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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE  
Senior Management Team

**Early Years Training for Specialist Inspectors in Regulatory Skills**

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**Issue**

1. Revised arrangements for developing the regulatory competence of new specialist inspectors (SIs) in a way which will better meet HSE's business needs and be both achievable and affordable.

**Timing**

2. Routine.

**Recommendation**

3. That SMT notes the new arrangements described in this paper (which will be put in to immediate effect).

**Background**

4. SI training is divided broadly in to two areas: (i) development of regulatory skills; and (ii) development of specialist skills in the context of the HSE role. The former has been delivered usually through a 6 month attachment to an operational group, almost exclusively in FOD.
5. It has always proved challenging finding sufficient training capacity in operational groups to meet the training demand created by these arrangements. This has been overcome with a degree of flexibility and "muddling through" but with current and projected SI recruitment levels and the additional demands of EYT on B2 & B3 regulatory specialists (together with the Warwick diploma (PGD)) the position is now unsustainable and the arrangements need to be re-thought.
6. Additionally, developments in the training and development of regulatory inspectors has seen the adoption of continuing and consolidated learning as key principles. In several respects specialist inspector training arrangements now lag behind, viz. structured assessment, clear criteria for the participation in elements of the Warwick PGD and discipline competencies to underpin the RDNA. This does not reflect well on our commitment to high quality training and development.
7. Consequently a project was established to review the current system in order to see what changes might be made to achieve a better match between training needs and the arrangements for satisfying them. John Sumner, a retired Band 1

inspector latterly of HID and who spent some time as Head of the Scotland Field Consultancy Group, was engaged to undertake the review.

## **Argument**

### Main features of the revised arrangements

8. TRIM document 2009/1888832 sets out the new arrangements in detail together with, where appropriate, discussion of the options considered.
9. In summary, the key elements of the arrangements are:
  - (i) The regulatory competence of a given SI is clearly specified according to their role, individual discipline, etc. Using an agreed core set of regulatory knowledge and skills for SIs, a competence matrix has been developed to plot the competence level requirements for each specialist discipline.
  - (ii) The EYT programmes will continue to involve a combination of off-the-job courses, tutorials and on-the-job experience. However, the competence specification for a given discipline ensures that the training programme is “just enough” rather than, as now, containing irrelevant training because it has been devised for a different (non-specialist) job role.
  - (iii) Although a small number of SIs will need to undertake the full post graduate diploma (PGD), most SIs will follow a reduced PGD programme, comprising relevant field delivered tutorials, basic law, modified legal modules and, depending on previous experience, the PGD module on business awareness, people and influencing (BAPI).
  - (iv) As now field placements still form a key feature of the arrangements as there is no better way of ensuring the SI achieves competence in the key regulatory skills appropriate to his/her role. However, the revised arrangements ensure this is again “just enough” and there is flexibility to vary the length or timing of attachments by mutual agreement, e.g. when regulatory competencies have been achieved in a shorter time than planned. And more focused, shorter placements can be distributed more equitably between geographical divisions.
  - (v) Instead of the current initial period with their discipline “home” group of just a few weeks before they undertake a prolonged period of regulatory training they will now remain with that group for between 1 – 3 months allowing them to better appreciate their specialist role. Thereafter, the placement with a front line group should be between 1-5 months depending on role. The delivery process is sufficiently flexible to accommodate these variables. This will ensure SIs begin making an earlier contribution to the work of their specialist team, e.g. taking on simple job requests.
  - (vi) A key ingredient for successful implementation of the new arrangements is an individual training plan which will be developed for each SI as soon as possible after we know they are joining HSE. The plan will specify the learning and development objectives for the trainee’s first 12 months and how these will be achieved, including details of agreed placements, which can be organised with as much notice as possible and flexibly to fit with other commitments.
  - (vii) Delivery of the training plan will continue to involve a collaborative effort between the B2 specialist line manager and the line manager of the operational group (aka the placement provider) to which the SI is assigned. However, unlike now, where the placement provider takes on the line management role for the duration of the placement, the specialist line manager remains the SI’s line

manager throughout and is responsible for dealing with any behavioural or performance issues

- (viii) The new arrangements depend in large measure on the appointment of a Specialist Development Manager (SDM) to support the training, development and CPD of specialists. This appointment will ensure adequate line management support for SI trainees and addresses the real challenges of providing ad hoc training necessitated by the spasmodic timing of SI recruitment which is often out of synchronisation with the B4 trainee inspector recruitment campaigns.
- (ix) Finally, performance appraisal arrangements have been tightened ensuring all SIs have 6 and 12 monthly formal assessments (and quarterly reviews of performance) which should pick up training needs and shortcomings (and are the sole means of assessing and managing performance of discipline specialists who do not participate in the PGD).

### **Costs and Benefits**

- 10. It is recognised that HSE will have to adjust recruitment activity in the highly probably circumstances its finances come under pressure. However, the age profile of current SIs and the crucial role they play in delivering HSE's business, suggests SI recruitment is something that HSE will need to protect with commensurate support for their training.
- 11. Staff training can generally be regarded as an opportunity cost – managers and staff appraising, monitoring and coaching are not free to do something else. In this regard the proposed arrangements should be cost neutral or better given the training will be more targeted to the specific needs of the individual trainee. And, with better planning and organisation of the periods for placement with operational teams there should be less disruption to critical operational activity, e.g. avoiding clashes with major recruitment campaigns.
- 12. The proposals include participation in in-house and Warwick University tutorial programmes. Again, better specification of the training needs will ensure the individual will attend essential tutorials only.
- 13. The only additional financial costs arising from these proposals are: (i) the creation of a new SDM post – see below for details; and (ii) a possible unquantifiable increase in the requirement for DDs to facilitate remote placements in order to share them more equitably between divisions.
- 14. The following principal benefits have been identified:
  - (i) Equipping SIs with no more or no less than the regulatory skills they need to fulfil their responsibilities will ensure training is more targeted
  - (ii) Clarifying potential SI training and development pathways to clearly identify their proposed development on joining HSE;
  - (iii) Introducing greater flexibility over the duration and timing of placements with operational groups will make it easier to arrange those placements in a way which minimises the impact on those groups;
  - (iv) Placing a greater responsibility on SI line managers to manage the performance of SI trainees throughout EYT will reduce the burden on operational line managers during the placement periods;
  - (v) Aligning SI EYT with B4 inspector EYT and RDNA will bring SI training up to date with HSE's current systems.

- (vi) Giving the SI trainee more time with their “home” team during EYT will allow them to simultaneously develop their discipline skills and begin making an earlier contribution to the work of the team.

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

- 15. The SDM post is a new post and the payroll cost could be £65K/ year with a further £6.5K in GAE. As with existing ODMs, job related expertise is an essential requirement therefore an existing Band 2 (or Band 3 on temporary promotion) is required to fill the post. In view of this, the real cost to HSE in the short to medium term is likely to be in terms of effort diverted to the SDM role. Only if and when full substantive back-filling occurs via Band 4 recruitment would the full cost be realised.
- 16. Helpfully, CSD have offered to fund the post on the basis of it being filled for two years (advertised simultaneously on level or promotion) by absorbing the costs within their existing budgets.

### **Consultation**

- 17. A Project Board was established, representing CSD, HID and FOD. SMT members were sounded out verbally on the broad thrust of the proposals and have generally welcomed them. TU side were met on 3 June 2009 and, again broadly support the proposals, particularly the appointment of a SDM, but expressed concern that there are several recently recruited SIs who are in limbo and whose training needs have to be addressed with urgency.
- 18. The broad proposals have been discussed at various discipline conferences and workshops where they have found broad support. Finally FOD Band 1s in FOD, who are often in the frontline of conflicting demands for training places under the current arrangements, are broadly supportive of the proposals.

### **Action**

- 19. SMT is asked to note the new arrangements summarised at paragraph 9.