

Senior Management Team Minutes		SMT/M/08/02	
Meeting Date:	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2008	FOI Status:	Open
Type of Paper:	Minutes	Trim Ref:	2008/192180

**Minutes of the SMT meeting held on Wednesday  
7<sup>th</sup> May 2008, Hope Room, Rose Court, London and by video  
conference link to Redgrave Court, Bootle**

**Present**

Geoffrey Podger	Sandra Caldwell	David Ashton	Alex Brett-Holt
Vivienne Carlton	Giles Denham	Steve Dennis	Patrick McDonald
Eddie Morland	Kevin Myers	Jane Willis	Mike Weightman
Kerr Wilson			

**Apologies**

Bill Gunneyon                      Gaynor Coldrick

**Also attending**

Peter Buckley (all items), Alison McKenzie-Folan (for Items 2, 3 and 4), Sarabjit Purewal (Item 4), Maria Finch (for item 5), Peter Brown, Howard Saunders, Mark Dempsey, Sue Valentiny and Maria O'Beirne (for item 6)

**Minutes**      René McTaggart

**1                      Agenda Item 1 – Draft Minutes of the HSE Board held on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2008 and Action Points**

1.1                      The minutes were to be approved via correspondence due to their late availability.

**2                      Agenda Item 2 – How and Where we Work – Policy activities to be based In London post establishment of a single HQ in Redgrave Court (Closed)**

2.1                      This section of the minutes is closed.

**3                      Agenda Item 2 – Monthly Finance and Staffing update – Provisional out-turn for 2007/08 (Paper SMT/08/06 - Closed)**

3.1                      This section of the minutes is closed.

**4                      Agenda Item 4 – Performance and Risk management Report (Paper SMT/08/07 - Closed)**

4.1                      This section of the minutes is closed.

**5                      Universal Work Recording (UWR) project (paper SMT/08/08)**

5.1                      Steve Dennis and Maria Finch introduced the paper and made the following remarks:

- a. As requested this paper was produced to keep the SMT informed of progress with the work to implement UWR in HSE.
- b. The paper sought the approval of the SMT proceed with the UWR project as outlined in the paper and in particular sought agreement

to the proposed pace of the project, training arrangements, and steps to change the working practices of HSE staff.

- c. In addition, the SMT were also asked to note the steps taken to ensure the IT system can support the roll out of UWR in HSE.

5.2 The SMT thanked Steve and Maria and made the following comments in response:

- a. The SMT agreed that in rolling out UWR a clear case needs to be made that there are benefits for both the management of the organisation and for staff as individuals. It needs to be made clear that UWR will help to set realistic personal objectives and allow for accurate appraisals of performance.
- b. The SMT were assured that all foreseeable problems had been mitigated by the on-going upgrades of the IT system. Therefore, the additional information being in-put via UWR should not cause problems.
- c. The SMT agreed that the training provided should be targeted to those who most need it and those for whom the investment will be worthwhile, with the option of refresher training (later down the line on a case by case basis) for those who have already been recording their work via COIN.
- d. The SMT also agreed that training on the use of UWR should form part of the induction of new staff members.
- e. The SMT agreed the proposed roll out of UWR , subject to the addition of hold points to review the initial tranche of training and implementation, and were assured that should problems arise that make UWR unfeasible that the project could be slowed/halted (at least until the problems had been addressed).
- f. The SMT agreed that Yorkshire and North East Division should be the first office on the roll out schedule and that the Legal Advisors Office should be added to the list at Annex 1.
- g. The SMT agreed that the system for chargeable work (which is based on assumptions about the time needed to complete HSE's work) would only be changed to rely on UWR once there was confidence that it UWR provides accurate information.

5.3 Geoffrey Podger concluded the discussion by thanking Steve and Maria for a very good paper and by asking that the SMT be kept informed of the progress in implementing the planned roll out of UWR.

**SMT Action point 15** Steve Dennis to amend the roll out plan to reflect the discussion of the SMT and report back on progress in due course.

**6** Agenda Item 6 – Health at work – HSE contribution in 2008/09 and beyond (Paper SMT/08/09)

6.1 Jane Willis introduced this paper and made a presentation which included the following points:

- a. Injuries and ill health at work result in some 30m days lost a year – of that 24m are due to ill health. Work related stress and MSDs account for the majority of days lost to ill health.
- b. HSE's health targets are to reduce the incidence rate of new cases of ill health by 20% and the days lost by 30% by 2010. We are

not on track to meet these targets.

- c. HSC's strategy to 2010 included the following points
  - "Do more to address new and emerging work related health issues"
  - "Among all of our challenges, occupational health demands a more strategic and partnership-based approach."
- d. The importance of choosing the right interventions and understanding HSE's position as seen by stakeholders – HSE is often seen as a 'safety' regulator' only.
- e. HSE has had successes in some areas including long latency diseases, noise and vibration, and stress. On stress and MSDs in particular, much had been achieved through communications and stakeholder engagement, e.g. with CIPD, ACAS etc; and through making links to wider sickness, health and productivity agendas to promote messages. Even with the successes there is still much to do and challenges to face.
- f. The challenges for HSE on occupational health include:
  - How to respond to the changing work environment.
  - Learning the lessons from Fit3.
  - Establishing HSE's role in tackling issues such as stress and sickness absence in light of, inter alia, our 2010 Strategy and, more recently, the broader Government Health, Work and Wellbeing Strategy.
  - Providing a clear statement of the direction of travel through the new HSE strategy.
- g. The SMT were also provided with a range of options for addressing common health issues and asked to provide a steer on what the strategic direction of HSE's work on occupational health should be.

## 6.2

The SMT thanked Jane and her team for the presentation and paper and had a wide ranging discussion which included the following points:

- a. The SMT agreed that deciding how best to tackle occupational health was a massive challenge due to the many factors influencing health at work issues.
- b. The SMT agreed that the approach adopted should, where appropriate, be based on the need for employers to follow a risk assessment approach to identify and then minimize the risks. This needed to be coupled with HSE targeting the areas where there is the greatest risk and greatest potential for harm. But, where a traditional risk assessment approach was not judged to be appropriate, e.g. for some common health problems (which are not solely caused by work), that did not mean that HSE should not take action on the issue.
- c. The SMT recognised the importance of continuing to provide the incentive for employers to tackle the causes of long latency diseases. That said, the SMT also recognised that 'work' was not the only contributing factor to a large number of days lost due to illness.
- d. The SMT agreed that for partnerships to be productive HSE needs to be able to offer its partners something that aligns with their priorities.
- e. The SMT agreed the need to ensure the proactive and reactive balance is achieved and that enforcement action is targeted at those that have been provided with the tools to address health

issues but have not taken any action.

- 6.3 The SMT concluded its discussion by agreeing:
- a. That HSE should continue with the current plans for work on stress and MSDs for 2008-09. This would include follow up work by FOD to help build the evidence base for HSE's approaches, the improvements to the stress web site, the work on management competences and the planned communication work.
  - b. Work on managing sickness absence and rehabilitation will not be re-started.
  - c. HSE's contribution to the Health Work and Well-being strategy will be focussed on our strengths in preventing work related ill health.
  - d. That an examination of whether the "safety model" for enforcement will work for common health problems should be undertaken.
  - e. Proposals for the HSE Board's consideration would be developed as part of the work to produce the new strategy for health and safety in Great Britain.

**SMT Action Point 16**      **Sandra Caldwell to provide Jane Willis with coordinated contribution from Operations on what can be/should be delivered.**

**7**      **Agenda Item 7: Draft Agenda for the June meeting**

7.1      The Agenda was approved as drafted.

**8**      **Any other Business**

8.1      Meeting with DWP to discuss the Departmental Strategic Objectives

- a. The SMT were informed that DWP were planning a review of their management and scrutiny arrangements and have invited Geoffrey Podger and Judith Hackitt to provide their input to the process.
- b. As part of the process DWP have agreed that DWP and HSE officials will liaise on issues relating to the HSE Board/SMTs roles in the management of HSE. Any concerns about HSE's performance will be feed to the Secretary of State who will raise them with the Chair of the HSE.
- c. The SMT welcomed the opportunity for more regular contact with senior DWP officials as it will help to build the relationship and trust between the two organisations.

8.2      BERR Workshop

The SMT noted that Judith Hackitt had written to Sir Brian Bender (BERR) about areas of common interest. A half-day workshop was proposed with three groups to discuss: Nuclear Safety, Better Regulation and Major Hazards. The event should take place during July at BERR's offices.

8.3      This section of the minutes is closed.

#### 8.4

##### Review of OPSD

The SMT noted that a review of the services and functions of OPSD was planned. The SMT also noted that the review was not a cost cutting exercise but aimed exploring whether, in line with How and Where We Work, the aims of OPSD could be delivered differently.