

LAC 67/2 Rev3 - Supplementary Material 1

Context of the Reforms

Much of the current Government's wider agenda on the reforms¹ was set out in "Regulation in the Post Bureaucratic Age - A Conservative Policy Paper on Better Regulation". This pre-election Conservative Party policy paper on better regulation set out the intention to reduce governmental red tape and reform public bodies.

The document "The Coalition: our programme for government"² further explained the Government's intention to cut red tape, end the culture of 'tick-box' regulation, and target inspections on high-risk organisations through co-regulation and improving professional standards.

A key priority for the Coalition Government is to ease the burden of bureaucracy on business as part of the Government's goal of making Britain more growth focused. The Government is committed to transforming the way in which it delivers regulation at the frontline and an important part of the Government's deregulatory agenda is to change the culture of health and safety.

For the Government, the first step in this process of changing the culture of health and safety was the review of the operation of health and safety laws and the growth of the compensation culture - commissioned by the Prime Minister - and the subsequent publication of the report "Common Sense, Common Safety"³ in October 2010. The Government has accepted all of the report's recommendations, which included measures for improving the public perception of health and safety and reducing the burden of bureaucracy on businesses. Two specific recommendations resulted in:

- a) Joint Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Local Government Regulation (LGR) and Food Standards Agency (FSA) guidance on "Combining Food Safety and Health and Safety Inspections"⁴, and
- b) A strengthening of the Primary Authority (PA) inspection plans with an enhanced role for HSE - whereby HSE will assist Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) in the development of inspection plans; and will develop sector intervention strategies for large multi-site retailers to assist individual PAs to develop inspection plans, which other Local Authorities (LAs) must follow. (Note - The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) has consulted on these proposals.⁵)

In March 2011, the Minister for Employment announced the next steps in the Government's plans for the reform of the health and safety system with the publication of "*Good Health and Safety, Good for*

¹ HELEX - Wider Government Agenda pages

This link to documents outlining the "Wider Government Agenda" are available for regulators on the password protected HELEX extranet

²The Coalition: our programme for government

³ Common Sense, Common Safety

⁴ Combining Food Safety and Health and Safety Inspections

⁵ The Future of LBRO and Extending the Benefits of the Primary Authority Scheme - Consultation

Everyone.⁶ Under the reforms, protecting people in the workplace and in society remains a key priority but, the focus of the health and safety regime will move to a lighter touch approach concentrating on higher risk industries and on tackling serious breaches of the rules.

As a result of this Government's reforms HSE and LAs are required to reduce the number of inspections carried out; to have greater targeting where proactive inspections continue; and to increase information provision to small businesses in a form that is both accessible and relevant to their needs.

⁶ Good Health and Safety, Good for Everyone