

MANDATORY ACTIVITIES

What we aimed to do

Modernise and simplify the regulatory framework

166. In 2003/04, HSC aimed to take forward projects to support its long-term aims to modernise and simplify the regulatory framework and to deliver European commitments.

Long-term Strategic Programmes

167. Work also continued with the long-term Strategic Programmes to improve health and safety, including Securing Health Together and related programmes on health work and recovery, developing new ways of working with other Government Departments to deliver cross-government goals on health (eg the Healthy Workplaces Initiative), rehabilitation and engaging small firms; and promoting worker involvement through increasing worker consultation in health and safety; and taking forward other measures and initiatives to promote and encourage greater employee involvement.

Progress

Modernise and simplify the regulatory framework

168. Policy Group came into existence at the start of this working year, and was formed from the merging of Safety Policy Directorate, Health Directorate, Railway Policy Directorate and the Strategy and Analytical Support Directorate. The work planned by these separate Directorates was prioritised and continued according to need. Full details of progress with legislation can be found in the Legislative Annex. Of particular note are developments with the following projects:

- an innovative HSE/Environment Agency project to develop integrated health, safety and environmental advice on chemicals reached a major milestone, when a demonstration CD-Rom giving practical advice on working with chemicals was launched and enthusiastically received by stakeholders;
- the Internet site eCOSHH Essentials (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) continues to be well used. By January over 115 000 COSHH assessments had been completed since the launch in April 2002. Advice for the LA sector is also popular with over 2 600 guidance sheets downloaded in two months;
- strong support from stakeholders for the plan of action to tackle occupational asthma, with valuable partnership projects underway;
- a major consolidation exercise of regulations governing the carriage of dangerous goods was completed. Twelve sets of regulations have been revoked. Agreement has been reached that the regulatory development work currently undertaken by HSE should be transferred to the Department for Transport from 1 April 2004;
- work-related deaths protocol - successful joint working between HSE, Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and LAs to produce an investigators' guide to support the protocol and helping to ensure investigations into work-related deaths are efficient and effective;
- continuation of the five-year campaign to raise awareness of the new duty to manage asbestos in non-domestic premises, including:

- presentations given to EHOs from over half of LAs;
- over 3000 partner organisations recruited;
- distribution of half a million free leaflets in collaboration with the Federation of Small Businesses, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and Asbestos Testing and Consulting;
- HSE is working in collaboration with DWP to develop an online training resource for General Practitioners (GPs). The aim is to raise GPs' awareness of occupational health and how work can affect their patients' health.

Long-term strategic programmes

Revitalising Health and Safety

169. Progress was reported in *Delivering health and safety in Great Britain: Health and safety targets: How are we doing? 2002/03* published in December 2003, incorporating the statistical information from the *Health and Safety Statistics Highlights 2002/2003* published in November 2003 (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/overall/hssh0203.pdf>). This showed a steady state against the fatal and major injuries incidence rate targets, probably a slight increase in ill health, particularly stress-related ill health, but no new information on days lost.

170. HSE has identified some ways of improving its statistical information and hopes to develop its own workplace health and safety survey over the next two to three years.

171. Ministerial interest gave an impetus to promoting Revitalising. Many industry sectors continue to promote their own targets and monitor progress. Good results have been seen in the food industry, quarrying, paper and board making; the electricity generation and supply industry has its own ten-year strategy. Themes identified in Revitalising have been carried forward into the new HSC Strategy.

Securing Health Together (SH2)

172. In line with the new HSC Strategy aim to do more to address the new and emerging work-related health issues, HSC asked for a gear change to deliver the health targets. It considered how, collectively, efforts under SH2 have delivered some change, but how this would not be enough unless we focus on delivery of support.

173. HSE facilitated final Programme Action Group (PAG) meetings, publishing reports by the Continuous Improvement PAG, Skills PAG and Support PAG. This latter represented a significant step in the development of our thinking about what must be done to significantly improve occupational health (OH) in Great Britain - (ie to provide OH support with a national coverage) and aspects of how that might be achieved. A report was also published by the Continuous Improvement PAG on Occupational Health Award schemes in Great Britain.

174. In November, HSE held a Conference of OH stakeholders to celebrate achievements so far and develop thinking for next steps in delivering the targets of SH2. Building upon the work of the PAGs and other OH support work in HSE a model for OH support was developed. This will be tested under the Better Health at Work Partnership Strategic Programme. It looks at how to test a model for delivering a problem - solving service for small firms using innovative partnerships, in the public and private sector, to provide occupational health, safety and rehabilitation support.

175. Work has begun on how to deliver the Programme - looking at ways to take work forward supported by the Better Health at Work stakeholder network.

176. The SH2 website (www.ohstrategy.com) contains a database of good practice examples submitted by employers across Great Britain - this has increased to 84 examples.

177. A project has been established to consider whether current approaches to risk management philosophy are adequate to support interventions in health-related problems.

Delivering new ways of working with other Government departments to deliver cross-government goals on health (eg healthy workplace initiative) rehabilitation and engaging small firms.

178. **Occupational Health Advisory Committee** - Two meetings were held as well as an open meeting in November. The 'horizon scan' was finalised and reported to HSC in May.

179. HSE held the role of National Co-ordinating Officer for the **European Network for Workplace Health Promotion** (ENWHP) on a trial basis, establishing foundations for a UK network in collaboration with other government departments (OGDs) and devolved administrations. It also delivered information on four UK Workplace Health Promotion 'tools' for the ENWHP toolbox.

180. **National Employment and Health Innovations Network** - HSE has been part of the steering group promoting information sharing across central and local government and external OH stakeholders.

181. **Healthy Workplace Initiative** - In partnership with the Department of Health (DoH) England we produced four newsletters, sent to approximately 26 000 small/medium sized enterprises (SMEs) themed around the areas of dangerous substances, rehabilitation, occupational asthma and stress.

Return and readjustment to work

182. HSE is working in partnership with DWP and DoH and OGDs to help deliver the Government agenda for combating social exclusion and health inequalities. HSE is contributing by developing a best practice resource (for communicating in Quarter 2 of 2004/5) to help employers manage sickness absence and the return to work of ill, injured and disabled employees thereby preventing long-term absence. In developing the resource, HSE drawn on research and has consulted widely including organising focus group discussions in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, the TUC, Electrical Contractors Association and in conjunction with HSL with individual members of small businesses in the Sheffield and Derbyshire area.

183. HSE also continues to provide advice to the DWP/DoH Job Retention and Rehabilitation pilots, running until 2005, which are testing and evaluating rehabilitative support centred around healthcare, the workplace and a combination of the two.

Promoting worker involvement through increasing worker consultation in health and safety and taking forward other measures and initiatives to promote and encourage greater employee involvement

184. HSC published a statement on worker involvement and consultation on 3 March 2004. The statement sets out the principles and evidence about why the Commission considers worker involvement to be vital and is the first deliverable from the new HSC Strategy: *A strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond*. The statement also sets out a body of work to deliver this and includes developing and improving training for workers and improving their competence, working with safety representatives and encouraging more workers to take up this role, promoting the Worker Safety Adviser (WSA) Challenge Fund* to give more workers in SMEs support and advice; discussing with HSE and LAs the practical steps that could be taken to move forward. The statement was endorsed by key stakeholders: the TUC, CBI, Institute of Directors, Federation of Small Businesses and many others.

**Andrew Smith – Secretary of State at DWP - announced at October's Labour Party Conference the creation of a new stream of funding to give workers in SMEs advice and support on health and safety. HSE has set up the WSA Challenge Fund and it opened for bids on 26 March 2004. The fund offers £1 million each year for three years for organisations to work in partnership to get WSAs working in SMEs. Successful award winners were due to be announced on 9 June 2004.*

Providing information and advice on health and safety

Communication

185. A strategic analysis during the year convinced us that we needed to devote more resource to improving communication - to making it an intervention in its own right. Colin Douglas was appointed as new Director of Communications from 5 January 2004 to head up a new Communications Directorate. A new corporate communication strategy emphasised more effective internal communication, developing a communication culture, establishing strategic communication, building partnerships, presenting a clear picture of HSE work and promoting the case for sensible health and safety.

186. To inform the new strategy a MORI survey in January 2004 found high levels of awareness of HSE (higher than for comparable Government agencies) and of support for health and safety. Employers ranked it among their top two issues of working life. They saw health and safety as good for business and disagreed strongly it was a strain on profits. Our vision of health and safety as a cornerstone of a civilised society was overwhelmingly supported - by 75% in the citizens poll. Some of our media coverage during the year however did not reflect these positive attitudes of employers, employees and citizens (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Q: Please tell me if you agree or disagree ... health and safety requirements are a cornerstone of a civilised society



Base: All citizens (1 000), all employees (2 002), all employers (500)

Source: MORI

Providing information and advice

187. HSE's information and advisory service promotes the delivery of key health and safety priorities and informs people about their rights and responsibilities and how they can improve the working environment. At the core of this work are the HSE website; hsdirect; HSE Books videos, publications, and electronic products; HSE Infoline the Contact Centre for telephone, letter, fax and email enquiries - see Annex 1 'Other output and performance measures' for detailed information.

188. HSE allocates approximately £10 million of its Programme budget to promoting and publicising health and safety.

189. HSE publicises enforcement and intervention activities and the outcomes of prosecutions, and promotes new information products through press releases, press conferences and the website. This activity plays a key role in adding value to enforcement initiatives and in providing an assurance that we act in the public interest.

190. Work will continue on reorganising the HSE website to ensure that information is delivered in an accessible way. Where practical, technical publications will be published on the web with hard copies available on demand at low cost.

191. HSE aims to raise awareness of safety and health through targeted publicity campaigns supporting the new HSC Strategy.

Science and innovation

What we aimed to achieve

192. HSC's Science and Technology mission is to develop and apply science and technology (S&T). In order to provide (a) a sound independent knowledge base for evaluating the risks to people's health and safety from work activities, and (b) the means to assess and control these risks in order to achieve HSC/E's objectives. The HSC/E Quality Statement, to ensure the effective implementation of the Chief Scientific Adviser's Guidelines 2000, is being radically updated in light of experience following its implementation and to reflect organisational changes arising from the HSE Change programme.

Progress

193. Preparation for an Office of Science Technology (OST)-led external review of HSE's S&T is at an advanced stage. A review of the MSD Priority Programme has been undertaken to assist HSE in preparing for the main review. The 2003/04 audits of two major policy processes for compliance with Guidelines 2000 are ongoing and analysis of the evidence and outputs is underway.

Science and Innovation (S&I) Strategy

194. High-quality scientific and technological underpinning is essential to enable HSC/E to be an effective regulator and to ensure that the policy and standards it sets are scientifically sound and cost effective. The present S&I strategy seeks to ensure a direct and transparent link between the science and HSE's high-level business aims.

Progress

195. *The strategic research outlook 2003* (published in May 2003) set out HSE's strategic S&I aims for 2003/4, reflecting the priorities and business objectives described in the HSC/E Strategic Plan, and stating how S&T will contribute to HSE meeting the PSA targets.

196. HSE's S&I strategy is being substantially revised and updated and will be put on the HSE website for external consultation prior to publication in Summer 2004. It will set out how HSC/E will apply S&T in meeting the priorities and high-level goals in HSC's Strategy for 2010 and beyond.

S&I communication

197. Effective communication and dissemination of HSE's S&I is an important element of the S&I strategy. The S&I web pages have been re-designed to deliver information on HSE's science activity in a more accessible way. Results of research are placed in full on the HSE science web pages and can be downloaded free of charge.

Progress

198. During 2003/04 over 110 Research Reports on newly completed research projects were published on the HSE website. An on-line projects directory has been launched on the HSE website, which provides details of over 1200 projects commissioned since 2000. Work has also been commissioned to develop a web-based HSE science newsletter. The Chief Scientist gave a presentation at the British Association Festival of Science, in Salford, describing how HSE uses science and technology in meeting its responsibilities as a regulatory body.

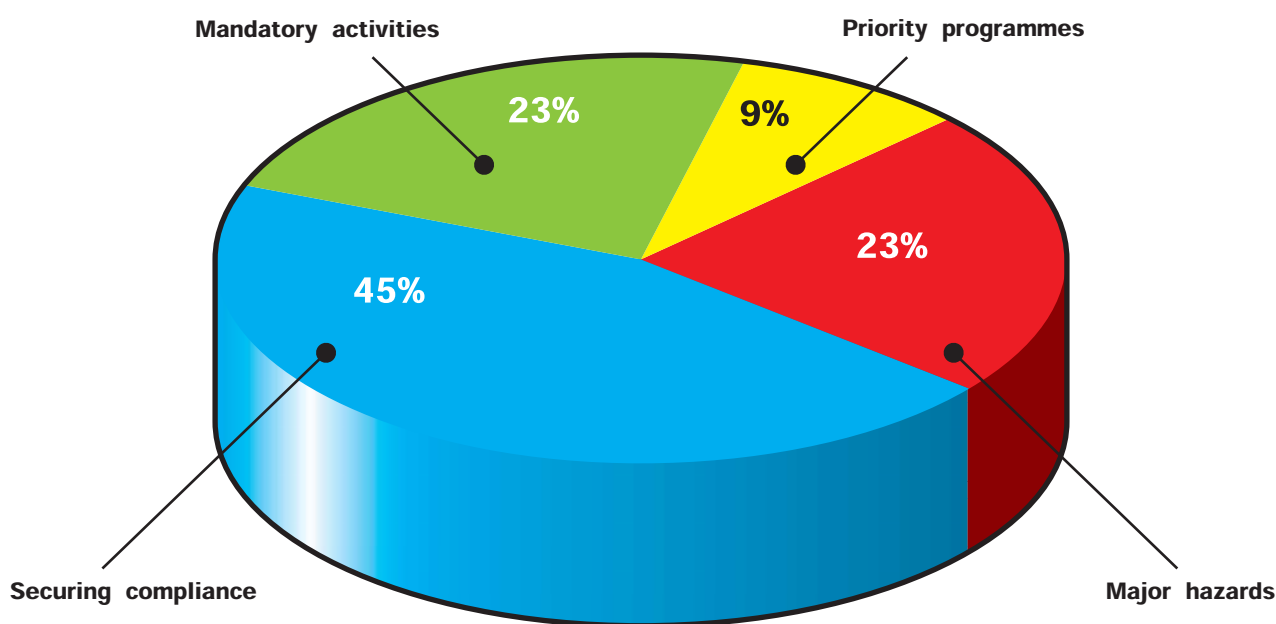
S&I resources

199. In 2003/04, HSE spent about 15% of its grant in aid on commissioned science and technology, both research and reactive support work. Priority Programme managers and those with responsibility for other key business areas identify and oversee specific and more generic research which addresses both policy and operational requirements to meet HSE's priority targets and support work within its mandatory activities.

Progress

200. In 2003/04 expenditure on commissioned S&T was £33.7m (compared with a revised budget figure of £33.8m not including science funded through HSE by industry (£5m)). Of this £9 m was spent on external research. Another £3m was spent on research and £19 m on scientific and technical support from the Health and Safety Laboratory. A further 85 technical support jobs, with a total value of £2m were commissioned through Technical Support Framework Agreements, which has been established with five external contractors. Expenditure across the HSE Programme Blocks is shown below. The pattern of expenditure differs from the initial business plan as the S&I budget is highly responsive to short-term needs in reactive support and incident investigations.

Figure 4 Percentage expenditure on research and scientific support across HSE Programme Blocks (Total expenditure £33 million)



A snapshot of other activities 2003/04

Notable work completed in 2003/4 included:

- beacons of excellence in stress prevention;
- causal factors in construction accidents;
- influences on H&S attitudes and behaviour in small firms;
- falls from height - Prevention and risk control effectiveness;
- evaluation of the Railways Safety Case Regulations;
- evaluation of COMAH, Gas, Offshore, Rail charging regimes.

Engagement in Government S&I through networks with OST & OGDs

Meetings have been held with DWP, DoH and EA. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) and an S&I action plan has been drafted and agreed between HSE and DWP. An updated MoU between HSE and EA is in preparation and a joint workshop on common S&I issues for HSE/EA is being planned for mid 2004.

Development and maintenance of HSE science website

The new HSE science website was launched in July 2003. A web-based projects directory, providing fully searchable details of over 1200 projects commissioned since 2000 was launched at the beginning of February 2004. In the first month following its launch, over 3000 searches were made and over 4300 individual project records accessed. Work has been commissioned to develop a web-based research newsletter, which will replace the quarterly newsletter currently published in hard copy.

S&I presentations

The Chief Scientist gave a presentation 'Avoiding tomorrow's accidents' at the 2003 British Association Festival of Science. The presentation described how HSE uses its S&I resources in carrying out its regulatory stewardship responsibilities. The presentation was repeated at a public lecture at the University of Warwick.

A series of nine Chief Scientist seminars have been given during 2003/04.

The head of the Chief Scientist Unit gave a presentation of HSE's S&I activity at a seminar organised by the Danish Working Environment Authority.

Risk assessment

Risk assessment management and education

201. Decision-making on the basis of risk is fundamental to HSE's regulatory activities and to promoting cross-departmental co-operation in risk management.

202. HSE's approach to risk assessment is to ensure:

- good regulation through proportionality, consistency, transparency, targeting and accountability that promotes cross-departmental co-ordination in risk management;
- effective risk communication to help stakeholders understand HSE's messages and to enable them to participate in the decision-making process;
- young people receive sufficient risk education to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills on risk awareness; and
- safety critical professionals are encouraged to consider risk in both work practices and design.

Programme of activities on risk assessment and education during 2002/3

203. HSE has continued to meet with a range of medium and higher-level contacts developed in a variety of organisations that are able to exert influence on the educational system. The existing 'National Healthy Schools Standard' scheme, a collaboration between DfES and DoH (among others) is an exemplary case of integrating health-related cross-curricular themes through curricula programmes. An initial meeting between HSE and the National Healthy Schools Standard agreed that there were good opportunities for co-operative working around their taking risk messages into schools.

Publish guidance for dutyholders on risk-based decision-making

204. Evaluation of *5 steps to risk assessment*, production of an interactive risk assessment management tool for dutyholders, and revision of risk assessment case studies are progressing well and will be completed during 2004. An external evaluation of *Reducing risks, protecting people* (R2P2) is currently being conducted and will be completed early in 2004. The planned guidance to industry on HSE's view of the role of good practice is now one strand of ongoing work to evaluate the range of interventions employed by HSE. It is no longer primarily a risk management matter.

Facilitate fora for discussing risk issues in HSE, Whitehall and Europe

205. HSE played a significant role in assisting the shaping and implementation of the two year cross-government Risk Handling Improvement Programme based on the Cabinet Office Report *Risk: Improving Government's capability to handle risk and uncertainty*. The Programme, which concludes at the end of 2004, has HSE's Chief Scientist on the steering group and leading the Managing Risks to the Public sub-group. HSE provides the secretariat jointly with HM Treasury for the sub-group. A further input from this year was the conclusion and report on the second phase of the European TRUSTNET work on participative/inclusive risk governance.

206. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work Contact Group is a platform for Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and education experts to find the key for the future integration of OSH into education and to facilitate a common learning process in all Member States. An outline is being developed for a future strategy to mainstream OSH into education and training at national and European level.

Develop policy on aspects of HSE's risk based decision-making

207. Progress on a programme to embed the principles of R2P2 in the culture of HSE was reviewed at the end of 2003 and has resulted in a switch of resources into supporting HSE's Policy Group in a project on 'Excellence in policy making', and in planning a programme for 2004 onwards to produce simplified guidance and tools for sensible risk-based decision-making.

Publish research reports on key risk issues

208. Research on evaluation of health and safety benefits, looking specifically at public attitudes to dreaded risks, such as cancer, has been extended and will now report towards the end of 2004. Evaluation and development of a 'societal concerns gauging tool', based on external research, is proceeding and should produce results during 2004. This project is being dovetailed with related work being done by HM Treasury and OGDs. A UK-wide study of the nature and extent of health, safety and risk education in schools was conducted and the results will be published.

Other significant activities

209. Substantial work was undertaken in the summer and autumn to support development of a long-term policy towards reconciling societal risk and land use planning. Related developmental work on incorporating societal concerns in decision-making continues.

210. Considerable work for HSE Rail centred on making the case for an ALARP-based approach, including consideration of social concerns, in decision-making about what control measures are required.

211. A risk education project called 'Bsafe' has been created in the form of theatre-in-education. A pilot programme was developed to take into ten schools targeting Year 10 pupils before they go on work experience. The project is financially supported by Bunzl plc and has been led by a Coventry head teacher on secondment to Head Teacher & Industry (HTI). A focus group was set up to take forward the work on which DfES, RoSPA, IOSH and HSE were represented. The project was evaluated following the pilot and HTI is now seeking funds to offer the programme to all year 10+ pupils.

212. With support from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the Risk Watch Pilot Project Steering Group on which HSE is represented aims to work with interested stakeholders and to facilitate pilot 'scoping' projects with a view to obtaining worthwhile evidence on which to base future strategy development at a national and local level. Risk Watch is an injury prevention programme developed in the US by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). A pilot of the Risk Watch generic risk education package is being run by two local authority fire brigades and will take place in five primary schools (three in the Highlands of Scotland and two in Nottinghamshire).

Small firms

213. HSE and local authorities have sought to improve arrangements for the management of health and safety in small firms.

214. Activities during 2003/04 have included:

- the Small Businesses Commissioner Judith Donovan was re-appointed in 2003/4. She has agreed to set up a Small Business Forum which will engage small business stakeholders and to ensure that the 'voice' of small business is heard by the HSC/HSE. The first meeting will be held in summer 2004;
- Judith Donovan and other HSC Commissioners have continued to attend events to meet small businesses;
- an initial review of the small business pages of the website was carried out in 2003/4. New content and presentation will be agreed in 2004/5. A key issue is building links to other government websites such as business.gov.uk, which is a 'one-stop shop' for information across all Government departments for small businesses;
- HSE (funded by Treasury's Invest to Save Budget) has worked in partnership with the SBS to develop electronic health and safety tools for the Businesslinks and other business support networks to use with their small business clients. The whole programme was launched in May 2003. The tools are supplemented by the IUK visit programme;
- HSE has piloted two grant schemes for small businesses. HSE worked with SBS, and Businesslinks in three areas to pilot a grant scheme. Part funding was offered to start-ups, and established micro-firms (up to ten employees). Evaluation of the scheme's operation has now started;
- the other pilot has been developed into the Workers' Safety Advisor Fund which was launched in April 2004. The aim is to provide health and safety advice to firms with less than 10 employees through a partnership approach between firms, their employees and possibly other stakeholders;
- HSE also attended the recent launch of the Small Business Consortium which is sponsored by the DTI and Business in the Community. We are looking to develop links with this programme.