

Health and Safety Commission
Annual Report
and the Health and Safety Commission/Executive
Accounts 2004/05

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Preface

Responsibility for the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on 24 July 2002. From that date the Commission reports to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, and to other Secretaries of State for the administration of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSW Act) throughout Great Britain.

From May 2005, the Rt Hon David Blunkett MP is the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. Lord Philip Hunt of Kings Heath OBE is the DWP Parliamentary Under Secretary (Lords) with responsibility for occupational health and safety. The previous Secretary of State for Work and Pensions was the Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP and the Minister of State for Work was the Rt Hon Jane Kennedy MP.

Departmental responsibility for HSC/E previously lay with the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, and before that (until June 2001) with the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

The HSW Act established HSC and HSE. HSC's primary functions include making arrangements to secure the health, safety and welfare of people at work and protecting the public against risks to their health and safety from work activities. The functions include proposing new laws and standards, conducting research and providing information and advice. HSE advises and assists HSC and together with local authorities (LAs) has day-to-day responsibility for enforcing health and safety law, investigating accidents, licensing and approving standards, in particular hazardous areas, and commissioning research.

Commission's duties

The Commission's statutory duties include:

- encouraging other people to secure safe and healthy working conditions;
- arranging for research and training to be carried out and encouraging others to undertake research and training;
- arranging for an advisory and information service for stakeholders;
- submitting proposals for regulations to ministers;
- paying to the Executive sums appropriate for it to perform its functions.

Commission's powers of actions

The Commission's powers of action are wide. They include anything necessary to help it advance these statutory duties. The primary role of the Commission is to give strategic direction to the work of HSE. It also has powers to:

- approve and issue Codes of Practice ('Approved Codes of Practice' (ACOPs)) with the consent of the Secretary of State, subject to consultation with government departments and other organisations;
- make agreements with any government department or person to perform HSC or HSE functions on HSC/E's behalf;
- make agreements with any minister, government department, or public authority for HSC to perform functions on their behalf;
- give mandatory guidance to LAs on enforcement;
- direct HSE or authorise any other person to investigate and report on accidents or other matters and, subject to regulations made by the relevant minister, direct inquiries to be held.

Commission Code of Practice

The Commission has adopted a Code of Practice, which the Chair and Commissioners follow. This conforms to Cabinet Office guidance. It sets out the responsibilities of the Chair and the corporate and individual responsibilities of Commissioners.

Openness

The Commission recognises that public access to health and safety information improves public understanding and strengthens public confidence in the health and safety system. The Commission has published a policy statement on access to health and safety information. As part of this commitment to openness, the Commission decided that from April 2005 its meetings would be open to observers. Details of meetings, together with agendas, papers, minutes and those of its advisory committees and sub-committees, are published on the internet, and can be found on the HSE website (<http://www.hse.gov.uk>).

Chair and members of the Health and Safety Commission: 2004/05

Chair



Bill Callaghan Appointment as Chair of HSC commenced on 1 October 1999. Bill was previously the Chief Economist and Head of the Economic and Social Affairs Department at the Trades Union Congress (TUC). He has served on the boards of Business in the Community and the Basic Skills Agency. He has a particular interest in developing partnerships between trade unions and employers at the workplace and at national level. He served on the Low Pay Commission 1997-2000, and was a member of the Economic and Social Research Council's Research Priorities Board. He is a Visiting Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford. He became a magistrate in 2005.

Commissioners



Danny Carrigan Appointment commenced on 1 October 2004. Daniel has worked in public services, shipbuilding, construction and oil rigs. He has over 23 years' experience of representing employees and negotiation, through his union service for AMICUS (and its predecessors) as a regional officer, national officer, and regional secretary. He has worked on HSE advisory committees and on government advisory bodies. He holds one other current public appointment, serving as a member of the Young People's Committee on the Learning and Skills Council since 2003.



Margaret Burns CBE Appointment commenced on 1 April 1998. Margaret is a part-time tutor of public law at the University of Aberdeen. She has taught in the law faculties at Dundee and Glasgow Universities and at the Open University. She was formerly the Legal Advisory Officer for, and is now a member of, the Scottish Consumer Council, which nominated her for the Health and Safety Commission.



Judith Donovan CBE Appointed 1 October 2000. Judith is a Yorkshire businesswoman who founded her own direct marketing company in 1982. She was Chairman of Bradford Training and Enterprise Council 1989-97, and the first female President of Bradford Chamber of Commerce 1992-2001. She is Chairman of the Yorkshire Tourist Board, a director of the Northern Ballet Theatre, and a member of the Programme Monitoring Committee for Objective 2 Funding for Yorkshire and the Humber. She is also a Millennium Commissioner and Chairman of Postwatch for the North of England.



Cllr Joyce Edmond-Smith Appointment commenced on 1 April 1997. A member of Brighton and Hove Council, Joyce has been a councillor for 19 years. She was a member of the Association of District Councils (ADC) for eight years and has wide experience of environmental and health issues in local government. She has chaired the ADC's Environment and Health Committee, has been a member of Brighton and Hove Community Health Council and a member of the Local Agenda 21 Steering Committee. She is currently the Chair of Brighton and Hove Council's Sustainability Commission. She taught in further education for 20 years.



Judith Hackitt Appointment commenced 1 April 2002. Judith trained as a Chemical Engineer at Imperial College, London. She has been Director of Business and Responsible Care at the Chemical Industries Association (CIA) since 1998 and was appointed Director General of the CIA from 1 April 2002. Judith was previously employed as Group Risk Manager at Elementis PLC, with worldwide responsibility for health and safety insurance and litigation. She also served for three years as a non-executive Director of Oxfordshire Health Authority. She holds no other ministerial appointments nor is she engaged in any political activity.



John Longworth Appointment commenced 1 April 2003. Currently an Executive Director Asda accountable especially for External Affairs and Legal matters, John is also Group Company Secretary. Prior to joining the Asda Board, John was a Stores Board Director at Tesco where he held a number of diverse positions in corporate areas. In the 1980s, John was with the Co-operative Group, latterly as Head of External Affairs and Deputy Company Secretary and was involved in the Co-op Board, Marketing and Strategic Planning Developments.



Elizabeth Snape Appointment commenced 1 November 2003. Elizabeth worked as a legal officer with the union NALGO 1990-94. She then took on Equal Opportunities and European Policy Employment with UNISON, where she has been Head of Policy since 1999. Since 2001 she has been a member of the TUC General Council, and served as an executive member of the European Public Services Union since 1996. She has experience of workers' health and safety concerns from her work as a UNISON safety representative.



Hugh Robertson Appointment commenced on 1 April 2004. Hugh is Senior Policy Officer on Health and Safety at the TUC. He was formerly Head of Health and Safety and Bargaining Support with the trade union UNISON. He is also a member of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Committee and the Boards of the Faculty of Occupational medicine and the British Occupational Health Research Foundation.

Past Commissioners



George Brumwell CBE Appointment ran from 1 April 1998 to 31 October 2004. He is General Secretary of the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT). He is a member of the Labour Party National Policy Forum and the TUC's Executive Committee and General Council. He is a long-time member of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and a board member of the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS). He is an executive committee member of the European and International Federation of Building and Wood Unions and a board member of the Building and Civil Engineering Benefits Scheme.



Abdul Chowdry JP Appointment ran from 1 April 1999 to 30 March 2005. Abdul gained more than 34 years' experience as a health, safety and environment advisor at Turner and Newall plc (manufacturing), where he worked until August 1998. He is the Director of Blackburn/Darwen Racial Equality Council, and has been a magistrate since 1976. He was a Labour Councillor at Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council 1972-98, where he chaired a number of committees including: Housing; Policy; and Economic Development. He was also a member of the Greater Manchester Police Authority 1986-98.

New Commissioners



Dr Sayeed Khan Appointment commenced 1 April 2005. Dr Khan is an accredited specialist in occupational medicine. He worked at Rolls-Royce plc for 10 years prior to joining EFF in 2002, where he is Chief Medical Advisor. He started work as a machinist, then trained and practised as a GP before qualifying in occupational medicine. He is on the BOHRF/FOM Scientific Committee, NHSplus Evidence-based Medicine Guidelines Advisory Group, DoH Sickness Absence Certification Project Advisory Board and was a member of the Continuous Improvement Programme Action Group (*Securing Health Together*).

The Commission's work during 2004/05

The Commission published its report on the first year of its Strategy in March 2005 (see paragraphs 48-55). Entitled *Workplace Strategy: Moving to Delivery*, it detailed how the Commission's Strategy, in the year since its launch in February 2004, was setting priorities and how resources were being directed to areas that could have the biggest impact on its targets.

It also provided a wealth of examples which showed how the Strategy's four themes were shaping HSE's approach and directly determining outputs, such as closer working with LAs, to focus resources on agreed health and safety targets.

The Commission recognised challenges as well as celebrating successes. Its key messages included:

- the Strategy has been well received by ministers and stakeholders alike;
- HSE has made major changes to its working methods to become an organisation centred around delivery. A clear link between the Strategy, resources and outputs has been established;
- the Strategy is a long-term commitment and we are only at the start of the process - some big challenges lie ahead;
- not least of these challenges is that of culture change - both internal and external;
- concerns regarding HSE's commitment to enforcement have been, and continue to be, rebutted; and
- the Strategy's first-year objectives (the 'early deliverables') have been met and a new set drawn up.

Changing ways of working

The Commission has further developed ways of championing and supporting delivery of the Strategy, taking an increasingly proactive approach in communicating HSC's vision at public events. Examples include:

- chairing and involvement in the steering group (which includes LA-elected members for England, Scotland and Wales) for the Local Authorities and HSE Working Together Strategic Enabling Programme;
- establishing and chairing a Small Business Forum with representation from small business trade associations aiming to ensure that the 'voice' of small business is heard by HSC/E;
- developing and chairing the steering committee for the Health and Safety at Work in Scotland Forum;

- speaking at a wide range of conferences, seminars, workshops etc;
- hosting fringe events at political party conferences.

The Commission held its first open meeting in October 2004 when a large audience heard Commission members debate current issues. The success of this event confirmed the Commission's aim to be as transparent and open as possible. They decided that from April 2005 all their business meetings should be made open to the public. In addition, they would hold one meeting a year where stakeholders could debate with them.

Members of the Health and Safety Executive

Director General



Timothy Walker CB Director General since 1 October 2000. Previously an academic scientist, Timothy taught physics and chemistry at various universities. He worked at the DTI, was Principal Private Secretary to successive Secretaries of State for Trade and Industry, and held the posts of Governor of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Chairman of the EBRD Nuclear Safety Account, Home Office Director General for Immigration and Nationality and Deputy Chairman of HM Customs and Excise. He is a lay member of the Council of the University of Warwick and a council member of the Institute of Employment Studies.

Deputy Director General (Operations)



Justin McCracken Justin took up post as Deputy Director General (Operations) on 1 April 2002. Based at the Merseyside Centre, he is responsible for all of HSE's operational divisions. A physics graduate, he joined ICI in 1976 as a research scientist, moving into process development and plant management, then onto marketing and business management in the UK and overseas, culminating in worldwide responsibility for ICI's catalyst business. In 1998, he joined the Environment Agency as North West Regional Director. He is a trustee of the British Safety Council.

Deputy Director General (Policy) From September 2004*



Jonathan Rees Jonathan succeeded Kate Timms as Deputy Director General (Policy) on her retirement in September 2004, and is responsible for the strategy, policy, communications and legal directorates, and delivery of HSE's targets for improving conventional health and safety. Previously he was a director of Consumer and Competition Policy at the DTI, director, Modernising Public Services Group in the Cabinet Office, and a member of the Prime Minister's Policy Unit 1994-97. He has been seconded to the European Commission and worked in the UK Permanent Representation in Brussels.

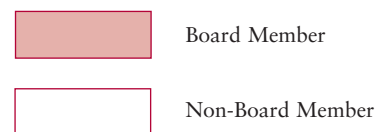
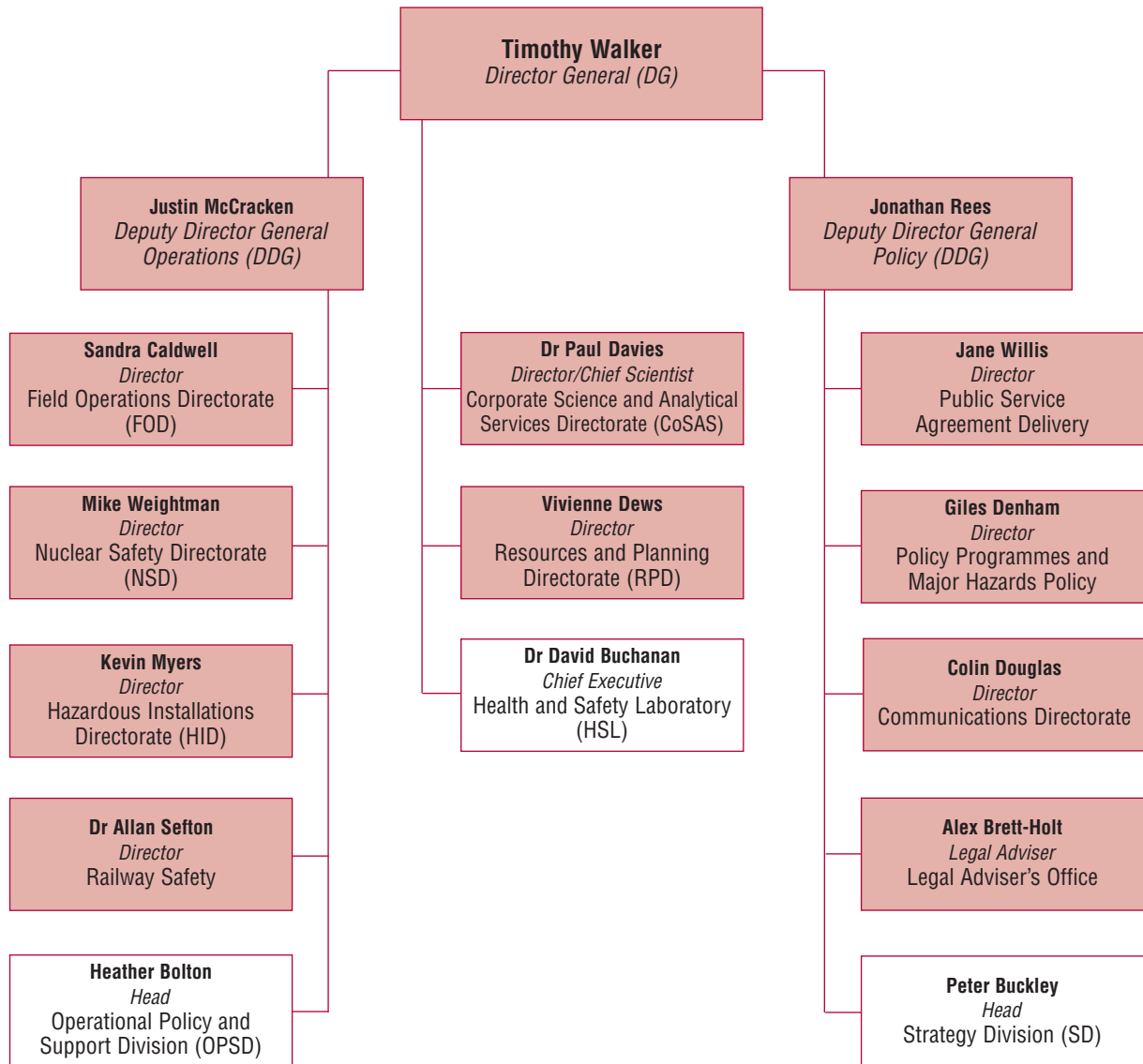
* Deputy Director General (Policy) until September 2004: Kate Timms CB

Register of Interests

A copy of the Register of Interests relating to members of the Health and Safety Commission and the Health and Safety Executive can be obtained by contacting the HSC Secretariat at the following address: The HSC Secretariat, Rose Court, 2 Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HS or phoning 0207 717 6642.

Health and Safety Executive structure

May 2005



Chair's foreword

The highlight of last year's Annual Report was the publication of the Commission's *Strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond*. The main theme of this year's Report is the work to implement that Strategy.

The Strategy has been influential. The endorsement of the Commission's Strategy by the Hampton review was particularly welcome, as was the support for higher penalties. We must continue to seek and maintain the right balance of enforcement and advice. This year has also seen the start of consultation with our stakeholders on how to best place our intervention resources. Leading from this we hope to achieve a more efficient and effective targeted interventions programme.

We must work closer with LAs and ensure that we both target the right areas, with the appropriate level of intervention required. The high-level Statement of Intent agreed with LAs has set out our joint commitment to partnership working. Leading from this local and regional partnership arrangements are being formed to best place resources to agreed priorities.

A further highlight of the past year has been the advertising campaign promoting the business case for better health and safety and the publication of case studies on director leadership. The Commission has also stressed the importance of worker involvement through a collective declaration and development of the Workers' Safety Adviser Challenge Fund.

So while we can point to some significant achievements there are challenges ahead. We face a major challenge on occupational health. Working in partnership with LAs, the National Health Service (NHS) and DWP we have made further progress towards delivering occupational health, safety and return to work (OHSR) support in the workplace. Local pilots such as the *Better Health at Work* partnership and *Constructing Better Health* have begun to provide OHSR support to those who most need it. A larger scale programme, Workplace Health Direct, complementing DWP's *Pathways to work*, is being prepared.

In addition, the challenges of meeting our targets for improving health and safety remain. We can see a marked improvement in some sectors, such as construction, paper and board, and food and in dealing with some hazards such as musculoskeletal disorders. In other areas progress has not been made. In tackling these areas we need to

continue to work in partnership. The Ministerial Task Force on Health, Safety and Productivity provides the basis for a sustained improvement in the public service.

A final challenge is communicating our core message to seek sensible management of risks, not a risk-free society. We have worked in the past year with the Better Regulation Task Force and the Department of Constitutional Affairs in tackling the alleged 'compensation culture.'

In July 2004 the Government announced the outcome of the Rail Review. The Commission was disappointed with the decision to move rail safety to the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) but was glad that HSC/E's positive contribution to rail safety was recognised and we are determined to make the transition of HMRI to ORR a smooth and timely one.



Bill Callaghan
Chairman
Health and Safety Commission

Director General's foreword

This is my last Annual Report as Director General of the Health and Safety Executive and I am pleased to report that much has been achieved over the last year with the Strategy being taken forward in a very positive way. This is of course a tribute to the hard work and commitment of staff throughout the organisation. It is because of them that HSE continues to make a difference to the lives of working people, and has helped Great Britain to achieve one of the best safety records in Europe. Opinion surveys do indeed show a large majority of both employers and employees have a favourable impression of HSE and our peers in Europe welcome our active participation.

As Bill's foreword shows, the Strategy has given us a very good base for setting out how we intend to achieve our targets. Our work is changing as the workforce changes its characteristics and becomes more diverse. Health issues, not least MSDs and stress, are the largest contributor and provide real challenges. Our work on the development of stress standards has been widely welcomed and we aim to establish partnerships with around 100 organisations to build on this experience and help them prevent the incidence of new cases as well as deal successfully with existing ones.

As well as our work designed to deal with specific health and safety hazards, we have brought together our supporting work into a series of enabling programmes which will give greater coherence for our efforts to improve worker and employer involvement in health and safety issues. The launch of a second tranche of worker safety adviser projects is one example of how we are tackling these issues. Another important innovation is the Enforcement Programme which will look rigorously at all our enforcement to identify how best it can be used to improve health and safety.

We are putting extra effort into the evaluation of our interventions and this is reflected in the new science strategy, the subject of recent consultation. We are also currently piloting a new workplace health and safety survey which will yield much rich detail of what helps improve health and safety in the workforce.

Our work is also progressing in the major hazards area where we have experience of the first year of operational targets for reducing the precursors to potential major accidents. We remain on track to deliver the targets in the offshore, onshore and nuclear industries.

There has been one change in the Executive in the year with the retirement of Kate Timms. We are very grateful for her contribution and wish her well for the future. We welcome her successor, Jonathan Rees, who joins us from the Department of Trade and Industry.

Finally I have been extremely proud to lead HSE over the last five years, and continue to be impressed with the dedication and professionalism which HSE staff display. I wish my successor and all in HSE every success in meeting the challenges ahead.



Timothy Walker CB
Director General
Health and Safety Executive

Snapshot of HSE in 2004/05

This section provides snapshot examples of some of the significant events or developments that occurred during 2004/05. Further details can be found on HSE's press release webpage:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/press/press.htm>.

April 2004



Survey reveals public vote of confidence in health and safety

Three out of four employers say health and safety requirements benefit their companies as a whole, according to a MORI survey published by HSE on 28 April. The survey, of 3000 members of the working and non-working public and 500 employers, found that employers rate health and safety in their top two most important workplace issues. Most employers see health and safety as good for business and disagree that it puts a strain on profits.

Attitudes towards health and safety: a quantitative survey of stakeholder opinion by MORI Social Research Institute can be accessed on the HSE website at:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/misc/attitudes.pdf>.

Consultation on new noise and work regulations

HSC published a consultative document on new proposed regulations and guidance to implement the European Physical Agents (Noise) Directive. The regulations are about protecting workers from exposure to noise, which is still a problem in many industries. It is estimated they will extend protection to around one million new workers. Noise can induce deafness or persistent ringing in the ears (tinnitus). Once damage is done it is permanent, and may affect quality of life; but it can be prevented.

May 2004



Protecting workers from asbestos: A legal duty

Asbestos is the biggest occupational health risk ever faced by workers in Britain and about half a million buildings from the 1950-80 period still contain it. Protection for building and maintenance workers from the fatal diseases caused by asbestos was

enhanced on 21 May when the new duty to manage came into force. The duty requires anyone responsible for the maintenance of commercial, industrial or public properties or for the common areas of domestic properties, to check for asbestos and properly manage the risk. Effective compliance with this new duty will help save about 5000 lives. More information on asbestos is available on HSE's website:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos>.

Factory explosion in Glasgow

HSE, together with the police and the Procurator Fiscal's office, began the investigation into the explosion that occurred in a plastics factory in Maryhill, Glasgow. The explosion, on 11 May 2004 when nine workers died and over 30 were injured, was the largest industrial accident in Scotland since Piper Alpha.

June 2004



HSE construction campaign

Falls, transport and lifting incidents account for over 70% of all fatal injuries in construction, and almost 300 people died from these causes in the previous five years. The FaTaL Risks Campaign during June focused on reducing the number of fatal and serious injuries in the industry. HSE site inspections concentrated on:

- F falls arising from work at height; and
- T transport on site including mobile plant and vehicles; and
- L lifting heavy loads with cranes and other lifting machines.

Improvements in construction design

Also in June, HSE reported encouraging signs that designers in the construction industry were becoming increasingly aware of their responsibilities to design out health and safety risks. This followed findings of an inspector site visit initiative which compared favourably with one undertaken the previous year. Further details can be found at:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction>.

July 2004



HSE publishes new guidance on accident investigation

HSE published new guidance on how to investigate accidents and incidents, primarily for small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) where it is often difficult to build up an expertise in investigating. This guidance is aimed at helping them to find out what went wrong, learn lessons and take action to reduce, or hopefully prevent, accidents in the future.

Copies of *Investigating accidents and incidents: A workbook for employers, unions, safety representatives and safety professionals* HSG245 ISBN 0 7176 2827 2 are available from HSE Books, priced £9.50.

Work and Pensions Select Committee report on the work of HSC/E

The Work and Pensions Select Committee's report on the work of HSC/E was published on 25 July. The Committee believes HSE is a high-quality organisation and recognises that Great Britain has one of the best safety records in Europe. The report can be found at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmworpen/456/45602.htm>

August 2004



Asbestos investigation

On 3 August, a Nuneaton company and its officers were fined a total of £245 000 in relation to the removal of asbestos, following an investigation by HSE. The inspector who attended the scene, after being alerted by a worker, found one of the worst situations she had ever come across. This was not only in relation to the asbestos risks, but because work was allowed to go ahead despite the concerns of the workforce.

Construction Health and Safety Roadshow launched in Glasgow

On 30 August, George Brumwell, Health and Safety Commissioner and General Secretary of UCATT, launched the 2004 Working Well Together (WWT) Health and Safety Roadshow at Glasgow Harbour, an area undergoing major redevelopment in Scotland. In its sixth year, the WWT Roadshow has reached over 25 000 workers with its health and safety messages.

HSE brewing up worker interest in offshore safety

HSE's Offshore Division (OSD) launched a new information sheet, *Tea-shack News*, aimed at giving offshore workers the latest safety news direct from HSE. Working in partnership with employers and the unions has brought some very positive progress towards better health and safety performance offshore.

September 2004



Infoline fields two millionth enquiry

HSE's public enquiry contact centre, Infoline, handled its two millionth enquiry in September. Set up in July 1996 as a 'one stop shop', Infoline provides enquirers with rapid access to HSE's wealth of health and safety information, and access to expert advice and guidance.

The Infoline service is open to the public from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm. Enquirers can contact Infoline by telephone, e-mail, textphone, fax or letter or by completing Infoline's *Ask an Expert* enquiry form on the HSE website (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact>).

Local authorities and HSE unveil ground-breaking Statement of Intent

A new partnership intended to capture the full potential of HSE and LAs working together, was embodied in a high level Statement of Intent, endorsed by LA political leaders and HSC/E in July and launched in September. This was a significant milestone in the process to give greater recognition to the essential role of LAs in improving workplace health and safety for millions of workers and the public, and meets the commitment given in the Commission's *Strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond*.

HSE and Kent's local authorities joined forces for transport safety campaign

On 28 September Bill Callaghan announced a partnership initiative between HSE and local authorities in Kent to run the country's largest-ever workplace transport safety campaign. Workplace transport incidents are the biggest cause of deaths in agriculture and food industries. Between 1992 and 2002, 44 farmers and 30 employees were killed in transport-related incidents across the country.

Practical guidance for homeworking

Work-related incidents can affect not just homeworkers, but others in their home, including children and visitors. This means that relatively minor hazards can become significant risks. In September, HSE published a report on homeworking, providing a series of good-practice case studies, which, together with existing guidance, offers practical assistance for employers and homeworkers. Copies of the report can be downloaded from the HSE website at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr262.htm>.

HSC consults on how it influences workplace health and safety

On 30 September HSC published the online consultation document *Regulation and recognition: towards good performance in health and safety* on the methods used by HSE and LAs to influence health and safety standards in the workplace. The consultation

document examined and sought views on the value of a range of intervention techniques including inspection, investigation, partnership working and sector-wide initiatives.

October 2004



HSC looks to the future

On 12 October HSC held an open meeting at the Mermaid Conference Centre, Blackfriars, London to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act. This was the first time that Commission business has been discussed in full view of the public and was an opportunity to open the work to ordinary members of the public and those dealing with health and safety on a day-to-day basis.

HSE says work is good for you

When you're off sick, returning to work as soon as possible may help you get well. And staying at home longer than you absolutely need to could actually make you worse. These were two recommendations of guidance published by HSE to explain how employers and employees can work together to hasten a successful return to work. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) estimates that 33% of working days lost due to sickness are accounted for by long-term sickness absence at a cost of £3.8 billion a year. HSE's guidance offers a practical step-by-step approach to managing sickness absence and getting people back to work quickly.

HSE targets manufacturing industries

On 27 October HSE launched a new enforcement-led campaign to reduce the unacceptable high number of fatal and serious injuries that continue to occur in manufacturing industries. Over the next three years HSE inspectors will target scrap metal, rubber, paper and wood industries to ensure that correct procedures are in place for working on machinery. During the previous three years, over 40 people had died as a result of incidents in the manufacturing industry, most commonly when cleaning machinery blockages or carrying out running repairs without the correct safeguards.

Work and Pensions Select Committee report: Government response

The Government's response to the Select Committee report on the work of HSC/E was published on 27 October. The introduction endorses the Commission's Strategy and explains the Government approach to risk management and targeting of resources. The main text then responds to each of the Committee's 35 recommendations. The Government response can be found at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmworpen/1137/1137.pdf>.

New business benefits of health and safety web pages

The web pages, launched on 4 October, featured three new case studies illustrating the business benefits of managing health and safety effectively. The benefits seen by the companies in the case studies included increased productivity, lower insurance costs, less absenteeism, better staff retention and morale, improved reputation and reduced liability claims (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/businessbenefits>).

November 2004



New online Slips Assessment Tool (SAT) launched

This tool was launched to help users to evaluate potential risks from slipping hazards in the workplace. Slips and trips are the most common cause of major injuries at work. They occur in all workplaces, 90% of all major injuries caused by slips and trips result in broken bones and they can also be the initial causes for a range of other accident types such as falls from height. SAT is easy to use and full instructions are included with the software package, which can be downloaded from HSE's *Slips* webpage at: <http://www.hsesat.info>. Users will need to purchase a surface roughness meter.

Helping business cut the cost of work-related stress

On 3 November HSE launched a new approach to help employers work with their employees to manage the risks from work-related stress. This includes:

- a benchmarking tool to help managers gauge stress levels, compare themselves with other organisations, and work with employees to identify solutions; and
- Management Standards which define the characteristics of an organisation where stress is managed effectively.

At over 13 million days a year, work-related stress is the biggest occupational cause of working days lost through injury or ill health. With an average of 29 days lost per case, it costs society about £3.7 billion a year. In 2001/02, over half a million individuals in Britain experienced work-related stress at levels that made them ill.

Ufton Nervet derailment - HSE investigates

On 6 November seven people were killed and 37 taken to hospital following the derailment at Ufton level crossing. HSE investigated together with the police. The HSE investigation focused on the railway aspects of the derailment and HSE published its interim report on 10 November. *Train derailment at Ufton level crossing, near Ufton Nervet, Berkshire, HSE interim report* is on the HSE website at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/railways/uftonnervet/interim.pdf>.

December 2004



Language barriers mean new dangers at work

Concern that migrant workers could be missing out on crucial health and safety training because their employers are not providing safety material in any language other than English prompted HSE and TUC to produce new safety information translated into 21 different languages. *Your health, your safety: A guide for workers* provides information about safety rights at work, the level of safety training that workers should expect from their employers, and who they should complain to if they believe their safety is being compromised by poor workplace practices.

Worker Safety Adviser (WSA) Challenge Fund second round opened for business

Bill Callaghan, HSC's Chair, announced the opening of the second round of the WSA Challenge Fund. The fund is designed to help build partnerships that drive safety and health improvements. Operated by HSE, it will run between April 2005 and March 2007 and focuses on small firms and organisations that lack such arrangements. Increasing worker involvement has been shown to improve health and safety performance and is a key part of the Commission's Strategy. The application form and details of how to apply can be found at: <http://www.wsa-cf.org>.

January 2005



New Freedom of Information (FOI) website

The FOI website (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi>) was unveiled on 4 January to coincide with the first working day of the new FOI Act. This website provides the means for the public to both access information as it becomes available and to request information not already published.

New web-based tool to help small businesses

This Health and Safety Performance Indicator (the Indicator) was developed to help SMEs track and assess how well they are managing their own health and safety performance. It is also intended to help companies tell their insurers how well they are managing health and safety, so insurers can more accurately calculate insurance premiums based on individual performance. Supported by the DTI's Small Business Service, the Indicator can be accessed at: <http://www.hspl.info-exchange.com>.

February 2005



The business case for health and safety

HSE launched a campaign to persuade businesses that

sensible health and safety management is not only beneficial for staff but good for their bottom line as well. The national advertising campaign was backed up by a new website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/betterbusiness>.

It cites a range of companies who have applied a managed approach and reaped the benefits in terms of improved profitability. The studies highlight the contribution that good communications, sound training and development and meaningful worker involvement all make - and that managing health and safety cannot be viewed in isolation from managing a business overall.

Secretary of State announces advice and support for small businesses

Secretary of State Alan Johnson announced Workplace Health Direct as part of the launch of the DWP Five-Year Plan which sets the Department's direction for the next five years and beyond. Workplace Health Direct will provide occupational health, safety and return to work advice and support to SMEs, via a helpline and a series of regional pilots. A roadshow explaining the proposed pilots toured England and Wales in March 2005. The pilots are due to start in early 2006.

Construction industry renews its determination to health and safety commitments

Senior executives and union representatives from across the construction industry met at a Construction Health and Safety Summit in London to review progress on the health and safety commitments given at the Construction Summit in 2001, to celebrate successes, and to commit to further action to further improve the industry's health and safety performance.

March 2005



HSE team short-listed for prestigious award

An HSE project team was short-listed in the Public Servants of the Year Awards 2005 for developing free interactive software that helps farmers carry out their own risk assessments and raises levels of health and safety awareness in the industry. The HSE's farming software was launched in late 2004. It can be downloaded from the HSE website at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/assessment>.

Waste and recycling industry initiative to reduce injuries

HSE launched a three-year initiative with the waste and recycling industry to address the high number of fatal and serious incidents that occur during collection and processing of municipal waste and recycling activities.

At initial visits, inspectors looked at policies and control measures in place and how these were managed, and will follow up one year later to check that employers required to produce an action plan of improvements have carried these out.