

## Statement of commitment between HSE and local authority representative bodies

**This joint statement of commitment**, agreed by HSE and local authority representative bodies in June 2009, sets out our commitment to improved standards of partnership working with one overriding aim – to prevent the death, injury and ill health of those at work and those affected by work activities.

We are committed to work together on the following four clear objectives for the health and safety of Great Britain:

- to reduce the number of work-related fatalities, injuries and cases of ill health;
- to gain widespread commitment and recognition of what real health and safety is about;
- to motivate all those in the health and safety system as to how they can contribute to an improved health and safety performance; and
- to ensure that those who fail in their health and safety duties are held to account.

We are committed to delivering these objectives by working in a close, effectively-governed, partnership that achieves the following aims:

- recognition of the need to balance local/regional priorities against national priorities – achieving the best outcomes for safer, stronger and healthier communities;
- effective targeting and use of resources and funding towards agreed priorities;
- joint planning, work programmes and training ensuring effective interventions and service delivery methods;
- timely communications and better sharing of information between partners;
- working with other regulators and stakeholders to drive forward health and safety improvements, including the health, work and wellbeing programme;

- co-ordinated enforcement activity, consistency and effectiveness, sharing intelligence, data and information, delivery of justice, cross-administrative boundary working;
- production of advice and guidance, publicity, campaigns and communications, best practice;
- implementation of the 'Section 18 standard on enforcement' by 2011;
- ensuring our views are represented within liaison, policy and governance groups at local, regional and national levels; and
- ensuring that information is provided to politicians, senior managers and practitioners on the decisions of such groups and on their work as regulators.

# An overview of the HSE/LA partnership structure



HSE is the national regulatory body responsible for promoting the cause of better health and safety at work in Great Britain – preventing death, injury and ill health in the workplace.

## How HSE supports the partnership structure

- The HSE Board and senior officials hold regular meetings with their LA counterparts.
- Partnership teams in HSE's seven geographical regions provide a strategic link for local authorities – particularly on major work planning initiatives. Partnership teams may also attend LA regional forums and county liaison groups. Enforcement Liaison Officers in the regions support individual councils in their enforcement activities.
- HSE's LAU provides the secretariat for HSE Board meetings with the LGP and for HELA (jointly with LACORS). LAU also runs the HEx (HELA extranet) and provides a partnership news service. LAU liaises regularly with LACORS and partnership teams to promote the partnership.
- HSE's policy teams ensure LA representatives are involved at an early stage in developing policy and workplans.



LACORS is the local government central body providing support, coordination and promotion of local health and safety regulation, representing local government on behalf of LGA, WLGA and COSLA.

## How LACORS supports the partnership structure

- Briefs the HSE Board member (who champions LA interests) before Board meetings.
- Secretariat for the LGP; HELA (jointly with HSE LAU); LACORS Health and Safety Policy Forum.
- Organises meetings of representatives of the county health and safety groups and liaises with these groups and individual health and safety officers.
- Raises the profile of health and safety with HSE producing publications and organising national conferences and regional events for LAs. Also produces a range of specialist advice and guidance on health and safety to LAs promoting good practice.
- Coordinates and submits responses on behalf of LAs to a wide range of government consultations, influencing and lobbying on behalf of local government.
- Leads and partners initiatives enhancing the reputation of regulatory services.

## Organisation acronyms

**HSE** Health and Safety Executive **HSE LAU** Local Authority Unit **LACORS** Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services **LA** Local authority **LGA** Local Government Association **WLGA** Welsh Local Government Association **COSLA** Convention of Scottish Local Authorities **LGP** Local Government Panel **HELA** Health and Safety Executive/Local Authority Enforcement Liaison Committee **CIEH** Chartered Institute of Environmental Health **REHIS** Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland

## HSE/LA partnership – key groups

| Key forum and information  | Purpose   | Members  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>HSE Board</b><br><a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/hseboard">www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/hseboard</a>   | To develop and communicate a strategy for improving the health and safety performance of Great Britain and delivery of the strategy – meets monthly   | HSE Board includes member appointed following LA consultation – briefed by LACORS prior to meetings  |
| <b>LGP and HSE</b><br><a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lgp">www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lgp</a>   | A high level strategic meeting between councillors and HSE which reviews the HSE/LA partnership – meets twice a year  | LACORS Chairman (joint chair) and six local councillors nominated by the three local government associations (LGA, WLGA and COSLA). Chair of HSE Board (joint chair) and up to nine Board members  |
| <b>HELA</b><br><a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/hela">www.hse.gov.uk/lau/hela</a>  | A forum for practitioners, providing strategic oversight of the HSE/LA partnership with a view to maximising its effectiveness in improving health and safety outcomes – meets twice a year   | Chair of LACORS Health and Safety Policy Forum (joint chair) and three others from the Policy Forum (representing councils in England, Scotland and Wales); Deputy Chief Executive of HSE (joint chair) and senior HSE policy and operational managers; CIEH and REHIS |
| <b>LACORS Health and Safety Policy Forum</b><br><a href="http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors">www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors</a>   | Advisory body to LACORS acting as a conduit for information into and out of county and regional liaison groups – meets three to four times a year   | Local authority representatives from 11 government regions (H&S liaison group nominee from county liaison groups and heads of service in county and regional groups); HSE and HSE LAU colleagues for relevant issues; CIEH and other reps for relevant issues          |
| <b>Regional forums</b><br><a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/hela/extranet.htm">www.hse.gov.uk/lau/hela/extranet.htm</a><br>or via HSE’s Partnership Managers<br><br>There are seven regional forums plus Scotland (HASCOG) and Wales  | To enable a regional strategic dialogue between LAs and HSE, supporting the work of liaison groups, shaping, directing and enabling partnership working – meets three to four times a year. Influences wider regional plans and strategies, eg Local Area Agreements and Local Strategic Partnerships | Generally a representative from each LA in Liaison Group, HSE senior regional managers and partnership team  |
| <b>Liaison groups</b><br><a href="http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors">www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors</a><br><br>Currently circa 48 groups: 41 County Liaison Groups (England), three Task Groups (Wales) and four Health and Safety Liaison Groups (Scotland) – they generally meet four times a year | Topical issues of mutual concern on policy or procedures, and which sits alongside discussion of the health and safety delivery plan  | Senior Environmental Health Officer from each LA with a Chief Environmental Health Officer mentor, HSE partnership team and Enforcement Liaison Officers   |

## Working together to deliver better outcomes

**A joint message from Judith Hackitt CBE (HSE Chair) and Cllr Geoffrey Theobald OBE (LACORS Chairman)**

As joint chairs of the regular meetings between HSE Board members and senior councillors who form the Local Government Panel of the Local Government Associations we value the opportunity these meetings provide to discuss key health and safety issues for local and central government. The mutual benefit of our meetings has led us to decide that the time is right to demonstrate our continued commitment to the process.

The partnership between HSE and councils has one overriding aim – making a difference to help prevent work-related deaths, injuries and ill health. We're delighted that this aim is now entirely consistent with the mission statement for the Health and Safety System for health and safety in Great Britain. The partnership remains fundamental to how we do business – shaping and delivering our work as co-regulators of health and safety. Combining our resources to deliver national, regional and local priorities is essential.

The new statement helps define how HSE and LACORS, working with and on behalf of the Local Government Associations in England, Wales and Scotland and local

councils who carry out health and safety will work together to ensure that we continue to develop and implement an effective and sensible approach to health and safety in the workplace. Councils should participate and be represented in the partnership governance structures, communicating their local experience and needs to secure improved health and safety compliance.

The statement of commitment also reflects the aims set out in the new standard for enforcing authorities – detailing how HSE's field operations and councils can meet their duty to make adequate and consistent arrangements for enforcement. The new standard sets out how we can all play our part and is vital to achieving a safe working environment for all those employed in local communities.

A good health and safety regime, focused on the real risks, will have a positive impact on local communities and local businesses, in many cases saving them money through more efficient, safer systems of working. Councils should explore ways that health and safety can help improve the well-being of local communities – perhaps as a component of Local Area Agreements in England, Single Outcome Agreements in Scotland and Local Delivery Agreements in Wales.

**The strong co-regulator partnership between HSE and councils is integral to the new strategy and to its delivery. We're confident that by restating our commitment to partnership working we will go further in working together effectively. This will help us deliver and further secure improvements in workplace health and safety. ■**

## Enforcing authorities – local councils and HSE

**Councils regulate health and safety in over a million workplaces, employing around half the British workforce. Health and Safety Executive is responsible for the rest.**

The role of the enforcing authorities is to ensure that duty holders manage and control risks from work activities – health and safety at work should therefore feature prominently in councils' corporate plans.

The sectors overseen by local councils and HSE include:

| Local councils    | HSE                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Offices           | Factories             |
| Shops             | Farms                 |
| Hotels            | Building sites        |
| Restaurants       | Nuclear installations |
| Pubs and clubs    | Mines                 |
| Care homes        | Hospitals             |
| Warehouses        | Government premises   |
| Places of worship | Schools/colleges      |

## Section 18 Standard

**Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 places a duty on the HSE and local authorities to make adequate enforcement arrangements.**

A new 'Section 18 Standard' sets out the arrangements they should put in place to meet this duty. All enforcing authorities are required to comply with the standard by March 2011. To help compliance, a number of toolkits have been developed – see [www.hse.gov.uk/section18/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/section18/)

**For further information about this joint statement of commitment, please contact either HSE or LACORS**

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