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GSE Programme - Programme Plan.

Programme Design

The programme aims to deliver the Public Sector's contribution to the achievement of the Revitalising health and safety targets.

Rationale

The targets for improving workplace health and safety by 2010 in Revitalising include reducing (a) days lost per 100,000 workers by 30% and (b) reducing the incidence of work related ill health by 20%.

The public sector as a whole employs around 5 million workers – around 18% of the workforce. It needs to make a contribution if the targets are to be met. HSC has therefore selected the public sector as a priority area for action under the Government Setting an Example (GSE) priority programme. The programme's overarching aim is:

To reduce the number of working days lost in the civil service and wider public sector, especially those caused by work related accidents and ill health, by 30% by 2010.

Days lost in the public sector overall were 10.1 and 8.9 in 2001 and 2002 respectively. In the civil service the figure was 9.8 in 2002. The average number of days lost per staff year in the private sector was 6.35 in 2002. Ministers are taking an interest in this work given the potential links to the public sector delivery and productivity agendas.

The *programme* is designed to reduce accidents and ill health and the subsequent loss of productivity in the public services. Therefore all the work undertaken as part of this programme will contribute to the reduction of lost productivity by:

- reducing accidents and/or ill health; and/or,
- reducing absence levels; and/or,
- improving service delivery.

Workstreams

To deliver this reduction the programme concentrates on four areas of work (workstreams):

1. Influencing central government departments;
2. Ensuring that other public sector organisations agree and deliver targets affecting their own employees;
3. Developing tools and techniques to support the management of health and safety;
4. Continuing to protect workers through targeted interventions.

Annex 1 to this note provides a detailed breakdown of the various projects being taken forward under each of these Workstreams. Outlined below are the key strategic aspects of each of the four workstreams.

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Workstreams 1 and 2

The aim is to influence Government Departments so that they put in place the measures necessary to help prevent the causes of sickness absence due to ill health and accidents. These measures will also need to ensure that, where sickness absence does occur, employees return to work as soon as possible.

The main element of these workstreams is gaining the commitment, at the highest level across the public sector, to a management framework approach for tackling the causes of sickness absence. The establishment of a Ministerial Task Force and support mechanisms are early priorities as they will provide the drive and commitment to achieving the target reductions. This commitment in turn will ensure Departments put in place effective systems to manage health and safety performance in order to improve their sickness absence record.

Early key high level deliverables of this workstream are:

What	Who	When	Why
Establishment of a Ministerial Task Force.	DWP/HSE to establish, arrange meetings and provide secretariat.	Meetings before end June and follow up in September - six monthly thereafter.	To provide high level impetus and commitment from key departments.
Departments produce individual targets based on current performance that will contribute to the overall programme target.	All public sector departments (in response to the work of the Task Force and SR 2004). HSE with HMT and Cab Office ensure timescales met and quality.	As part of, or shortly after, SR settlement – around September.	Programme team have information on plans and contribution to targets, examples of good practice.
Departments have delivery plans (based on a Management Framework - Champions at board level and milestones, etc).	As above.	September.	To ensure that there is a mechanism for reporting progress and monitoring against Programme plan.
Departments report on progress to Min Task Force.	Departments (with HSE/DWP etc providing analysis and comparisons).	Half yearly.	To ensure that progress is maintained and that corrective action is taken to deliver targets.

Workstream 3

The aim of Workstream 3 is to ensure that where appropriate HSE's (or others) tools are used by the public sector to make improvements to their health and safety performance and to disseminate best practice. To help identify how well Departments are positioned to addressing health and safety problems - and to benchmark their performance with other similar organisations – a performance index (the Corporate Health and Safety Performance Index – CHaSPI) - is being developed. To provide a reliable benchmark CHaSPI will be promoted and Departments will be encouraged to

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use CHaSPI to assess and compare their performance with similar organisations.

Stress and Muskulo-Skeletal Disorders have been identified as two of the main causes of sickness absence in the public sector. This programme - in conjunction with other HSC Priority Programmes – will promote the HSE tools for addressing these issues and identify and promulgate examples of best practice.

The key high level deliverables under this Workstream are:

What	Who	When	Why
Development, availability, promotion and use of tools to support departments (stress management, management index etc).	HSE and others as appropriate.	As per other Programme plans.	To support others' targets and gain feedback on usefulness of the tools.
Development and role out of CHaSPI across public sector.	HSE Policy and Task Force.	Autumn 2004 for the start of role out.	Assess departmental weaknesses in occupational health and safety management and learn form others strengths.
Best practice examples identified, and/or produced and disseminated through out the public sector.	Departments and programme team.	Four case studies produced each year.	To encourage commitment and support strugglers.

Workstream 4

HSE - in particular the field staff - have a key role to play in terms of their practical experience and expertise in complying in the most efficient ways possible with health and safety legislation. This workstream aims to build on the relationships to ensure that the public sector is well placed to comply with relevant health and safety legislation. A series of planned interventions will be developed so that field staff can liaise and work with public sector organisations at a 'local level'.

Key to this work will be the links to the other workstreams so that a consistent approach can be taken in providing advice and targeting of resources. The primary role of field staff will be to assist the public sector in achieving its targets. However, where necessary enforcement action will be taken.

What	Who	When	Why
Activities and sector interventions, etc. Interventions will directly reduce accidents and/or ill health; and/or,	Field Operations in conjunction with Sector and Departments.	Liaison at Sector level 2004 onwards with Field activity taking place from 2006 onwards.	To identify best and disseminate best practice, assist local projects, develop centres of excellence.

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reduce absence levels; and/or, improving service delivery.			
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