

Local Authorities and HSE Working Together

September 2004

Local Authorities Working with HSC and HSE to Change Attitudes and Culture in Health and Safety Enforcement

On 19 July 2004, the first meeting of the Steering Group of the 'Local Authorities and HSE Working Together' Strategic Programme took place. The Group agreed a 'Statement of Intent' (reproduced overleaf) setting out both local government's and the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE's) commitment to working together to deliver the Programme's aims. Membership of the Steering Group comprises elected member representatives of the local authority (LA) Associations and Health and Safety Commissioners.

The Strategic Programme is one of five established to help deliver the Health and Safety Commission's (HSC) Strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond (www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/hsc/strategy.htm). The HSC examined the existing working arrangements between HSE and LAs as enforcers of health and safety legislation. It considered that HSE and LAs would need to change attitudes and cultures in order to work together in closer partnership.

The programme of work will involve key LA representative bodies in developing partnership arrangements – the Local Government Association (LGA), the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS). The Steering Group is an essential part of ensuring that the views and interests of Local Authorities are fully accounted for in the development of the work programme and the other elements of HSC's strategy.

Bill Callaghan, HSC Chair, said: 'I am pleased by the positive approach of the meeting. We all recognised that HSC and HSE had to give much greater recognition to the contribution LAs can make to improving health and safety standards in the workplace. At the same time local authorities and their representatives had to respond to the challenges of partnership working by being open to new ways of working and to increasing cooperation with their colleagues in HSE, as well as within their own and other authorities'.

Joyce Edmond-Smith (Chair of the Steering Group and Health and Safety Commissioner) said: 'This Group is a clear example of our intention to give much greater recognition to the essential role of LAs in improving workplace health and safety for millions of workers. I have two roles central to ensuring that the development of a new partnership is a success. First, I have to ensure that the views of LA representatives are heard and taken into account by both HSC and HSE and vice versa. Second, I must ensure recognition that change in approach and attitude is needed in both LAs and HSE, and in the way LAs work together, to improve workplace health and safety'.

The LGA, WLGA and COSLA recognise the need to raise the profile of health and safety in light of the major contribution that it makes to public health and community well-being. They all have representatives on the Steering Group. Councillor Alison Hay – the COSLA nominee – welcomed the direct involvement of elected members in the Strategic Programme. Councillor Hay said that: 'The Steering Group is a crucial strand of the high-level governance arrangements for the Strategic Programme and is vital to its success in providing overall direction for the Programme. The inaugural meeting has given the Programme impetus to make significant progress'. She added: 'It is particularly pleasing that there is specific Scottish and Welsh involvement to ensure that the work reflects priorities in all parts of Great Britain'.

Members of the Steering Group, and HSC's Chair, who attended the inaugural meeting of the Group on 19 July, at which the 'Statement of Intent' for partnership working between LAs and the HSE was agreed.

Left to Right: Councillor Caroline Seymour (LGA), Hugh Robertson (HSC), Joyce Edmond-Smith (HSC), Councillor Andy Sutton (LGA), Councillor Graham Brown (LGA), Bill Callaghan (HSC), Councillor Peter Kent (LGA), Councillor Alison Hay (COSLA). The WLGA representative – Councillor Jeffrey James – is not pictured.



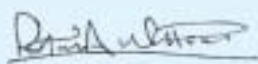
Endorsement of Statement of Intent

The HSC, LGA, WLGA, COSLA, LACORS and HSE recognise the importance of making sensible health and safety a cornerstone of a civilised society. We also recognise the need to raise the public and political profile of health and safety so that it is seen as a vital component of worker and public protection and an intrinsic part of community health and well-being. To achieve these aims and to improve health and safety in Great Britain, we need to change attitudes and cultures and work together – and with others – in closer partnership.

We endorse this Statement of Intent for the ‘Local Authorities and HSE Working Together’ Strategic Programme. We believe that it provides a sound framework for a joint programme of work between local authorities and HSE towards achieving a record of workplace health and safety in Great Britain that leads the world.



Bill Callaghan, Chair,
Health and Safety Commission



Councillor Pat Watters, President,
The Convention of Scottish Local
Authorities



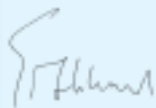
Sir Sandy Bruce-Lockhart, Chairman,
The Local Government Association



Rory Mair, Chief Executive,
The Convention of Scottish Local
Authorities



Sir Brian Briscoe, Chief Executive,
The Local Government Association



Councillor Geoffrey Theobald OBE,
Chairman, Local Authorities
Coordinators of Regulatory Services



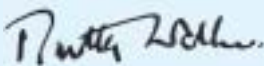
Councillor Alex Aldridge, Leader,
The Welsh Local Government
Association



Derek Allen, Executive Director, Local
Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory
Services



Steve Thomas, Director,
The Welsh Local Government
Association



Timothy Walker, Director General,
Health and Safety Executive



Local Government Association



HSC's Strategy for Workplace Health and Safety in Great Britain to 2010 and Beyond

‘Local Authorities and HSE Working Together’ Strategic Programme: Joint Vision and Statement of Intent

The HSC has set a new strategic direction for the health and safety system in Great Britain. The HSE and LAs are HSC's enforcing authorities. The new HSC strategy envisages a significant change in how HSE and LAs work together. The HSC has asked HSE and LAs to establish a Strategic Programme, that will over the next 15-18 months develop and deliver the detailed arrangements for working together in an effective partnership.

The Programme will contribute to HSC's vision of gaining recognition of health and safety as a cornerstone of a civilised society. The principal aim of the Programme is a more effective use of HSE and LA resources collectively, in reducing accidents and ill-health at work. This will contribute to initiatives for regeneration, health and well-being in local communities and thereby enhance employment and business viability.

Vision

The Programme vision is of LAs and HSE working jointly and in partnership, locally, regionally and nationally, to a common set of goals and standards, committed to focusing resources on agreed health and safety priorities. The aim is to minimise harm to those in the workplace or those affected by workplace activities, and contribute to the health and well-being of local communities.

The Programme will develop and maintain structures within HSE and local government to facilitate closer working between HSC, HSE and LAs. It will establish an infrastructure across Great Britain between HSE and LAs that will seek to ensure partnership working:

- Is embedded within the enforcing authorities' cultures
- Reflects the equivalent status of LAs and HSE as enforcing authorities
- Makes the best use of joint resources
- Reflects the priorities of LAs and devolved administrations within the overall context of the HSC strategy
- Is supported by sharing of information and expertise
- Has clear and effective communication tools and systems.

The Programme must raise the public and political profile of health and safety so that it is recognised as a vital component of worker and public protection which significantly contributes to local community health and well-being.

Statement of Intent

This joint statement of intent, agreed by HSC, HSE and local authority representative bodies in July 2004, sets out the high-level commitments which provide the framework of objectives for the Strategic Programme and achievement of the vision

We are committed to:

- 1 Developing an effective and coherent partnership between HSE and LAs, based on the principle of making the best use of their respective strengths, and applying collective resources in the best way to tackle national, regional and local priorities for health and safety.**

There is no lasting logic to the current division of enforcement responsibility between HSE and LAs and their ways of working, which do not capture the full potential of HSE and LAs to work together. HSE and LAs will work in a closer partnership based on a mutual understanding of their respective strengths and the value of local and central interventions. Joint working will reflect the HSC's overall strategy and contribute to relevant local strategic objectives such as those for healthy communities.

As a start, to exemplify this new partnership approach, HSE and LAs will build on and publicise current examples of best practice.

- 2 A joint approach to developing the arrangements to deliver these commitments.**

The HSC will engage LA elected members with the Programme and aim to secure their support for its strategic objectives for health and safety.

The Programme will be overseen by a Steering Group that has members from HSC and elected member nominees from the LA Associations of England, Wales and Scotland. A joint HSE and LA board (officials and officers) will lead the detailed work and the Programme team will be jointly staffed. The input of HSE and LA staff to the Programme is essential to developing practical proposals which meet national, regional and local needs.

- 3 Improving communications between HSC, HSE and LAs to ensure, in particular, that LAs and their representative organisations are adequately involved in the development of policy advice to the HSC, and in the planning and delivery of the operational activities which carry them into effect.**

This will require a change of attitudes and culture to ensure that LAs are able to effectively contribute in a timely manner and their interests are seen as an important and necessary consideration in HSC's and HSE's work.

- 4 Providing information, guidance and support to enforcing authorities equitably.**

We are aiming to move quickly to better ways of sharing the guidance that supports the day-to-day work of enforcing authorities and their staff. We will also develop systems for sharing training and information, and for access to expertise and specialist resources.

- 5 Examining and adapting as necessary the institutions and legal framework which currently underpin the relationship between HSC, HSE and LAs.**

We will revisit the effectiveness and value of all our supporting institutions to ensure that they are fit for purpose to deliver our new aspirations, including completion of the current review of the HSE/LA Enforcement Liaison Committee (HELA). In particular we need to consider how we can deliver effective governance of the partnership at local and regional level, with the support of LAs' elected members. HSE will aim to put in place a locally-based framework of staff support and other necessary resources for the partnership, and to review the role of HSE's existing Enforcement Liaison Officer network.

We also recognise that the Enforcing Authority Regulations may need to be amended or replaced in order to support new ways of working. But our approach will be first to determine how the partnership can best work, and only then to see what changes are needed to the legal framework to enable this to happen.

- 6 Developing arrangements for monitoring and auditing the work of the enforcing authorities which properly reflect the status of HSE and LAs as partners.**

We wish to see arrangements for overseeing the performance of HSE and LAs which are applied equitably to the work of both partners in the new relationship. In taking this forward we will seek and take account of the views of the Audit Commission and other central and devolved government interests in accountability.

- 7 Contributing effectively to current and future initiatives to improve the consistency and coordination of central and devolved government requirements which impact on regulatory services, in the context of expectations, priorities, minimum standards, monitoring and intervention.**

We are committed to working with others to ensure a joined-up approach that helps to support the enforcing authorities and their drive for improvement. The aim is to promote a consistent approach by different government departments that have an interest in LAs and their responsibilities for delivering regulatory services.

We will follow the principles established in accordance with the Enforcement Concordat and which are reflected in HSC's Enforcement Policy Statement.

HSE Appoints Partnership Managers to Bolster Partnership Working with Local Authorities

Regionally based 'Partnership Managers' have recently been appointed by HSE to forge strategic partnerships with LAs. Their aim is to promote effective and consistent approaches to health and safety enforcement in all employment sectors throughout Great Britain. Partnership Managers are in addition to HSE's existing Enforcement Liaison Officers, who will continue to facilitate contact between LAs and HSE staff.

Partnership Managers will work with elected members, Chief Executive Officers and other key LA staff as well as colleagues in HSE to develop, implement and facilitate effective partnership working between HSE, LAs and other stakeholders. Regional plans are being developed and regional events are expected to take place this autumn.

The Partnership Managers cover England, Scotland and Wales. In six of the seven geographical Divisions in HSE's Field Operations Directorate (FOD), the Partnership Managers are Principal Inspectors.

However, in the Wales and South West Division two senior managers are handling the Partnership Manager role to take account of the devolved government/regional split.

The HSE's Partnership Managers who will work with LAs at a high level to develop effective joint-working arrangements between central government, local government and other key stakeholders.

Left to Right: Bernadette Cadman (North West), Steve Coppel (Wales), Janet Francis (London), Alan Craddock (Midlands), Max Walker (South West), Peter Dodd (Scotland), David Cole (Yorkshire and North East) and David Bryant (East and South East).



LACORS' Health and Safety Policy Forum Established to Engage Local Authorities

The first meeting of the LACORS' Health and Safety Policy Forum took place in July 2004. The Forum will ensure that LACORS tackles the most important health and safety enforcement issues for LA officers and senior managers, especially when representing LAs' views to central government. Importantly, it will help to facilitate engagement between LACORS and the wider LA community on health and safety matters.

The Forum comprises LA representatives from the nine English Government Regions and Wales – a Health and Safety Officer Liaison Group nominee and a Heads of Service Group nominee for each Region. To ensure that due consideration



is given to all relevant agendas, the Forum has also sought to establish links with relevant organisations representing fire safety, building control as well as professionals in the environmental health and trading standards arena. At future meetings the Forum will tackle issues around the 'Local Authorities and HSE Working Together' Strategic Programme and address the challenges of ensuring effective LA input into this and the other pertinent HSE Strategic Programmes.

For further Information on the Forum and LACORS' wider health and safety work, please visit www.lacors.gov.uk or email Nick Clack at nick.clack@lacors.gov.uk