HSE recently published an update on its KP4 inspection programme for ageing and life extension (ALE) of offshore installations. The programme aims to ensure operators are effectively controlling risks to asset integrity associated with ageing and the use of offshore platforms and infrastructure beyond their original design life.

A significant number of platforms operating on the United Kingdom’s Continental Shelf (UKCS) have exceeded their original design life. Management of ageing is therefore crucial, and begins with an awareness that ‘ageing is not about how old your equipment is but what you know about its condition, and how that changes over time.’

The interim report, Key Programme 4 (KP4): Ageing and life extension, finds industry has reacted well, with the majority of dutyholders engaging positively with HSE. Many have undertaken independent reviews of their own integrity management practices in preparation for extending the life of ageing offshore assets, and are developing long term installation-specific plans.

Workforce involvement is of key importance and it is encouraging that dutyholders have held specific ALE events to engage with the offshore workforce. However, more is required, possibly using innovative approaches to involve the workforce in the long-term management of ageing offshore assets, a subject on which OSD is in discussion with Step Change in Safety.

The report highlights areas where the industry needs to maintain its focus, and identifies issues requiring improvement. It can be viewed on the HSE website at: www.hse.gov.uk/offshore/ageing/kp4-interim-report.pdf.

A final report will be published when the programme is completed.

**Joined-up Thinking is a new Hydrocarbon Release (HCR) Reduction toolkit from Step Change in Safety.**

The industry has a target of reducing the number of HCRs by 50% by 2013. Joined-up Thinking is a series of videos and PowerPoint packs about how to reduce HCRs. The aim is to engage the whole industry in playing their part in reducing HCRs and promoting discussion about what can be done in YOUR workplace.

Packs are available on the Step Change website www.stepchangeinsafety.net from December 2012. Further packs will be released bi-monthly.

**Be On Your Guard—NOROVIRUS**

HSE are aware that there have been several outbreaks of Norovirus also known as the “winter vomiting bug” on Offshore Installations in the past few months. The virus is highly contagious and easily spread by direct contact with an infected person or indirectly via contaminated food/drink or by contact with contaminated surfaces/objects. Although not reportable under RIDDOR it is good practice to keep HSE informed of any outbreaks so that we can respond appropriately to any Press enquiries. For advice and guidance on action to be taken in the event of a norovirus outbreak, please contact Offshore Division’s Occupational Health Team.
Enter the 2013 UK Oil and Gas Industry Safety Awards

The search is on for the outstanding people and companies leading the way in offshore oil and gas safety.

The UK Oil and Gas Industry Safety Awards, jointly organised by Step Change in Safety and Oil & Gas UK, are looking for the best safety representatives, most inspirational leaders, the brightest up-and-coming people and the quick-thinkers who have helped prevent an incident.

In addition, a new prize has been added to honour a worksite which has actively embraced workforce engagement on safety matters. Not only that, but the £5,000 Ideas in Safety prize is on offer for an individual/team who has an original idea for reducing or preventing hydrocarbon leaks. This can be an invention, a new method or process or even an unproven idea with great potential.

Nominations are open from 7th January to 1st March 2013. For details on how to enter the UK Oil and Gas Industry Safety Awards or to submit a nomination on behalf of someone else, visit www.oilandgasuk.co.uk/safetyawards.

Workforce Involvement Group (WIG)

WIG continue to hold their regular meetings and agenda and minutes from these meetings can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/oiac/wig/meetings.htm.

Further updates of the Additional Safety Rep Training which OPITO is currently developing can also be found on above link.

Also included on the website are two new podcasts recorded by Safety Reps Bob Scott (Marathon Oil/Salamis) and Bob Niven (Petrofac) giving a recount of their experiences as safety reps. Their podcasts can be listened to, along with other podcasts at www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/oiac/wig/podcast.htm.

WIG members have attended various events recently including:

• the launch of the Step Change Workshop Toolkit
• the Step Change Elected Safety Representative event held on 28th November 2012. Feedback from a WIG perspective can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/oiac/wig/news.htm.

WIG are sorry to announce that Fraser Easton, who has chaired WIG for the last 3 years, is standing down. WIG would like to take this opportunity to thank Fraser for his steadfastness in the promotion of workforce involvement. Dave Walker, HM Principal Offshore Inspector from HSE’s OSD, will take over Fraser’s role as Chair of the Workforce Involvement Group. To find out more about Dave please go to www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/oiac/wig/members.htm.

Where to go for more information

General HSE enquiries/Web-based information

Please go to HSE’s offshore safety home page at: www.hse.gov.uk/offshore

Useful offshore leaflets can be downloaded free from the HSE website.

What do you think?

We would like to know what you think of this news sheet – send your comments and ideas for future editions to:

Tea-shack News, Health and Safety Executive, Lord Cullen House, Fraser Place, Aberdeen AB25 3UB
email: osd.tnews@hse.gsi.gov.uk

Total Elgin Gas Release - Update

Shortly after midday on 25th March 2012, a major gas release occurred from Well G4 on the Total E&P UK Ltd Elgin offshore wellhead platform.

Personnel on the Elgin production platform and the adjacent Rowan Viking jack-up drilling rig were all subsequently evacuated without injury.

On 15th May 2012, day 51 of the release, well G4 was successfully ‘killed’ and the gas release was stopped with mud pumped via the West Phoenix drilling rig.

The well was secured with cement plugs pumped via the Rowan Viking drilling rig in September 2012.

Along with other regulators, HSE has been in constant dialogue with Total throughout this incident, in light of Total’s statutory responsibility to satisfactorily manage the risks to their staff and contractors involved in bringing the release under control.

HSE’s investigation into the gas release continues. Inspectors have made a number of visits to the Elgin complex and the Rowan Viking drilling rig. As part of the investigation, inspectors have been taking statements and acquiring physical, computer and documentary evidence both onshore and offshore. HSE’s investigation will determine what happened, why it happened, what the lessons are and whether regulatory enforcement action is appropriate.