that it would be helpful if the SMT agreed a priority order for recruitment activity, such as giving priority to recruiting in chargeable areas and maintaining front line inspector numbers.

### **Retention**

28. Table 3 shows that there have been nearly 228 leavers (FTE) in 2007/08. Overall turnover is about 7.3% which is higher than the rate last year (6.4%) – [DN: check rate]. Turnover was highest in LAO (31.5%), LAU (18.1%) and Comms (17.7%).

D/D	OGD Transfer	Resignation	Retirement	Other <sup>1</sup>	Total	Turnover
Comms	1.9	1.0	1.0		3.9	17.7%
CoSAS		1.0	1.9	4.5	7.4	9.8%
FOD <sup>2</sup>	12.7	56.1	23.8	4.0	96.5	7.3%
HID	1.0	17.0	14.9		32.9	6.2%
LAO	7.0	1.5		1.0	9.5	31.5%
LAU		2.0	1.0		3.0	18.1%
ND		2.4	5.6	2.3	10.3	3.7%
OPSD		0.8	0.9		1.7	3.8%
PG	18.9	12.1	4.5	5.1	40.6	11.6%
RPD	2.0	6.0	7.1	4.9	20.0	5.2%
STG		2.0			2.0	1.3%
All	43.5	101.9	60.6	21.8	227.7	7.3%

**Table 3: leavers between 1 April 2007 and 14 March 2008**

<sup>1</sup> Other includes: end of contracts (FTAs, loans), dismissals and death in service.

<sup>2</sup> FOD rate is not adjusted for the creation of STG

3. STG rate is calculated on staff in post at 14 March 08

29. Resignations (102) accounted for most of the leavers, followed by retirements (61), but OGD transfers (44). Thirty-four of the OGD transfers were in London.
30. Table 4 shows leavers by discipline group. Administration is the highest (111) but there were 50 regulatory specialist leavers, including a total of 23 resignations from FOD (16 band 3s and 8 band 4s).

Discipline	OGD Transfer	Resignation	Retirement	Other	Total
Administration	26.6	44.8	26.1	13.2	110.6
Regulatory specialists	6.9	33.6	9.3	0.0	49.8
Offshore Discipline		6.0	5.9		11.9
Lawyer	6.0	1.5			7.5
Scientific	1.0	2.0	1.9		4.9
Nuclear			4.6		4.6
All	40.5	87.9	47.8	13.2	189.3

**Table 4: leavers by discipline between 1 April 2007 and 14 March 2008**

31. To respond to an expected increase in leavers, it was suggested that HSE should review where specialist staff are located across HSE and consider putting in place mechanisms to redeploy specialists to areas of greater business/staffing need.
32. There are also internal retention issues. D/Ds are concerned about the loss of specialists to higher paying disciplines in other directorates. The corporate need is recognised, but often these staff are transferring from relatively small disciplines that are already carrying vacancies, and which cannot readily afford to lose somebody else.

#### Age Profile

33. Several D/Ds raised concerns about their age profiles and the levels of retirement they expected to see over the next few years. Disciplines with small numbers of specialists were particularly at risk.
34. Table 5 shows that there are 17 disciplines (out of about 36) where at least a fifth of staff are aged 57 or over; and in 4 disciplines over half of staff are 57 or over. In most disciplines, this percentage has increased significantly since 2005. There are also about 90 staff who are aged 59 years and could retire within the next 12 months (the planning assumption is that half of them will retire).

Discipline	01-Apr-05	29-Feb-08	Change
Professional/Technical	50%	67%	17%
Offshore Wells	10%	53%	43%
Mines	5%	50%	45%
Psychologist	0%	50%	50%
Quarries	15%	42%	26%
Spec Const/Civil Engineer	22%	41%	19%
Offshore Discipline	26%	38%	12%
Spec Occ Hygienist	9%	33%	24%
Spec Risk Assessor	18%	32%	13%
Spec Inspector Security	N/A	27%	-
Spec Mechanical Engineer	32%	26%	-6%
Spec Electrical Engineer	34%	26%	-8%
Nuclear	16%	25%	9%
Spec Process Safety	17%	24%	7%
Med Insp MFOM	25%	22%	-2%
Offshore Diver	29%	22%	-8%
Nursing	34%	21%	-13%

**Table 5: Percentage of staff aged 57 or over by discipline**

35. D/Ds said they need to recruit new staff well before staff leave, to facilitate effective skill and knowledge transfer. A good period of overlap is also needed to support the training and development of new staff. It is thought to be too big a risk to wait to recruit until after staff have left. In some topic areas HSE's corporate knowledge could be lost when a single individual retires.
36. To improve retention it was suggested that we need to look at our how we reward staff and to consider whether we could offer other types of flexible benefits. In the past we have tended to recruit older specialists who would be interested in benefits around pension or health provision. These may need to be improved to aid retention of existing staff.
37. However, HSE also needs to rethink its recruitment strategy as taking on younger specialists may be the only way to recruit in some areas and would help us to build a healthier age profile, who may be interested in different benefits.

## HWWW

38. All D/Ds reported that they will be directly or indirectly affected by HWWW. There will be an opportunity to reshape the HQ based workforce and staff will have better career development opportunities. Some D/Ds are concerned thought that in the short term at least they could lose significant numbers of their better staff to PG, without satisfactory replacement cover.
39. PG need to recruit staff to Redgrave Court across all job bands. They will need to recruit internally as well as externally, particularly for posts at more senior levels. Successful band 2 recruitment is seen as critical. There is concern that OGDs' experience in externally recruiting at this level has been mixed and required considerable management effort. To help manage the transition to Redgrave Court and reduce the impact on themselves and other D/Ds, PG are keen to retain the services of their FTA staff beyond March 2008.
40. CoSAS and LAO face challenges in recruiting specialists. Generally, the career paths of economists, social scientists and lawyers involve moving from department to department. This is overseen by the respective Government specialist agencies, who are thought to have a London-centric focus, which doesn't help in establishing services in the North West. Having said this, recent recruitment activity for economists and lawyers, has shown a promising response to building capacity in the North West.
41. There are concerns about the transfer of inspectors to non-sector roles in PG, without clear arrangements in place under which they would return to inspection. Some of the transfers may take place on promotion, which would increase the difficulty in managing returns. PG believe there is a need to move away from the expectation that specialists need experience in policy roles for advancement, but this should be actively managed for the development of a small number of colleagues with identified high potential.
42. D/Ds said that centrally coordinated arrangements were needed to manage internal moves during the transition period, balancing individual D/Ds' business priorities and staffing needs. It would not be sensible to rely upon filling vacancies through the normal advertising arrangements. Part of the

arrangements could involve a Redgrave Court based local career review group (arrangements for a band 2 pilot are being finalised).

## **Learning and Development**

### Training demand

43. There is a general concern that the proposed levels of recruitment, particularly for 2008/09, will lead to a demand for training that the centre will find it difficult to meet. D/Ds are also concerned that they will not be able to resource the expected increase in the volume of training needed.
44. It was said that the balance between personal/management training and technical training needs to be reviewed. There is concern that it is now harder to get technical training than it used to be. New recruits will need a combination of personal skills training and technical training and it is important to achieve the right balance.

### Early years' training model

45. FOD/HID trainee inspectors (band 4) and new specialist inspectors (band 3) from HID spend their first six months in FOD. FOD also provides training for new nuclear inspectors. The proposals to recruit significant numbers of trainee inspectors and specialist inspectors over the next years will put significant strain on the early years' training model.
46. It is thought that the model needs to be revised to cope with the likely increased demand. It is proposed that initial attachments should focus on achieving a number of objectives specified by the parent directorate, rather than being driven by the need to spend 6 months in FOD.

### Grow your own pilots

47. Under the current "grow your own" (GYO) pilot five staff are working towards gaining chartered status. Although it is too early to evaluate the pilot, based on progress so far D/Ds thought that HSE should seek opportunities to grow other types of specialists.

48. Supporting the existing pilot had put a considerable extra load on D/Ds. It is thought that more could be gained from the initiative with increased corporate support. It was suggested that before expanding GYO, the roles of the different types of specialists need to be considered – i.e., researchers (HSL), hazardous industry specialists and specialist support inspectors. There may be scope to offer staff wider career opportunities across the specialisms. For example, a number of occupational hygiene specialists started as scientists at HSL.
49. It was pointed out that HSE is currently developing 10 staff in human factors, who are currently going through a structured training programme at Cranfield.

### **Succession planning**

50. D/Ds said that better talent spotting and succession planning is needed to support workforce management and career development. It could also help to reduce dependency on small fields of specialists.
51. It was said that we need to think more creatively about the career paths that we offer staff. At the moment the focus seems to be on filling immediate gaps rather than thinking about longer term workforce development.
52. Organisational changes have recently been made to develop career paths for specialists in FOD and HID. By establishing fewer, larger teams and distinguishing between team leader and topic specialist roles, it is hoped to develop better career options for this group of staff. It might be helpful to build on these ideas in other parts of HSE.

- END -