

Health and Safety in the 21st Century

‘A Balancing Act’

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Health and Safety before 1974

- Multiple outdated regulations
- Worker/employee involvement not mandated/regulated
- ~ 1000 people being killed at work every year

1974 – The turning point

- The Robens Report
- The Health and Safety Commission and Executive

The key principles of HSWA 1974

- Recognise the pace of change
- Do away with prescriptive solutions
- Replace with a more generic goal setting approach

“Those who create the risk are best placed to manage it”

The approach and the Act is as relevant today as it was >30 years ago

So, what has changed?

- Safety Performance improved by more than 70%
- World of work and the consequent risks to be managed
- Public expectation and tendency to look for “something must be done”
- Devaluation of the Health and Safety brand
- Confusion over roles and responsibilities



The 21st century H&S Challenge

- Current performance on a plateau
 - > 200 deaths a year at work
 - >28000 major injuries
 - Over 2 million people suffering from an illness caused or made worse by work
 - A great deal still to do

The 21st Century Challenge

- 4 sectors account for ~ 50% of work related deaths
- Health requires a different management approach to safety
- Diverse and remote workforces present new challenges
- Large and small businesses perceive different needs from the regulatory system



A new governance model

- On 1st April 2008 HSC and HSE merged to become the new Health and Safety Executive
- Former Commissioners have now become the (non-Exec) Board of HSE
- Time to revisit Robens

A new strategy for Health and Safety in the 21st century



- Led by the new Board of HSE
- Strategy for workplace H&S in GB and HSE's role
- Takes account of evidence from stakeholders to W&PSC and other recent consultations/reports
- Calls on others to consider their role in helping deliver the strategy