

The Strategy in Action

Report to Ministers on the second year of the HSC Strategy

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Our vision is to gain recognition of health and safety as a cornerstone of a civilised society and, with that, to achieve a record of workplace health and safety that leads the world.

The mission is for HSC and HSE, working with LAs, to protect people's health and safety by ensuring that risks in the changing workplace are properly controlled.

Foreword by HSC Chair

To Lord Hunt of Kings Heath, OBE

I enclose a report from the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) on the second year of our Strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond. Like the report on the first year of the Strategy, *Moving to Delivery*, this year's report focuses only on the work that HSC and its enforcing authorities, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and local authorities, have been doing.

Much has happened since the launch of the Strategy. The continued development of our partnership with local authorities has been a highlight of the first two years of the Strategy. And we are delighted that the Commission's focus on health has been reflected in the joint DoH, DWP and HSE programme on Health, Work and Wellbeing which you and DoH Ministers launched in October. HSE has also changed the way it works to become a more delivery-orientated organisation that now operates through Strategic Programme working. One of the criticisms of both the Strategy and the Revitalising Health and Safety statement in 2000 was the apparent limited focus on our work regulating the major hazard industries. We have gone some way to rectifying this by developing as one of our 2 Strategic Delivery Programmes, one which focuses exclusively on our work in the major hazard industries. The other focuses on our work to reduce work related ill health, injury and days lost. Both Programmes have contributed to the progress we have made on the Revitalising midpoint targets.

However, we are not the only players in the health and safety system. Whatever our resources, we can only do so much. The trade unions, health and safety professionals and British business all have a part to play and we will again be looking to them in the next 12 months to implement and use the strategy in their work on health and safety, for example by promoting the strategic themes in their dealings with third parties, particularly small and medium sized businesses.

After two years of the Strategy, we remain convinced that the course we have set is the right one. HSE is now more focused on delivery and the progress on the Revitalising mid-point targets suggests that we are beginning to see the fruit of our labours. The Strategy is working and is now integral to our activities.

Bill Callaghan

Chair, Health & Safety Commission

March 2006

Introduction

The Commission's Workplace Strategy in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond was launched in February 2004. A year on, we presented a report assessing its initial impact to the then Minister for Work, the Rt Hon Jane Kennedy MP, entitled *Moving to Delivery*.

This is the report on the second year of the Strategy. It does not detail all of our activities. Rather it is an illustrative account of the work HSE and local authorities have put in place, with some selected examples that demonstrate the Strategy's themes in action. It complements but does not seek to replace the statutorily-required HSC Annual Report, which is due to be published in June.

The second year of the strategy coincided with the Revitalising Health and Safety midpoint targets. The overall targets are:

- To reduce the number of working days lost per 100,000 workers from work-related injury by 30% by 2010;
- To reduce the incidence rate of cases of work-related ill health by 20% by 2010; and
- Reduce the incidence rate of fatalities and major injuries by 10% by 2010.

A further target was set for achieving half the improvement under each target by 2004. HSE's statisticians conclude that we have probably and possibly met the targets set for ill health and days lost respectively. There has however been no change in the incidence rate of fatal and major injuries. Despite this, there have nonetheless been some encouraging signs. We have seen significant improvements in the sectors that HSE has targeted, including a 25% reduction in the construction industry's major injury rate.

Inspection and enforcement continues to play an important role in our approach. It is not the only string to our bow but will often be the means by which other parts of our intervention strategy are brought to bear. It is also what many businesses and the public expect of us.

Philip Hampton's report last year on the scope for reducing administrative burdens on business through more efficient regulation and enforcement endorses our approach, and many of its recommendations reflect the thinking and philosophies behind our Strategy. This is especially so on partnership working, better advice and targeted and prioritised enforcement.

HSE has embraced the Hampton better regulation agenda and set a leading example by implementing reforms across its regulatory regime. We would argue however, that we have been a proportionate, goals based regulator long before the Hampton recommendations and the creation of the Better Regulation Executive. Better regulation helps to deliver the outcomes we are trying to achieve. It is about regulating in a way that is proportionate to the

risks we need to manage. This philosophy is woven through many of the highlights featured in this report.

Strategic themes

We have been promoting the Strategy in terms of its 4 individual high-level themes:

1. **Developing closer partnerships;**
2. **Helping people to benefit from effective health & safety management and a sensible health and safety culture;**
3. **Focusing on our core business and the right interventions where we are best placed to reduce workplace injury and ill health;** and
4. **Communicating our vision.**

The real strength of this approach, though, lies in the power of the whole being greater than the sum of the individual parts. The examples below demonstrate the strategic themes in action, reinforcing each other and contributing to reducing workplace injury and ill health.

Strategic Programme Working

To help embed the strategic themes more fully into its work processes, HSE has organised its work into strategic programmes and become more focused on delivering objectives and achieving targets. Much of our activity is now conducted through 2 Strategic Delivery Programmes, the **Major Hazards Programme** and the **Fit for work, fit for life, fit for tomorrow (Fit3) Programme**. Four Strategic Enabling Programmes (STEPs) in turn support and contribute to the Major Hazards and Fit3 Programmes. The STEP's all aim to improve health and safety performance by developing closer partnerships and working with and through local authorities, businesses, other organisations and workers. The 4 STEP's are:

- **Local authorities and HSE working together;**
- **Enforcement;**
- **Business Involvement;** and
- **Worker Involvement.**

Individual work programmes also contribute directly to the Strategic Delivery and Strategic Enabling Programmes.

The Strategy in action

Below are examples of some of the individual programmes and projects which contribute to the Fit3 and Major Hazards Strategic Delivery Programmes.

They all clearly demonstrate the four strategic themes in action:

- Partnership working;
- Effective health and safety management;
- Focussing on our core business; and

- Communicating the vision.

The examples are meant to be illustrative, a flavour of the work we have done over the past year rather than an exhaustive account.

Backs!2005 (Fit3 Strategic Programme)

Back pain represents a core element of HSE's work. With 4.9 million working days lost in 2003/04 due to back pain¹, it is an area where we can make a huge impact on the days lost target. Backs! is a national initiative aimed at reducing back injuries at work and promoting effective management of back pain. It involves partnership working between HSE, LAs and a range of stakeholders including large companies, unions, health and safety groups, public sector employers and insurance companies. These stakeholders between them have the potential to influence an audience of just under 10 million employees. The campaign began in summer 2005 and was designed to raise awareness by encouraging innovation and combining a range of interventions including publicity, educational events and inspections to promote action. The publicity campaign comprised national press and radio advertising and 2 linked homepages on the HSE website. A further campaign is planned for autumn 2006. The initiative is an integrated part of HSE's MSD programme and compliments other work in the LA/HSE Working Together Strategic Enabling Programme and the Public Services Programme.

The inspection phase targeted higher risk industries and activities and included formal enforcement. Inspections included joint visits between HSE and LA officers. Over 3,500 inspections took place, reaching 420,000 employees. There were 180 enforcement notices served, primarily in the manufacturing and food industries. Formal enforcement however, was just one of the tools that inspectors deployed during the campaign. Encouraging duty-holders to help their staff by promoting the use of the Manual Handling Assessment Chart (MAC) tool was another. In total, 2954 MAC assessments were completed at the premises of 1825 duty holders.

Backs!2005 was the largest single topic initiative of its kind. We are still in the evaluation phase of the project but early indications are that expectations have been either met or succeeded in achieving the objectives of raising the profile of back pain, educating dutyholders about the best ways to reduce the incidence of work-related back pain and creating self-responsibility amongst employees to look after their backs at work.

Construction Strategic Programme (Fit3 Strategic Programme)

This programme is designed to engage with key stakeholders including clients, contractors, workers, professionals, intermediaries and other regulators, so that we deliver a targeted programme of work that supports the industry in achieving its health and safety targets. The programme has so far achieved a 25% reduction in the industry's major injury rate but construction remains one of the country's most dangerous industries. It has a fatal injury rate of over 4 times the UK all-industry average. It is the cause of the largest

¹ Self-Reported Work Related Injuries

number of worker fatalities of any sector, accounts for 15% of all major injury accidents at work and its record on ill health is poor. Improving the performance of the construction industry will go a long way toward helping us meet all the Revitalising targets.

The programme's initiatives in the last year included:

- A national "Fit out Phase" Campaign was delivered successfully in October making a major contribution on slips and trips and falls. The campaign brought together Construction Division's contribution to the HSE wide 'Watch Your Step' Campaign and "Falls Week" by targeting the final stages of construction projects across the country. This stage of projects can result in significant increase in numbers on site and a consequent increase in the risk of low falls and trips. Over 1000 sites were visited, at over 450 dangerous work at height was stopped by Inspectors and at over 100 work was stopped because of the risk of tripping.
- Early intervention with major projects such as Wembley Stadium, Liverpool King's Dock, Newcastle Hospital and Scottish Power's Renewable Energy Programme. Early intervention at the Rotunda office block in Birmingham led to a challenge to proposals to use rope access for maintenance on the completed building. A subsequent cost review found that a properly designed cradle would be safer as well as cheaper over the lifespan of the building.
- The "Take a designer to site" initiative in Scotland and the North resulted in improved health and safety training of designers and provided a better understanding of the role designers could play in eliminating or reducing health and safety risks. The initiatives have been used as a lever for in-depth assessments of health and safety performance and been built into central interventions with designers.
- The Dulux decorator initiative partnered with a major supplier to educate hard-to-reach micro-SMEs on the risks involved with working at height. The construction industry accounted for 53% of all fatalities associated with falls from height in 2004/05. Early indicators are that the publicity and information provided has resulted in dramatic changes in sales of access equipment reflecting the messages of the campaign.
- A programme of occupational health supply chain projects is underway. The projects bring clients, contractors, manufacturers, hirers etc. together to develop solutions that meet the needs of the whole industry. Projects on cement bags and mechanical kerb handling have already delivered solutions and a Hand Arm Vibration project has begun to get a better understanding of vibration created by portable tools. Further projects on paving slabs, silica, heavy blocks, handling panel products, use of lifting aids and steel reinforcing bar tying are being developed.
- An Occupational Health Management Model is being piloted with industry. This will produce a web-based tool providing comprehensive advice and guidance on processes to deliver good occupational health risk and case management.

Workplace Health Connect (Fit3 Strategic Programme)

“Small and medium-sized enterprises need more help to face particular challenges in the management of occupational health, safety, sickness absence and return to work.”

The quote above is taken from the government's welfare reform green paper - *A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work*. The Strategy committed us to developing innovative partnerships to develop the provision of occupational health and safety support with greater emphasis on rehabilitation as a contribution to the wider government employment agenda.

Workplace Health Connect fulfils this commitment and will contribute to the government's wider agenda on welfare reform. It is an occupational health, safety and return-to-work (OHSR) support service for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) launched in February 2006. It complements *Safe and Healthy Working*, an existing service for small companies in Scotland. The service, which will be fully evaluated, consists of an Adviceline, offering OHSR advice to all SME employers and workers in England and Wales and 5 regional Pathfinders. These provide workplace focused visits with an emphasis on supplying managers with the knowledge and skills they need to manage health safety and return to work. The five regional pathfinders are located in Greater London, the North East, the North West, South Wales and the West Midlands. The service will be expanded in 2007 to cover some two thirds of SMEs in England and Wales.

Each pathfinder has set up a Regional Stakeholder Council (RSC), with members acting as champions for the service within their local constituencies. RSC's include members from local Chamber of Commerce, Regional Development Agency/Government Office of the Region, national bodies delivering locally, Local Government/Authority, regional trade union participation, and local media representation.

Health, Work and Wellbeing

Workplace Health Connect will also underpin the Health, Work and Wellbeing (HWWB) Strategy which in turn compliments the HSC strategy. HWWB was launched by the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department of Health and HSE in October 2005. It has a number of aims including preventing ill health occurring, making sure the topic gets the attention it deserves, that work is recognised by all as important and beneficial, that healthcare services meet the needs of working age people and that employers look at supporting people in work. It lays out a blueprint for change, so that work related illness and accidents can be avoided in the first place, but if not ensures that people get fast treatment and that they can access occupational health services when they are needed. It also puts the emphasis on creating healthy workplaces and linking this to the broader health and productivity agendas.

LAs and HSE Working Together (Fit3 Strategic Programme)

In developing the Strategy, particular attention was paid to the division of enforcement responsibilities between LAs and HSE. It was recognised that the existing arrangements did not maximise the potential for HSE and LAs to work together. The Strategy committed both the enforcing authorities to work in a closer partnership to “more sensible and better-understood divisions of enforcement and agreed targets”. One of the early deliverables of the Strategy was a high-level partnership agreement between HSE and LAs. HSE developed a STEP (see section on Strategic Themes) to take this work forward and a joint Statement of Intent was agreed by HSC, HSE and LAs in July 2004.

Some of the highlights of the STEP are:

- The launch of a secure “extranet” to enable HSE and LAs to upload, download and exchange/share relevant data, information, guidance, training and other material. The extranet will be the key communication tool between HSE and LAs and will be maintained by HSE.
- Research identifying training and support needs of local authority enforcement officers resulting in a programme of training and guidance to aid joint working and reduce inconsistencies.
- Complete review of the Governance arrangements of partnership working and the involvement of elected members, for the first time, all helping to secure and cement the relationship between central and local government.
- A project dealing with all the Builders Merchants (BMs) across the Midlands is underway. Enforcement responsibility for BMs is shared between LAs and HSE. In general, LAs deal with the premises. HSE deals with deliveries to and from the premises. This project aims to bring alignment of inspection standards and approaches between HSE and LAs based around the priority topics. It involves inviting small and medium sized BMs to attend seminars at which standards are set out by LA, HSE and industry representatives. Businesses attending the seminars will then not be inspected by either LAs or HSE for an agreed period. The big 4 national BMs (Jewsons, Travis Perkins, Build Base and Build Centre) will be audit inspected against the standards set out at the presentation by LA staff later on in the year. LA Inspectors will then make presentations to the management boards on their findings.
- HSE in London has worked with 2 existing LA groups, the London Health and Safety Liaison Group (LLG) and the Association of London Environmental Health Managers (ALEHM) to develop the Moving Goods Safely (MGS) Project. This project addresses the hazards (slips and trips, falls from height, workplace transport and MSD) associated with the delivery of goods to wholesale and retail premises and subsequently to commercial and domestic users. At different points along this chain, the enforcement responsibility transfers back and forth between LAs and HSE. Consequently, agreeing consistent standards and approaches offers considerable benefit to enforcers and dutyholders alike and representatives of LLG, ALEHM, SE Region TUC, British Retail Consortium and HSE are all represented on the project team.

- “Stress and the City” was a project involving 2 London Boroughs (Corporation of London and Tower Hamlets) with responsibility for many major financial services and the London Chamber of Commerce to produce seminars and workshops to support HSE’s Stress Programme.
- “Window Cleaning Safety” is joint work between Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and the Corporation of London. These boroughs all contain numerous large office developments where window cleaning is procured and controlled by a limited number of managing agents. This event brought together these agents and set out the standards expected of them.
- HSE has provided local authorities with access to the Health and Safety Laboratories (HSL) and this has been actively taken up. During 2005/06, HSL carried out 53 incident investigations and approximately 20 research projects for local authorities amounting to around £600k of work financed by HSE for LAs.

Improving Management of risks in the Chemical and Nuclear Industries (Major Hazards Strategic Programme)

HSE’s Major Hazards Strategic Programme is responsible for regulating and assuring the safety of those industries where failure to manage risks to health and safety can lead to a catastrophic incident. The industries we regulate are nuclear, offshore oil and gas, railways and onshore major hazard industries (e.g. chemical manufacture/storage, transportation, mining, explosives, diving at work, dangerous pathogens and genetically modified organisms).

We have worked with the Sellafield Nuclear licensee, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and the Environment Agency in accelerating and completing work packages on clean up of nuclear waste. Revised arrangements supporting joint working with MoD’s new Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator are being developed. A forward work programme to support MoD’s major nuclear investment at Aldermaston and Burghfield has been agreed.

Appropriate performance indicators and a system to make effective use of them are now available to the chemical industry giving a more effective means of managing major hazards. Work has progressed with the Nuclear industry to develop a set of indicators to be used to measure safety performance based on incidents considered to be precursors to a major accident. We worked with British Energy to ensure their relicensing and restructuring into a single nuclear licensee was achieved whilst maintaining or enhancing safety.

We have worked to improve process engineering health and safety management in the chemical sector to protect a valuable industry, reduce risks to the workers and the public and contribute to the reduction of major hazard incidents. We have refined our systems for targeting our inspections and other interventions at Nuclear sites taking into account previous inspection findings, the quality of safety submissions, corporate competences and incidents track record.

Website information, training and awareness events have been integral to the success of major initiatives in the chemicals sector. An online system has allowed voluntary reporting of loss of containment incidents at chemical sites, over and above that required by regulation and has resulted in a much larger pool of information to draw conclusions from. We have revised our Safety Assessment Principles for nuclear plant in consultation with the industry and a wider range of stakeholders via for example, the British Nuclear Energy Society and through a programme of workshops. Feedback mechanisms have been put in place and a web based consultation exercise planned. We have completed the first phase of introduction of a new nuclear stakeholder perception survey.

Agriculture (Fit3 Strategic Programme)

Farming is one of the most dangerous industries in Britain. Workplace transport, falls from height, working with chemicals and livestock all contribute to the risks involved. Environmental factors such as adverse weather conditions and noise are other contributors. But farms are also family homes. So in addition to having one of the highest fatal accident rates, agriculture is also the only high-risk industry that has to cope with the presence of children. HSE's work in agriculture is part of the Injuries Reduction Programme which contributes to the Fit3 objectives.

To help farmers understand and manage risk, HSE has been running "Safety and Health Awareness Days" (SHADs). Up to 500 farmers, mainly self-employed or members of family-run farms, are invited to attend each event. Throughout the day, professional instructors present scenarios that reflect local interests. These scenarios underline hazards and preventative measures associated with activities that are the biggest cause of fatalities and major injuries. Each presentation lasts about 15 minutes, with an opportunity for questions afterwards. HSE staff are always on hand to answer any legal questions. The farmers take home an information pack they can refer to afterwards. These events highlight the responsibilities of individual farmers and exemplify HSE altering its communication methods depending on the audience.

If a farmer does not accept the invitation to attend the SHAD, they are more than likely to have an HSE inspector visit. This allows us to be supportive of those who need it and also tough on those who may be wilfully disregarding the law. Some HSE Operational Groups also run smaller awareness events. Around 15 farmers are invited to attend the event, held at a local farm that has volunteered to host it. An HSE inspector inspects the farm with the group, and uses the inspection to help explain good health and safety management.

Business case campaign

As part of the Strategy commitment to find ways to demonstrate the moral, business and economic case for health and safety, HSE ran a business case

campaign last spring. The objectives were to raise awareness and inform large businesses within the Manufacturing, Construction, Utilities and Services sectors of the business benefits of proactively managing a sensible health and safety policy. The campaign aims were also to inform and educate dutyholders of the possible risks of loss of key staff, loss of sales, recruitment difficulties and the costs of correcting health and safety failures.

The campaign comprised radio and newspaper advertisements highlighting the business benefits of sensible health and safety management through the use of real companies as case studies. The case studies were further highlighted on the HSE website. In one case study, a company enjoyed a 64% reduction in their overall accident rate and £500k saved in days lost since 1997.

Following the campaign 300 telephone interviews were conducted with senior staff (primarily Health and Safety managers, Directors and other senior staff) of companies with 100 staff or more. Up to 48% claimed spontaneous awareness of advertising informing businesses of the benefits of sensible health and safety management. A quarter recognised at least one of the press advertisements and 23% recognised at least one of the radio commercials.

Inspection and enforcement

The Strategy is clear that for us to be most effective, we must employ a range of different intervention techniques. This includes enforcement where dutyholders are intentionally or seriously in breach of the law. Enforcement or the fear of enforcement remains a powerful motivator for some businesses. The Strategy commits HSE and local authorities to work together to ensure compliance with the law and to hold to account those that are in breach. The Enforcement and LA/HSE working together Strategic Programmes contribute to this work.

HSE recently secured a conviction against a Norfolk quarrying company following continuous disregard of safety provisions – including ignoring HSE advice and information and disregarding prohibition notices. The crime sheet against the company included a worker falling from height, resulting in a broken pelvis and punctured lung; falsifying statements about the fall; and ignoring prohibition notices related to a dangerous tipping area and a dumper truck with faulty brakes and steering. Initially, HSE's first step was to work with the company to help them better manage their health and safety processes. HSE inspectors then worked with the local authority and the Police to gather evidence against the company, including video footage, which resulted in significant fines for the director and her partner, with nine months' imprisonment for the partner for breaching the prohibition notices.

This is an example of HSE offering advice and information in the first instance and when this was wilfully ignored, taking robust enforcement action to prevent lives being put at risk. The case was featured in a popular regional

paper as well as on the BBC's Look East programme. BBC Radio Norfolk also interviewed an inspector. This publicity helped to highlight HSE's approach, support and advice when required but robust inspection and enforcement when necessary. This message is not unique to this case and is repeated and reinforced in our operational work throughout the organisation and all over the country.

Conclusion

Two years into the Strategy, we remain convinced of the value of the restructuring exercise that we undertook and the Strategic Programmes we put in place to achieve our objectives. From a position 3 years ago of genuine uncertainty about achieving the Revitalising mid-point targets, we are now at a point where we can feel more confident after realising 2 of the targets. And while it is probably too simplistic to say that this success is completely down to the Strategy, we believe that it has played a big part. Much of our work is now at the heart of the Government's agenda and we are contributing positively to cross-departmental initiatives like Health Work and Wellbeing and welfare reform. The strategic themes, particularly the focus on deploying resources where we can have the biggest impact on the targets, are now paying dividends.

The Strategy is beginning to deliver results and remains an integral component of how we go about our work.