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**Young People's Attitudes to Health and
Safety at Work**

HSL/2002/19

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HSE have commissioned this study to look into the attitudes of health and safety among young people between the ages of 16 and 22 years. The objective of the study was to provide ideas on what techniques work best for this age group in terms of communicating health and safety messages.

A pilot focus group was initially conducted at a college of further education. This was then followed by two further focus groups at an agricultural college and a university. The research was completed with individual interviews at an agricultural college, a youth club, a construction college, a further education college with construction students, and a university with students studying for degrees with health and safety components.

Objectives

The main objective of this study was to assess how young people perceive health and safety, and their experiences of it in the workplace. This objective was met by asking the young people questions on the following issues:

- risk assessments
- health and safety training
- reporting of accidents at work
- their awareness of health and safety legislation and publications
- particular people who have influenced their attitudes to health and safety
- ways to promote health and safety and increase awareness of it

Findings

- None of the young people in the study were taught about health and safety in school. In addition to teaching basic health and safety at schools, road shows or seminars for schools and youth clubs could be introduced as ways of communicating health and safety messages.
- Young people identify with modern techniques and approaches. More effort needs to be made to introduce interactive training packages when teaching health and safety.
- HSE could appeal to young people by introducing a colourful logo or mascot to associate with health and safety. This will reflect modern trends for the use of logos and brand names in advertising, marketing, and society in general.
- None of the young people were aware of any health and safety leaflets issued by HSE. HSE need to introduce guidance which is targeted specifically to young people with bigger pictures, diagrams and greater use of colour. The guidance could also have distinctive logos or mascots.

- Internet-based health and safety activities should be introduced into the classroom. This would encourage interactive health and safety training in schools and move away from the traditional didactic methods of teaching.
- All of the young people were aware of government campaigns and adverts which use 'shock tactics'. HSE could use such government campaigns to make young people more aware of health and safety.
- Using media such as the radio, posters or free newspapers is a good way of communicating messages to young people. The effects of radio advertising and posters should be particularly investigated as a method of making young people more aware of health and safety issues.
- Most of the young people believed HSE should use celebrities to promote health and safety campaigns. However, if celebrities are to be used, HSE would need to give careful consideration to issues such as the 'status' of the celebrity, their relevance to the particular industry and the age of the young people they are targeting.
- A recurring theme from the interviews and focus groups with agricultural students was the current financial difficulties in the industry. HSE need to take these difficulties into account when attempting to make young people in the agriculture industry more aware of health and safety.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

Definitions of the term ‘work’ vary between cultures and across time but Warr (1996) states that most often they ‘*contain the assertion that work is an activity directed to valued goals beyond enjoyment of the activity itself*’ (p5). Furthermore, he adds that paid work is a source of social cohesion and material welfare which is necessary for the physical and psychological health of individuals.

There has been an increasing number of changes to the nature of work and working practices. These include an increase in employment in the service sector as opposed to agricultural and manufacturing industries; more people working part time than ever before; the need for irregular working hours - particularly with today’s ‘24 hour’ society; and more small businesses than ever before.

Work is now an integral part of many people’s lives and is increasingly being undertaken by young people. Indeed, Wegman and Davis (1999) point out that in the past young people worked unpaid to help support the family, but, today, they work to earn money for their own spending with only a small percentage contributing to the family’s income. This is supported by Loughlin and Barling (2001) who state that young workers are typically between 15 and 24 years of age and are employed in the paid labour force.

The changes to the nature of work and working practices, coupled with the increase in young people at work, have led to HSE wishing to explore how young people receive health and safety messages and their experiences of health and safety in the workplace. Thus, HSE approached the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) with a request for research into young people and their attitudes to health and safety.

HSE’s publication ‘Young People at Work: A Guide for Employees’ makes the following definitions and distinctions:

- a **young person / young people** is anyone under the age of eighteen
- a **child** is anyone who has not reached ‘minimum school leaving age’ (MSLA)¹
- a **young worker** is below eighteen years of age and above the MSLA

However, for the purposes of this report the term young people, or young person as appropriate, will be used to describe all people under the age of 21. Thus, in this report the term young person will encapsulate all of the above three definitions.

¹ MSLA is defined as the last Friday in June of the school year during which a child reaches the age of 16.

1.2. STUDY DESIGN

After initial discussions between the two parties, it was decided that the work would be conducted in two stages: an initial literature review (Sreenivasan 2001) followed by the research into young people and health and safety in the workplace. The literature review looked at why young people are at greater risk of injury, examined models of behaviour and risk perception, training and education, and provided details of health and safety programmes overseas. As well as providing information on the area of young people and health and safety, the findings of the review determined the issues to be examined in the research.

The research itself involved a combination of focus groups and interviews with a wide range of young people between the ages of 15 and 22 years. An initial pilot focus group was conducted followed by two focus groups and individual interviews with the young people. The pilot focus group enabled HSL to determine whether the objectives of the study were being met by the research. In the event, changes were made to the question schedule as a result of the data gained from the pilot focus group.

1.3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

After providing details of the methodology, this report will discuss the results and provide a summary of the main themes which emerged. A detailed breakdown of the results is provided in the annex.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 STUDY DESIGN

After discussions between HSE and HSL, it was decided that a pilot focus group would initially be conducted at a Further Education college. After analysing the results of the data from this pilot focus group, HSL and HSE decided to conduct two further focus groups and five sets of interviews. On the basis of the results from the pilot focus group, the question schedule was amended to remove questions which provided similar answers, and rephrase questions which caused confusion. The question schedule used for the interviews was the same as that used for the focus group with minor changes being made to reflect the fact that it was an individual interview rather than a focus group.

2.2 DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS

A number of colleges, universities and clubs were contacted by the researcher and asked whether they would be willing to participate in the research. Initial contact was made with either health and safety officers or managers, and they were then explained the details of the research and sent a letter. In addition to explaining the aims of the research again, the letter confirmed that the young people would be paid £10 for participating in the research. This payment was to encourage participation and to thank them for their time. Most of the health and safety officers/managers contacted were agreeable to participate in the research and were willing to recruit young people for the focus groups or interviews. There were a total of fifty young people who participated in the research. This included all the focus groups and all the interviews.

2.2.1 Pilot focus group

The pilot focus group was conducted at a college of further education by two researchers from HSL. Eight people attended the group between the ages of 16 and 19 years. Four members of the group worked in an office, two of the group were hairdressers, one was an electrician, and one was a chef. All eight participants were apprentices.

2.2.2 Focus groups

Two focus groups were conducted at an agricultural college and a university by two researchers from HSL. The agricultural college involved seven young people between the ages of 16 and 19 years. All seven participants worked part time in agriculture. The university focus group was attended by eight young people between the ages of 18 and 21 years who had experience of working in retail, catering, manufacturing, and office environments.

2.2.3 Interviews

Although six young people had been requested from all the colleges, universities, and clubs, for various reasons only five young people were available at three of the sets of interviews. Thus, 27 interviews were conducted at three colleges, one university, and one youth club by the researcher.

The first set of interviews was conducted at an agricultural college with six young people between the ages of 17 and 19 years. All six participants had worked full time on a farm as part of a work placement from college the year before.

The second set of interviews was conducted with five university students of civil engineering and environmental sciences. It was confirmed by the health and safety officer that health and safety was an important component in the syllabuses for these courses. The students were between the ages of 20 and 22 years. All five participants had experience of working in areas such as construction, catering, and retail. One of the participants had worked as an environmental assistant as part of a work placement from university the year before.

The third set of interviews was conducted with five young people from an Afro-Caribbean community centre's youth club. The young people were between 15 and 19 years. Four of them attended school while the 19 year old had left school. Two of them had experience of working (catering and bar work) while three had not worked. Interviewing young people who had no experience of work enabled HSL to determine attitudes to health and safety among young people who have had no experience of work.

The participants from the youth club were not paid for participating in the interviews. This was decided on the advice of the youth club co-ordinator who stated that the young people are frequently visited by researchers and other professionals to explore their attitudes. The co-ordinator also believed that it would be a constructive activity for them since they would otherwise have been playing games and socialising amongst themselves. Thus, in the circumstances the researcher and the co-ordinator agreed that payment was not necessary.

The fourth set of interviews was conducted at a college of further education with five engineering and construction students. The students were between the ages of 17 and 19 years and all had experience of working. One of the participants was a refugee from Kosovo and had only been in England for three years. He had received schooling in Kosovo until he was 11 years old, but, because of the war, did not receive any further schooling until he came to England at 15 years old. Although the questions about the teaching of health and safety at school did not apply to him, the other questions were applicable because he had worked on a construction site in England.

The final set of interviews was conducted at another college of further education with six young people between the ages of 17 and 18 years. All six participants worked as bricklayers at construction sites for three days a week and attended the college for two days a week.

2.3 CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

All focus groups and interviews were conducted at the college, university, or club with the prior agreement of the health and safety officer or manager as appropriate. At the start of the

interview, the young person was informed of the study, its objectives and the confidential nature of the interview. They were then asked whether they objected to a tape recorder being used to support the notes being taken. It was reiterated that the interview was confidential and that it was only being recorded to assist in the analysis of their responses. The exception to this was the interviews with the youth club where the researcher decided that the use of the tape recorder would not be appropriate due to most of the participants being under 16 years. Where used, all the participants agreed to the use of the tape recorder.

The interviewees were presented with the questions in the order they appeared in the interview schedule and their responses were noted down in addition to being recorded. At the end of the interview, they were given the opportunity to ask any questions if they had any and they were thanked for their co-operation.

2.4 ANALYSIS

Notes and tape recordings from all the focus groups and interviews were analysed qualitatively by the researcher. This entailed analysing the data to see if any trends or patterns emerged. These trends are then illustrated by reporting verbatim quotes in the report. The analysis of the data included the pilot focus group in addition to the other focus groups and interviews.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A discussion of the main themes that emerged in the results is presented here. A detailed breakdown of the responses to each interview/focus group question is provided in the annex and includes tables and verbatim quotes.

3.1 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

3.1.1 Age of participants

Most of the participants were evenly spread between 16 and 20 years of age. The exceptions were three 15 year olds, three 21 year olds, and one 22 year old. The majority of the participants were male.

3.1.2 Industry worked in

The industries the young people worked in varied, but most of them were in either agriculture or construction / engineering. There were three participants who were still at school and did not have any experience of working.

3.1.3 Type of work

The experiences of work were predominantly from either part time / summer jobs or placement / apprentice schemes.

3.1.4 Length of time working

The length of time working was evenly spread across the range. However, taking into account their age, a large number of the young people had been working for long periods of time. This is explained by the students from agricultural colleges who start working on farms when very young, and by the university students who had experience of working to help fund them through their studies over a period of years.

3.1.5 Work for other firms

Most of the young people had worked for more than one firm. This reflects studies which have shown that young people frequently move in and out of the labour market, changing jobs and work schedules as they respond to changes in employers' needs, labour market conditions, and circumstances in their own lives (Sreenivasan, 2001).

3.1.6 Number of people employed at workplace

The number of people employed at the young people's workplaces were at extremes. The majority worked with either five or fewer people, or over 50 other people.

3.2 HEALTH AND SAFETY AND TRAINING

3.2.1 When you hear the phrase ‘health and safety’, what is the first thing that comes into your head?

When asked to mention the first thing that comes into their mind when hearing ‘health and safety’, most of the young people referred to either rules and regulations or safety and well being. This suggests they are aware of the concept of health and safety in the work place and the need to abide by health and safety regulations. However, it does not necessarily indicate that they follow the rules and regulations.

Interestingly, the young people who did not have experience of work mentioned general health and safety issues such as cleanliness and hygiene. This indicates health and safety issues specific to the workplace are learnt from experience of working and not from the education system.

3.2.2 Were you taught about health and safety at school?

The above point is further corroborated by the fact that none of the young people were taught at school about health and safety issues specific to the workplace. If health and safety was taught, it related to issues such as first aid, fire drills, and the need to take precautions and use personal protective equipment in science lessons.

3.2.3 Should a similar approach to the way you were taught be used with all young people?

In contrast to the way they had been taught, most of the young people believed that health and safety should be taught in schools, since this would make things easier for them when they enter the workplace. However, there were some young people who believed health and safety should only be taught when starting work because it is job specific, and not necessary for all jobs. It could be argued that this reflects naivety and arrogance, since although the level of health and safety may vary between jobs, it is nevertheless an integral part of all work.

3.2.4 Have you received any training on health and safety, apart from at school?

All of the young people who had experience of work had received health and safety training either from their college/university or from their place of work. Four of the young people mentioned that they had been taught basic health and safety through activities in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, the Girl Guides, and the Boy Scouts. Although such schemes may be seen as unfashionable by the young people of today, they are very useful sources of health and safety messages information.

Interestingly, almost all of the young people who worked in agriculture and construction claimed the training they received was informal, with the emphasis placed on getting the young people into the workplace rather than ensuring they were sufficiently trained. This echoes Pitham (2000) who states that the provision of health and safety training among smaller companies tends to be informal, and left to colleagues of the young person, rather than formal structured training courses conducted by training providers.

Most of the young people felt the health and safety training they received was good. Those who felt it was bad pointed to it being common sense and tedious. A very valid point was made by one of the construction students who said although he was taught about health and safety in college, he was less likely to put it into practice at work because of time pressures and peer pressure from his colleagues.

3.2.5 Interactive training packages

Almost all of the young people believed using interactive training packages would be a good way of learning about health and safety rather than the traditional didactic methods of teaching. Some of the young people said that although the concept of interactive training is good, there is the caveat that not everyone will have access to, or be interested in, computers. Another valid point brought up was that people are unlikely to use the Internet or CD-ROMs that they have been given unless they actually want to look up something on health and safety.

An interesting point that emerged from the discussions on interactive training was the need for the training materials to be modern with a couple of young people bemoaning the use of old videos and old books. This reflects the fact that young people are more likely to identify with modern techniques and packages rather than old materials with outdated music, old fashioned trends, and old technology.

3.3 COMMUNICATIONS

3.3.1 Who has made you take the most notice of health and safety?

The majority of the young people stated that their tutors at college/university had made them take the most notice of health and safety. Managers at work and parents were also mentioned. Reflecting the popular belief in the arrogance of youth, and young people's notions of immortality, two of the young people claimed that they had learnt about health and safety by themselves and not from anyone else.

3.3.2 Who do you think should teach the basics of health and safety?

Almost all of the young people believed the basics of health and safety should be taught at a young age by teachers in schools or by a combination of teachers and parents.

3.3.3 Are you aware of any HSE leaflets or books?

None of the young people were aware of any HSE health and safety leaflets. This is not surprising since the only two documents available aimed at young people's health and safety are not actually targeted to the young people themselves, but to employers and work experience organisers. See Appendix for details of the two documents.

3.3.4 Do you think more health and safety leaflets for yourselves is a good idea?

Almost all of the young people went on to add that leaflets specifically aimed at them would be a good idea. Those young people who believed leaflets are good believed they should be designed so they have bigger pictures, more diagrams, and greater use of colour. A good point raised by one of the young people was the use of colourful logos to attract people.

Those who disagreed with the use of leaflets pointed to the problems of getting young people to read things they are not interested in. They believed the leaflets would just be put to one side without being read.

3.3.5 Would you prefer other methods of getting the information?

Most of the young people stated that they would prefer other methods of getting health and safety information from sources such as posters, the Internet, videos and computer games. Three of the young people (two of whom were from the youth club), believed there should be seminars and road-shows in clubs and schools to increase young people's awareness of health and safety.

The young people who were sceptical of other methods pointed to the fact that not everyone has access to a computer and that people would not use the Internet to look up health and safety information. This corresponds with the young people who said earlier that interactive training is a good notion but has certain caveats.

3.3.6 Do you think it would be a good idea to use young people who have had accidents at work pass on health and safety messages?

Most of the participants agreed with the Canadian technique of using young people who have had accidents at work going into schools to make people more aware of health and safety (see Young, 1998). It was believed that this would make young people realize they are not invincible and that they can become injured if they are not aware of health and safety issues.

The young people who were sceptical of these tactics stated that it would not work because the impact would be forgotten after a week, and because it may emotionally affect young people. The moral issues of using such tactics was also brought up by one young person.

3.4 REPORTING OF ACCIDENTS AT WORK

3.4.1 Have you ever had an accident at work?

Four of the young people had had accidents at work ranging from falling through scaffold boards, to having nails torn off by grinding machines. Of the four, three reported their accidents. The young person who did not, went back to work after being treated at the hospital. The rest of the young people were generally split between those who had not had accidents, and those who had had minor accidents.

3.4.2 If you have not had an accident, would you know what to do if you did?

Most of the young people who had not had accidents, or who had had minor accidents knew what the procedures were if they were to have an accident. The exception to this was the university focus group where the common response was that they were not aware of an accident book.

3.4.3 Have you ever been in an unsafe or risky situation?

The young people who had been in unsafe situations were predominantly from the agriculture and construction sectors. The attitude was that although the young people were aware of the hazardous nature of the situation, they 'got on with the job' because that was what was expected of them.

3.4.4 Have you ever refused to do a task because you thought it was too dangerous?

The majority of the participants had not been in a position where they were required to complete a dangerous task. Those who had been in this position included two young people who refused to undertake a task because they thought it was too dangerous. On both of these instances they were not reprimanded by their manager. A point worth noting is that one of these cases involved a female refusing to carry something. It could be argued that the manager only accepted this refusal due to gender issues. Whether refusal from a male employee would lead to the same level of acceptance by the manager is an interesting point which unfortunately can not be assessed. This is illustrated by the fact that two further young people who had refused to do a task were reprimanded by their managers. The first encountered a hostile atmosphere eventually making him leave the job, while the second young person got on with the job for fear of not being paid.

One of the agricultural college students who was interviewed said that he had had an accident falling off a ladder. Although he had doubts with heights since the incident, he had never refused to go up a ladder because he felt that his doubts were a mental obstacle which had to be overcome because going up ladders was part of the job. This is a serious issue since he believes his (quite valid) concerns of going up ladders is all in his mind, consequently he carries on with the task without telling anyone about his concerns.

Another serious issue emerged with one of the young people who had been on work experience at a fast food chain. He was required to operate a cash till which he refused because he had not been trained to do so. However, he was told he had to operate the till. When he went back to school he told his teachers about the incident who then said he should have refused to do the task. As well as the issue of being forced to operate the till, there is the greater issue of his teachers only telling him he was entitled to refuse to do the task **after** the incident. If he had

been taught about health and safety, and his prerogative to refuse to do a task **before** going on work experience, the situation would not have arisen. This corresponds with what was earlier reported about the young people not being taught about health and safety when at school. Although this does not relate to health and safety, there is still the issue of the young person being put in the position of having to do something he did not want to.

3.4.5 Have you ever been asked to take a short cut?

Most of the young people had not been asked to take short cuts or break the health and safety regulations when at work. Those who had taken short cuts believed they were only committing minor offences, and that they would save time leading to the job being completed more quickly. This indicates the young people went through the process of a trade off between taking short cuts and risking injuries, with abiding by health and safety regulations but taking longer to complete the job. The fact that the young people chose to take short cuts and believed they were minor offences indicates that they perceive the risk of getting injured as relatively low. Using the mental models approach (Bostrom et al, 1992), it could be argued that the young people justify taking short cuts, because they have incorrect mental models which lead them to assuming they will not get injured.

The opinions on whether there is peer pressure to take short cuts split the young people in two groups. Generally, around half of the participants accepted that there was peer pressure, while half believed there was not. As well as peer pressure to take short cuts and work quickly, there was also an instance of 'positive' peer pressure where one of the construction students was shouted at by his colleagues when he took his hard hat off on a warm day. Cynically, it could be debated that the 'positive' peer pressure only occurred because not wearing a hard hat is one of the most conspicuous forms of breaking health and safety regulations. Construction workers who do not wear hard hats when on site can be spotted relatively easily by passers-by, and it may be that the positive peer pressure may not have occurred if the young person had taken a less conspicuous short cut.

The young people who believed there was no peer pressure referred to the fact that they could make up their own mind and would not be influenced by the actions of others. However, it is worth noting that the majority of these participants tended to be those who had little or no experience of working full time. Furthermore, a cautionary point is that all the participants in the three focus groups believed there was no peer pressure to comply with health and safety. Young people are less likely to admit to being influenced by peer pressure in a group situation than in an individual interview, and it could be argued that this has been the case with the focus groups in this study.

3.4.6 Do you think you will have an accident at work in the future?

The young people were evenly divided between those who believed they will have an accident in the future, those who were unsure, and those who did not think they will have an accident. Those who believed they will have an accident in the future tended to come from the construction and agriculture sectors and thus, they pointed to the industry they worked in as being hazardous and likely to cause accidents. Using the mental models approach, it can be seen that the young people in construction and agriculture have developed mental models which have led them to believe that their industries have a high chance of causing accidents. Although construction and agriculture may have relatively higher accident rates than other industries, by changing the young people's mental models, it may be possible to make them believe that by

complying with health and safety, they could actually reduce the chances of accidents happening.

The young people who were unsure about whether they would have an accident in the future felt that although they complied with health and safety regulations, they may still have accidents because of other external factors such as commercial pressures, and the behaviour of their colleagues which are beyond their control.

Those who believed that they would not have accidents argued that they would be careful enough and were knowledgeable enough about health and safety to avoid accidents. However, although it may be possible to minimise the number of accidents, it is a lot harder to completely eliminate all accidents. Thus, young people who believe they will not have an accident could be displaying naivety and/or may not have been fully informed of the hazards that exist in workplaces.

3.5 RISK ASSESSMENTS.

3.5.1 Do you know what a risk assessment is?

Almost all of the young people knew what a risk assessment was. The few that did not know tended to be from the same group *viz*, one of the construction colleges, the youth group and the university focus group. This indicates they had not been taught about risk assessments.

3.5.2 Has your employer told you about any risks to your health and safety as identified by the risk assessment?

The majority of the young people had not been told about risks to their health and safety as identified by the risk assessment. Those who were told by their employers stated that it tended to be informal with warnings about general risks such as avoiding certain areas and ensuring hard hats are always worn. Only three of the young people had been told about risks as identified by a risk assessment. These included wearing appropriate footwear and being warned about the specific risk of organophosphates to female farmers.

3.6 EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE AND EMPLOYERS.

3.6.1 Are you familiar with the 'young worker' web site?

All of the young people, except one, were not aware of the young worker site developed by Norwich Union and RoSPA (<http://www.youngworker.co.uk/>). The only young person who was aware of the site vaguely recalled it from an Internet search he conducted when researching an assignment on health and safety.

3.6.2 Will you use the site in future?

Most of the young people said they would be unlikely to use the site in future despite being informed of it. Eleven of the young people stated that they may use the site in the future. Seven of the young people said that it depends on factors such as whether they need it for an assignment, whether the web site was well presented, and whether they were likely to take on management responsibilities.

3.7 PROBLEMS WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES.

3.7.1 Do you think there are differences between small firms and large firms?

All of the young people, except one, stated that there was a difference between the small firms and large firms. Most of the young people believed large firms are more aware of health and safety because they are likely to have health and safety officers and are more likely than small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to have formal policies and training programmes. However, a few of the young people believed the opposite was true and that smaller firms were more aware of health and safety because the employees are seen as individuals and not as 'anonymous numbers'.

3.8 OTHER GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGNS.

3.8.1 Have you encountered other government campaigns?

All of the young people had encountered other government campaigns through television and radio adverts, leaflets, and billboard posters. The examples given were predominantly anti-smoking, drugs, and drink driving campaigns, but examples also included campaigns for the use of seat belts.

The majority of the young people stated that they attracted their attention because they were 'hard hitting' and made them think. Those young people who claimed the campaigns did not attract their attention pointed to the fact the adverts did not tell them anything new.

3.8.2 Do you think HSE should copy the above campaigns for health and safety?

Most of the young people believed HSE should copy other government campaigns by using shock tactics. They considered that these tactics would be the most effective form of conveying the dangers of not adhering to health and safety.

However, some of the young people believed the use of shock tactics was not so straightforward. They pointed to the fact that trying to shock young people into following certain behaviours does not always work. These arguments typify the wider debate in society about the use of shock tactics. With drugs campaigns in particular, research has found that shock tactics have little success in changing behaviour with many young people frequently detaching themselves from the 'sensationalist' images, or forgetting about the messages after a few days (Hammersley et al. 2002, Coogans and Watson, 1995)

3.8.3 Do you think the mass media is an effective way of getting messages through to young people?

All of the young people agreed that the mass media is an effective way of getting through to young people. One young person provided the caveat that it is only effective if used correctly: the media should not whip the public into a panic with sensationalist headlines.

Of all the forms of mass media, most of the young people referred to either the radio or television as being the most effective in conveying messages to young people. This was because they believed most young people had access to televisions and radios, and because the media of sound and vision were seen as more effective than magazines. The growing influence of radio is illustrated by the latest RAJAR (Radio Joint Audience Research) data which shows that 78% of people between 15 and 34 years of age listen to the radio every week, with the average time spent listening being 16 hours per week for each individual (RAJAR, March 2001).

In addition to TV and radio, some of the young people stated that posters at bus stops, newspapers, and magazines would be the most effective method of getting information across and provided valid reasons to prove their point such as the fact that posters are hard to miss and magazines are available to all.

3.8.4 Do you think HSE should use famous celebrities in health and safety campaigns?

Most of the young people believed HSE should use famous celebrities to promote health and safety campaigns. It was believed that the use of celebrities would enable people to remember the campaign, and that it would particularly benefit younger people. This corresponds with Bandura (1986) who argued that individuals who appear high in competence, are alleged experts, or have a celebrity status, are likely to command greater attention than those who lack these attributes.

However, some of the young people believed this approach would only work if major celebrities were used. It was felt that using minor celebrities, or celebrities unrelated to the particular industry would not be taken very seriously by the young people.

In further contrast, there were some young people who believed that celebrities should not be used, because they were unlikely to have had experience of working in their industry, and thus, were not in a position to inform them about health and safety. One of the young people mentioned that rather than use celebrities, the Canadian scheme of young people who have had accidents at work giving health and safety talks would be of greater benefit.

3.8.5 What would you do to make young people aware of health and safety?

This question gave the young people the opportunity to talk about what they would do to change current approaches to health and safety, and the most common response was to introduce health and safety at a younger age in schools. Other common responses included greater use of advertising to convey the message, and greater use of interactive teaching techniques. Other interesting points mentioned included using cartoons or comic strips for very young people and introducing health and safety awareness sessions or road shows in youth clubs or communities.

4 RECOMMENDED ACTION POINTS FOR HSE

- None of the young people in the study were taught about health and safety in school and almost all of them believed basic health and safety should be taught at a young age. In addition to teaching specific courses in basic health and safety at schools, road shows or seminars for youth clubs and schools could be introduced as ways of getting health and safety messages across.
- Young people identify with modern techniques and approaches. Out-of-date books or videos are less likely than modern approaches to communicate health and safety messages to young people. As well as not being able to take advantage of modern technological advances, out-of-date material will also contain references to trends and issues which are no longer appropriate. Almost all of the young people approved of using interactive training packages to learn about health and safety.

One of the young people suggested the concept of having a colourful logo. This is an interesting suggestion and could help young people by enabling them to associate the logo or mascot with health and safety, and its related issues. Using logos will also reflect modern trends for the use of logos and brand names in advertising, marketing, and society in general.

- None of the young people were aware of any health and safety leaflets issued by HSE. Almost all of them believed that they should have leaflets or documents targeted specifically to them and not to employers or teachers. Introducing leaflets with bigger pictures, greater use of colour and diagrams would be another way of getting health and safety messages across to young people. The leaflets could also have distinctive logos or mascots following on from the earlier point about logos.
- The Internet is one of the most popular forms of transmitting information to a wide audience. Although the young people generally thought it was a good idea to use the Internet to convey health and safety messages, concerns were raised regarding access to computers, and whether the Internet would be used to look up health and safety related topics. These issues can be overcome by introducing Internet-based health and safety activities into the classroom. As well as providing all young people access to the Internet, it will also remove the onus on the young people to look up health and safety of their own accord. Furthermore, it would ensure that the teaching of health and safety is more interactive, and away from the traditional didactic methods of teaching.
- Although there was debate about the effectiveness of government campaigns and the use of shock tactics, all of the young people had encountered the campaigns and were aware of them. Taking into account the fact that the first step to changing people's attitudes and behaviours is making them aware of the relevant issues, it could be argued that HSE could use such government campaigns to make young people more aware of health and safety.
- The young people agreed that the mass media is an effective way of getting health and safety messages across to them. Using media such as the radio, posters, or free newspapers would be a good way of making young people aware of health and safety issues. The effects of radio advertising and the use of posters should be investigated in particular since the former has been found to be the most effective form of advertising, and the visual

component of posters was believed by the young people to be a good way of conveying information.

- Most of the young people believed HSE should use celebrities to promote health and safety campaigns. Those who were unsure expressed doubts about the use of minor 'B' list celebrities, and the use of celebrities who were unconnected to the particular industry. Some of the young people believed the use of celebrities would particularly benefit younger people. This could address the latter issue since the celebrities would be promoting basic health and safety and not campaigns relating to specific industries. An alternative to using the celebrities is using animation with the voice of a celebrity.
- A recurring theme from the interviews and focus groups with agricultural students was the current financial difficulties in the industry. Adhering to health and safety means that in addition to the obvious costs associated with buying new equipment, there are also hidden costs associated with the time taken to complete work. Thus, a task which complies with health and safety procedures will generally take longer to complete than one which does not. As well as increasing the costs of conducting the work, there is also the danger of being undercut by competitors who are cheaper because they do not adhere to health and safety. These are particular issues with the agriculture industry at the moment and this is evident from the young people in the agricultural colleges who frequently stated that health and safety was not necessary, and got in the way of their work.

5 ANNEX - DETAILED RESULTS

5.1 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Eight young people studying a range of courses at a college of further education participated in the pilot focus group. The two other focus groups were made up of seven young people from an agricultural college, and eight young people studying a range of courses from a university. The interviews consisted of six young people from an agricultural college, five studying degrees involving health and safety at a university, five studying construction courses at a college, five young people from a youth club, and six brick layers studying construction two days a week at college.

Table 1 Age of interviewees

Age	Number
15	3
16	7
17	8
18	12
19	10
20	6
21	3
22	1

Table 1 shows that most of the interviewees were either 18 or 19 years old. The three 15 year old participants were from the youth club and the 22 year old participant was one of the students interviewed at the university.

Table 2 Gender of interviewees

Gender	Number
Male	37
Female	13

Table 2 shows that of the fifty young people in the study, the majority of the young people were male.

Table 3 Industry worked in.

Industry	Number
Agriculture	13
Construction/Engineering	12
Catering/Bar Work	8
Retail	6
Office	5
Other	5
None	3
Total	52

Table 3 shows that the majority of the young people worked in either agriculture or construction. The five 'other' responses included computer aided design; manufacturing; hairdressing (two); and an electrician. The total number does not add up to 50 because a number of the young people worked in more than one industry.

Table 4 Type of work undertaken

Work	Number
Part time / summer job	19
Placement / apprentices	16
Full time	8
Work experience	5
None	3
Total	51

Table 4 illustrates the type of work undertaken by the young people. The majority of them had worked in part time/summer jobs and as apprentices/placement students. The total number does not add up to 50 because a number of the young people undertook more than one type of work.

Table 5 How long have you been working?

Time	Number
Less than 1 month	3
Less than 6 months	8
Between 7 months and 12 months	2
Between 13 months and 2 years	9
Between 2 years and 5 years	6
5 years or over	14
Total	42

Table 5 shows the length of time the young people had been working.

Table 6 Have you worked for any other firm?

Other	Number
Yes	30
No	17
Total	47

Table 6 shows that most of the young people who had experience of working had worked for other firms.

Table 7 How many people are employed at your workplace?

Number of people	Number
Less than 5	16
Between 6 and 10	4
Between 11 and 25	6
Between 26 and 50	3
Over 50	10
Total	39

Table 7 shows that, in most cases, the number of people employed in the workplace was at opposite ends of the scale. Either they worked with '5 or less' other employees or they worked with 'over 50'.

5.2 HEALTH AND SAFETY AND TRAINING

5.2.1 When you hear the phrase 'health and safety', what is the first thing that comes into your head?

The most common response to this question was regulations, rules, and restrictions:

Loads of great sheets with all the health and safety rules listed on.

Regulations and things you have to go by.

Another common response was safety and well being. Interestingly, most of these references to safety and well being came from the young people who worked in, or were studying, construction:

The safety of others and myself around machines.

Knowing that you're going to be looked after when you work. Protecting the well being of yourself and others around you.

Your health and safety and that of others, just making sure that you're safe and that your colleagues are safe.

Working safely.

A couple of the young people referred to the procedures and the PPE:

What you should do before you start a task.

Hard hat, stuff like that, PPE.

One of the university students referred to the common perception of health and safety inspectors:

You do get this perception of a guy going into a take away and closing them down.

Interestingly, the members of the youth club mentioned hygiene, cooking, fire exits, cleanliness and tidiness. This reflects their naivety in the workplace since three of them were still at school and had not worked.

5.2.2 Looking back to when you were at school, were you taught anything about health and safety?

None of the young people were taught about health and safety when at school. Some of them referred to issues such as first aid and fire drills, but not health and safety at work.

No. Nothing of any importance. I don't think it ever get mentioned in school. It was like when you're doing CDT [Craft Design and Technology] maybe it was like 'don't touch this 'cos it might be hot' and that was it. There was no sort of plan or any sort of method.

No, anything I've learned is from college. I went straight into con, you know after finishing my exams I went onto site. Didn't know anything on site, it was just relying on the boss and that telling you what to do and what not to do. Then I came here [to the college] and there was more health and safety.

No. Not at all. I think the first thing I was taught about health and safety was when I worked in the pub and following certain guidelines. Then there was a lecturer that we had two weeks ago. There is obvious things that you would follow anyway but I don't think I've ever been taught on the curriculum.

Not that I can remember at school no. There should be basic training in health and safety at schools.

The way I were taught was to make sure I always go to left door if we had a fire and things like that. We have to make sure there are certain routes and certain extinguishers are for different things. So that's how I were taught ...

Some of the young people referred to being taught about precautions and the use of PPE in science lessons:

Science labs with Bunsen burners.

Not that I can remember no. I suppose in science labs we were taught to wear goggles and stuff like that but not anything specific like health and safety in industry.

Two of the young people referred to 'basic' stuff being taught just before they went on work experience. When asked what the 'basic' stuff was they said they could not remember:

It was taught a week before the work experience - it wasn't major.

Weren't too much about it really. Was told basic stuff just before work experience.

One of the young people made the very valid point that health and safety is very much a part of modern society:

Anything you go into is always health and safety these days ain't it. They don't really [teach it] much at school, safety at school, they don't really talk about it.

5.2.3 Do you think a similar approach to the way you were told should be used with all young people in general?

Most of the young people believed that, unlike their experiences, health and safety should be taught in schools:

It needs to be pointed out at school. At the moment the whole perception of health and safety is seen as somebody else's problem. If you start early it gets taken into the office - which is needed. As soon as you start doing CDT in your first year, just pointing out health and safety procedures for the use of machinery and tools and stuff. 'Cos that's the first time anybody comes into contact with it, 'cos before then you're dealing with glue and sticky back plastic!!

Definitely. 'Cos we've got lads who come for labouring on the site, they ain't been to college and they've got to learn somewhere as well don't they?

It would have made it a bit easier instead of learning it all straight at college.

One of the young people from the youth club made the very good point that, because she had not worked yet, she was not aware of what she needed to know. Despite this, she knew that she needed to be taught about health and safety:

We don't do a lot [health and safety] but we should do more. Don't know anything about it because I haven't started work yet, but I know that I need to know more.

There were a few young people who were happy with the way they were taught and felt that health and safety should not be taught at schools:

I think it shouldn't be taught on the curriculum. I think it should be taught job specific really, 'cos a lot of jobs aren't necessarily going to use health and safety.

I seem to have got by all right so far!!! I'm still here today so they must have done something right!!

5.2.4 Have you received any training on health and safety?

Apart from three of the young people from the youth club, all of the participants had received training either from college or university or from their place of work. However, almost all of the young people who worked in the agriculture and construction sectors claimed that the training they received at work was informal. This was summed up by the following succinct quotes:

It was like, come in, show you a few pictures, sign it, get out!!

But you just get sat down in an office, shown a video with all the procedures, you sign a declaration, and you walk out and you've been taught in health and safety ... !

In addition, one of the young people from the university focus group referred to the training she received when she worked at a major multinational company as a holiday job:

There was a two hour induction. They gave us a big page of text where we had to fill in the gaps, but we were told the answers! The managers read out the words and told us what the answers were. We didn't learn anything.

The only exception to the above was one young person who worked in agriculture for his father's farm. His father had had an accident at work when younger, and consequently was very cautious, ensuring everyone else was aware of health and safety.

Interestingly, four young people (one from the youth club, and three university students) mentioned being taught about basic health and safety issues in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, the Brownies, Girl Guides, and Boy Scouts respectively.

5.2.5 How did you feel about the training?

Most of the young people felt that the training that they had received was good:

What you normally do on site, you don't think twice before you actually do something

I noticed it [after the training] when I went back to site, started to realize a few problems that were on site.

It's better to prevent than to cure.

It was useful because I've knackered up my back anyway. I did it when I was young so ... Yeah, now I know how to lift things the right way for my back. Cos that's how I did it I think ...

In contrast, the young people from the focus group in the agricultural college felt that the training was bad:

It's all a bit tedious though.

Most of the time it's common sense.

Fair enough you have to tell people once, common sense things like, 'don't put a ladder against whatever' but 10 times is a bit boring.

One of the agriculture students who was interviewed believed that his training was good but was not required in agriculture:

Yeah, possibly later on in life 'cos you might go into a job where you need health and safety training and may need to put it into practice.

It is worth noting that in contrast to the agriculture focus group, the agriculture students who were interviewed were not so negative towards the training. The interviewed agriculture students accepted its benefits in teaching them about health and safety in a hazardous industry. Three of the young people claimed that everything they had been trained on was common sense:

A lot of it was basic common sense though, with working with machines.

Interestingly, one of the young people believed the main issue was that of having to transfer training to the real life situation:

But the issue is to put it into practice when you are at work. At college, you do it because the lecturers are about, and you have to do it for good marks. At work, sometimes obviously you can't do all the step by step 'cos they think 'oh he's taking too long - blah, blah, blah'. So you just sort of get on and do it. You watch out for yourself obviously, but no way near as much if you were at college doing something.

5.2.6 Do you think you need more training or have you had enough?

The young people were evenly split with this question with just as many of them believing they had had enough, as believing they needed more. Those who believed they had had enough stated:

Once you're taught about signs and stuff the rest is just common knowledge sort of thing.

Me personally, I think I've had enough. Purely for the fact that because, I've not been in any incident that involves er, I've not had an accident. I don't see it as important as maybe some people do, victims or ...

One of the young people believed he did not need the training because he knew about the dangers already:

'Cos, I'm not stupid, I know it can be dangerous and that. I'm not going to walk around risking my life 'cos it's my life at the end of the day.

Those who believed they needed more training provided the following quotes:

You could always do with training which is specific to the job.

I don't think I've had enough. There's a lot more that can be done, and that I can do, but it's just a matter of having enough time and resources.

Two of the young people mentioned the need to have refresher training but contrasted in whether they felt they needed the training or not.

Where I stand at the moment, you can never have enough. You can never be 100% safe, 100% healthy. It's got to be on the job every six months, maybe every year, just to refresh your mind. If it gets instilled every so often you'll keep remembering and you'll keep up the good practice.

I've had enough but over the years it sort of do slip away don't it. So, every now and again you need like reminding. You should know anyway, but you know, it sort of slips away. I know everyone says it's boring but at the end of the day it's still you know ...

5.2.7 If you haven't received training, have you received basic introductions to first aid and fire and evacuation procedures?

All of the young people had been taught in school about fire evacuation procedures. In addition, one had also been given demonstrations in first aid techniques when at school.

5.2.8 Interactive training packages

Almost all of the young people believed that using interactive training packages would be very good and useful to learn about health and safety:

Yeah, definitely yeah. 'Cos all we did was look at bits of paper, headlines from accidents and stuff. From newspapers and stuff. We watched really old videos from the early '80s and stuff...

Up to date technology and information will be a lot better than a video from the '80s or an old book! If you can see it or get involved with it or something ... If they've got a decision like with a virtual thing. If they're the person they can decide what to do, and then when it goes back they, they can either see themselves making mistakes or what could have happened if it was real life. It might make them think again.

... schools don't teach you much. You learn more from the Internet at home and school.

Yeah, you learn a lot from a video. It's easier than listening to a tutor rabble on. By getting a computer at least you're doing something with your hands and learning while you're doing something.

When you're young it's the hands on stuff that is more likely to grab your attention and make you remember something.

Yeah, yeah, something where we don't have to read.

If you go for your job [training] you could ask 'Do you like the Simpsons? OK, use that [The Simpsons] CD ROM'. 'Do you like Ali G? OK use that [Ali G CD ROM] ...'

Some of the young people believed that it would be good to use interactive training but provided caveats of not everyone having access to computers:

Yeah, it's a good way yeah, but you have to do it at college and not at the home 'cos not everyone can afford computers. 'Cos not everyone will check it [CD-ROMs] when they get home. When it's there, yeah, I see your point, but not when they get home. If I took a CD home, I'll probably take just one look at it and that would be it. It's probably different going into a class and someone talking to you.

Not all the people, not everyone has got computers. If you give someone a CD-ROM they'll just put it to one side and say I'll do it later. It's not actually making them learn it. It's like you said on the Internet, how many people actually look up health and safety?

You've got to be the right type of person to get on with that sort of training. You can produce any number of CD-ROMs, Internet packages, virtual reality, but if you're not aligned to that way of learning you're not going to get anything out of it. Like you can give them a huge pamphlet and some people might read, digest it and be 100% proficient but you've got to tailor it for the main bulk of the people. You can't develop a package for an individual person.

One of the young people went further to state that it would not be good because not everyone is interested in interactive training:

I think things like that are being introduced to make it trendy but it's one of those things which isn't that interesting and people overlook a lot. I don't think it would have that much of an effect. People who take notice of it are people that care anyway. And if you don't care then they won't be bothered.

This was echoed by the young people from the agricultural focus group:

I'm not sure about CD-ROMs. Especially if they're health and safety.

I don't think many people will use CD-ROMs.

They should have things at shows, you know, like 'The Yorkshire Show' [annual farming exhibition] where a lot of people will go and look at it. I'd say that would be better than a CD.

A couple of the young people believed that videos were not appropriate:

The video was OK but it wasn't brilliant 'cos all you're doing is watching a video. You can't full well train somebody to be health and safety proficient in half an hour. The video needs to go in a bit more depth.

I think actual hands on type, 'cos we did a lifting thing. You probably learn more actually doing it than just watching a video with someone going 'ooh my back's hurting'!

5.2.9 Further questions about health and safety

More than half of the young people stated that they would go to their teachers or tutors if they needed more information on health and safety. Supervisors at work, the Internet were also mentioned.

5.3 WHO HAS MADE YOU TAKE THE MOST NOTICE OF HEALTH AND SAFETY?

The majority of the young people stated that their tutors at college have made them take the most notice of health and safety. Nine said that their managers at work had made them take the most notice of health and safety. Seven young people referred to parents:

Parents, and you have to do it don't you, for your children otherwise you'd have some right accidents!

Two of the young people pointed to themselves claiming that they had learnt everything themselves. One young person said CITB booklets he had received during his training and another referred to the Duke of Edinburgh scheme he had participated in.

5.3.1 Who do you think should teach the basics of health and safety?

The majority of the young people believed that the basics should be taught by teachers at school or a combination of teachers and parents:

Teachers at schools should really do it. They're relying on colleges too much. If you leave school and get a job straight away they're not going to learn it at all are they?

Teachers mostly because that's what they are there to do. Parents also.

Other responses to this question included teaching the basics at college (post age 16 years), at work, by health and safety officials, and by people who have had experience of work:

Anybody, as long as the message gets through.

They [HSE] make the rules, they sit in the office and they make the rules, but they've never done nothing on the site. It should be somebody who's got experience of the industry who tells us rather than a shirt and tie in an office.

5.3.2 Are you aware of any health and safety leaflets or books provided by HSE?

There are only two HSE documents relating to young people, 'Young People at Work: A guide for Employers (HSG165)', and 'Managing Health and Safety on Work Experience: A guide for organisers' (HSG199), (See Appendix for documents). Although these are not directly targeted to the young people themselves, since they are the only documents available, the young people were shown the documents and asked whether they had come across them before. None of the young people were aware of either of the documents. One of them said that he may have come across the information in another form:

I might have come across the information what's in there but I haven't seen them booklets before.

5.3.3 Do you think more health and safety leaflets specifically aimed at yourselves would be a good idea?

Almost all of the young people believed that leaflets specifically aimed at them would be a good idea:

They're good because they tell people what to do.

Leaflets are the best. 'Cos you'd be able to hand them out.

Small leaflets are OK. They should be in packs with basic information and more pictures.

However, six young people believed that leaflets were not so good for getting the message across:

The problem is it's not the type of thing you go looking for either really ... we got one with tractors and we were just looking through it to see which tractors were in there!! In the lesson we watch videos which are more useful. If someone handed you a book you'd just put it down sort of thing, whereas with a video you'd sit and watch it.

I think you'd have trouble getting people to read them. Unless it's in a specific course or something like that, I just don't think people would find it interesting really. You know it's bad when it's got a contents page on it really!!

If you're reading and reading and reading, it'll just drag and drag. You'll get half way through the book and ...

No, people don't read them. We get so many of them. We wouldn't even pick them up 'cos we get so much stuff given to us.

The young people were asked what they think the leaflets should be like:

The information you put in, instead of waffle, should be just the main points, split it up so when you look at it you're not taken back. Should be more pictures, graphs, and more colour. Also making it smaller will make it less daunting.

A lot of young people don't like reading that much - it's getting that way now. I don't know, a lot of people like them cartoon captions don't they, with a bit of writing and a caption. Or maybe pictures. I don't know what's best.

Put diagrams and things, maybe even use shock treatments 'cos that always seems to work. You know show pictures of broken legs or something like that 'cos it would make people pay attention. It makes you realize what can happen.

Logos are good. They attract people especially colourful ones. Everywhere you go you see logos, I'm wearing one, you're wearing one!!

Only one of the young people believed the leaflets should not be too bright:

You could brighten it up, but if you brighten it up too much you're making it more like a magazine rather than guidelines you should adhere to. It's got to be serious so that the kids when they read them can say 'oh this is important'. But it still needs to be interesting enough to keep them entertained.

5.3.4 Would you prefer other methods of getting the information?

Most of the young people said that they would prefer other methods of receiving information. These included posters; videos and computer games:

Posters are good because they are eye catching.

We've got a poster like the one on the wall. Little posters like that are probably more useful than a book.

Posters are better than leaflets. If you have a test at work then you look over the leaflets but then you forget all about it after the test but you're more likely to remember the posters.

I think obviously visual is better than actual verbal because you start chatting to kids they think here we go again and they just switch off. If you're doing visuals they're obviously going to take it in.

It's a like a bit boring just sitting down listening or writing. If you can actually see it or do it. Videos and stuff like that. We're watching videos at the moment and they're good 'cos it shows you what can happen.

People don't always listen to teachers but it would be nice to have something different.

I think they should have little games, should have little games so if you do something wrong, like, it gets you in the neck and it kills you!! If you've got the option between games and health and safety, you'll choose the games all the time.

Seminars. Just little meetings so they go round schools and say this is health and safety just to make them aware of it. Booklets are one things but they won't be inclined to read it unless they have had something relating to it. Some spoken words so to speak ...

However there were some young people who believed that using modern methods to teach health and safety will not always work. There was particular concern over whether young people would use the Internet to look up health and safety topics:

The Internet, I don't think that many people will go on to it. What would you prefer to go onto - health and safety or 'www.persiankitty.com'?!?

Well it wouldn't for us 'cos the only communication what we've got is the telephone. We ain't got a computer at work.

The thing is with e-mail people think 'ohh I've got an e-mail' but it's just junk e-mail and you like think 'oh I'll just delete it 'cos it's rubbish'. Like little commercials on web pages. Like if there's a web page and a commercial comes up.

5.3.5 Do you think it would be a good idea to use people who have had accidents at work to help pass on health and safety messages?

Most of the young people believed that it would be a good idea to use people who have had accidents at work:

Yeah. 'Cos they've been through it. Say if there's marks on the body, what you can show to people, what's happened. How it can change your life and stuff like that from a personal ...

Yes it is a good idea, particularly to shock them and show them the point. People might think it might not happen to me but if you show them someone they know, or just someone who is there and they can physically see it...

Yes. It shows what can happen to you if you don't care. It gets the message across. If you see someone standing up in front of you who has lost a leg you're bound to take notice aren't you?

It will definitely work, it's psychological. As part of the Duke of Edinburgh scheme we had to do an area on sports and leadership. For this we had a guy in a wheelchair which was good and made you think.

Good way of doing it. I definitely agree with that. Rather than having someone who's just been sitting down in an office and thought 'oh we'll add this to health and safety'. 'Cos you really do need to experience it yourself before you realize, 'cos if someone just comes out of an office and says right "you got to do this and that" you think 'yeah, right mate! What do you know!'

One of the young people was unsure:

This is the shock factor. In a way yes, in a way no. Some kids today just don't give a flying monkeys - it's just like 'it won't happen to me'. And then there's some who will think about it and take it on board. I think it will work though, it brings people down to earth and lets them know that it can happen, and that it could be you. If you get people aware themselves they may keep themselves on top of things.

However, there were a number of young people who were sceptical of using such tactics:

It might be seen as scare mongering as something, if you bring someone and say this is what happens if you don't follow the rules it could seem like some sort of threat. You don't know how people are going to react to it, the confusion of going through adolescence and all the rest of it.

Bit of a shock factor. It would definitely get the message through but maybe just for one week only and then after that you might forget about it. I suspect it would work on some people. There's moral issues in that as well.

Yeah, that's sort of like shock tactics. I reckon it's all right after a certain age, but I think it's unnecessary to lay that on school children. I don't think it would work with young children.

Scare tactics. I don't think so, I personally don't think so. It's sort of like bullying people into something. They should have freedom, they should be able to make their own mind up without being scared into it. I think that's morally wrong as well. People have no option, they think well I don't want to end up

*like that, I might as well do it. Even if they choose to reject health and safety
it's their choice, it's their option at the end
of the day. That choice shouldn't be taken away from them.*

5.4 REPORTING OF ACCIDENTS AT WORK

5.4.1 Have you ever had an accident at work?

Almost all of the responses were split into those who had not had accidents and those who had had minor accidents such as cuts, bruises, minor burns and trips. The agriculture focus group succinctly stated why they did not report their minor incidents:

*You always think when you're getting on with it, oh it'd be alright but you
never like go and report it and then you forget all about it.*

*Not on small farms, it [accidents] might [get reported] do on bigger companies.
Small farms which your parents have ... I wouldn't think.*

Four of the young people had had accidents while at work. One agriculture student broke his arm, another fractured his finger, another fell through some scaffold boards, and the fourth had part of his nail torn off by a grinding machine. Three of the four young people reported the accident and completed accident books. However, the agriculture student who broke his arm did not report the incident:

*I broke my arm once. I just went to hospital then went back
to work again ...*

5.4.2 If you haven't had an accident at work would you know what the procedures are?

Most of the young people who had not had accidents, or who had had minor accidents knew what the procedures were and the need to complete accident books if appropriate. One of the young people concisely stated :

*At college, they let you know there **should** be an accident book,
but at work they tell you **where** it is.*

They were aware of these procedures through a combination of teaching, and being told at work. One of the young people stated he only knew what the procedures were because of an incident with his colleague.

In contrast to this, the common response from the university focus group was that they did not know where the accident book was or were not aware that it existed. However, if they did want to report an incident they would inform the manager and let him/her deal with it.

Two of the young people went on further to state that although they knew what the procedures were, whether they reported the accident depended on other factors:

Depends how it happens, if it's someone else's fault!! If it was all my fault then ...'

I only fill it in if I'm taking sick leave off because of it [the incident].

5.4.3 Have you ever been in an unsafe or risky situation?

Most of the young people had not been in unsafe or risky situations. Interestingly, the young people who had been in unsafe situations were predominantly the agriculture and construction workers.

Yes, probably a few times, on roofs and things. I was alright, I knew it was dangerous but 'cos I knew it was dangerous, I was being careful.

Yeah. Walking along trestles and well, the site's [construction site] never safe is it? Doesn't matter how many rules and regulations you're gonna have there's always dangers on a site, it's just a matter of being aware and safe yourself... but you just get on with it don't you.

Yes, quite a few times. I shouldn't really be doing it but at the end of the day it makes you work quick. We've had to work on houses where we had to walk over beams and step over them. If you fall through them, one slip and you're straight through. It was a bit risky, because I'm a bit scared of heights. I just got on with it.

Yes, I have. Mainly to do with livestock. I just got on with the job. It happens quite often and it's part and parcel of the job.

5.4.4 Have you ever refused to do a task because you thought it was too dangerous?

Two of the young people stated that they refused a task and were not reprimanded by the managers:

Yeah. I wouldn't use electrical equipment after I got a shock off it when it was raining once. He [the boss] was alright, he couldn't say anything. He just brushed it aside, I wasn't going to do it and that was it. If he wanted to do it himself he could do it.

Yes, I refused to carry something.

However, there were also two young people who refused tasks but were reprimanded by their managers:

*... we were getting some fibreglass sheets that you put in your loft insulation and stuff. I didn't have any gloves you see, I had a T-shirt on and he [the boss] told me to stuff it in the back and I was stuffing it, but it was going everywhere, it was going in my eyes. I said "look I ain't doing this" and he was just like you got to do it, this is your job. I think I just said f**k it in the end, and that was when it started - the bad atmosphere. And that was when I decided that I don't care. Once you say no to your foreman, there was a bad atmosphere from then on. It gradually grew, they started giving me bad jobs.*

I refused to go on a scaffold because we got independent scaffolders and the boss said it was alright, but there were gaps. He [the boss] just said keep the boards in and just get on it. There was no choice. If you don't get on it you don't get paid do you, so really it's ... at the end of the day you just wanna get paid.

One of the agriculture students had not refused a task but had had doubts from a previous incident:

I've never refused to do anything but I've always had doubts in my mind. Since I fell off ladder, I've never really liked heights too much, but I still go up and do it. You get the initial bit but it's coming down, I find it a bit tough. I don't say anything because I get on with the job. I can get on with it though, it don't bother me. It's just in your mind really, it's mental you just carry on with your work.

One of the young people from the youth club had been on work experience at a major multinational fast food restaurant:

During my work experience, I had to work on a cash till even though I didn't want to because I had no training. When I refused the supervisor said I had to do it and I was forced into it. Because I wasn't trained I made loads of mistakes. When I got back to school I told my teachers and they said I should have refused.

5.4.5 Have you ever been asked to take a short cut and do something that breaks the health and safety regulations?

Most of the young people claimed that they had not been asked to take short cuts. However, three young people and participants from two of the focus groups had been asked to take shortcuts:

Probably. I wouldn't risk breaking my neck as long as it was nothing too serious.

Can't say I've been told, but I probably do it myself anyway!! Probably jumped a couple of steps off a tractor ...

As long as it's nothing stupid, you know.

Yes, you do short cuts don't you. Obviously health and safety makes things longer, you know you have to prepare things, and goggles or whatever which obviously wastes time. Most of us are paid for what we do, if we have to take the long way round doing something you're obviously going to take a short cut to get it done quicker ... it's just the fact that you've gotta get it done if you want to get paid for it.

Yes. But you take it for granted when it's busy. You just think 'I've got to get it done'.

5.4.6 Is there peer pressure to not comply with health and safety?

The opinions on this question were relatively split, but most of the young people accepted that there is peer pressure:

*To an extent, when I used to work for my first firm I used to do stuff like pick up concrete and hard core - broken concrete - and I wasn't issued with gloves so I was using bare hands and it was getting ripped to f**k, you know what I mean, everywhere. And then I asked my boss for some gloves and all the other bricklayers were like 'f*****g p**y, you don't need gloves, you're a brickie, harden your hands up' and I was like for f***'s sake, I've got fresh hands I'm only 16 and they [the workers] just gave me s**t. And the boss goes 'look they're giving you s**t' so you know ... It's very hard, especially when you're 16 and you've come straight out of school, it does bug you a little bit.*

In farming yes, 'cos money's so tight at the moment and you're under a lot of stress, so I reckon some people are.

A farm that I worked on in my second year at the college was generally a bit bigger than what I work on at home. Erm, it generally has a reputation for being 'quite quick, don't waste time, get everything done and just go for it'. When I'm on the tractors it's just flat out so when I went, instead of me going steady, like you would at home or whatever, you're sort of going that little bit quickly and just hoping that something won't be coming round that corner. To keep up because you don't want to let anyone down. Just because you want to keep the job and you don't want to let anyone down you could cause more of an accident.

Some pressure, you get your hard hat off, it's really hot like, you got your hard hat on it gives you a headache and it strains your eyes. You take it off and everyone's shouting at you 'get it back on, get it back on!' It slows your work down half the time but what can you do about it?

One of the young people made the valid point that the issue with peer pressure is that young people do not know about health and safety and thus are only copying other people:

There is a bit, but the problem is people don't know about health and safety. You wouldn't knowingly flaunt the laws because, unless you know them, you're not really too fussed.

The young people who believed there was no peer pressure believed this was because they were able to make their own mind up:

I wouldn't be a sheep, no!!

Everybody has their own opinion. Some people do listen to their friends, if they're like a bit stupid ...

In contrast, the university focus group believed there was no peer pressure on them because they were in low status jobs during their holidays:

No, 'cos we're at the bottom of the scale we just have banter and tell each other in a good way.

5.4.7 Do you think you will have an accident at work in the future?

Most of the young people who believed they will have an accident pointed to the industry they worked in:

Oh definitely, you're always having little accidents and tripping. One time I am actually gonna slip over and do some serious damage. This is because of the environment [construction] and the equipment we use. You know I might smash my thumb or break my thumb with a hammer or ...

It's not an easy job to do. It's a dangerous job especially when you work on site with diggers and fork lifts and all that kind of stuff.

I think I will have a trip or fall because I'm quite clumsy. Just a minor accident.

Some places where you work, there's one place I worked you just don't feel safe doing anything really ...

The young people who were unsure felt they did work safely, but other factors such as commercial pressures and the behaviour of others may cause accidents:

I don't know. I wouldn't like to say yes, and I wouldn't like to say no. It's just how farming is at the moment. If I do something once that is risky the next time I might do it without thinking and just see it as an everyday task and one day it might ...

Hope not! I suppose anything's possible. You try to use health and safety but try and do the job quick so you're using 75% health and safety and 25% quick. Agriculture is all about time and money and you can't be spending time really nowadays.

I hope not. I'm quite safety conscious, but you never know about other people do you, so you can never tell.

The young people who thought they would not have accidents believed they would be careful and knew enough about health and safety to be safe:

I'm safe enough and careful enough on site.

I hope not. Should be able to avoid it because of what I learned at college like.

I don't normally put myself in any situations where I'm likely to get hurt basically.

Most accidents can be avoided, it's usually human error.

5.5 RISK ASSESSMENTS

5.5.1 Has your employer told you about any risks to your health and safety as identified by the risk assessment?

Most of the young people stated that their employers had not told them about any risks. On the occasions where they were told by their employers, it tended to be informal with the young person being warned about general risks with little detail:

No. He'd say watch that bar, don't walk into, or whatever, or there's a plank missing there, scaffold. He'd never go into great detail.

We are told to wear a hard hat and we are told to wear a jacket but that's about it. On your first day, here's a hard hat - put it on.

No my boss is more worried about work than doing any of that!!

Only three of the young people were formally told by their employers about risks:

*Yes, dust and noise, working from heights, falling objects.
That sort of thing, it was helpful.*

We were told to wear shoes which had toes, no sandals or trainers.

I were warned about drugs on the pig unit that lasses can't use [female agriculture student].

5.6 EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE AND EMPLOYERS

5.6.1 Are you familiar with the 'young worker' web site?

All of the young people, except one, did not know of this web site. The one exception was one of the young people from the university interviews who vaguely recalled it from an Internet search he had conducted when researching an assignment on health and safety.

5.6.2 Will you use the site in future?

Most of the young people said they would be unlikely to use the site. Eleven of them said they may use it in the future, and seven said it depends on other factors:

I might use it in the future for an assignment.

If it was well presented and attracts the attention with pictures, I might use it in the future 'cos I wanna be a chef.

If I took over the farm and had to employ people then yeah. Businesses have to send out so many workers on training courses, so I wouldn't want to end up in debt or whatever because I've not given them the right procedures.

5.7 PROBLEMS WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SMES

5.7.1 Do you think there are differences between small firms and large firms?

With one exception, all of the young people believed there was a difference between the small firms and large firms. Most of the young people believed large firms are more aware of health and safety than small firms:

Yes. Big one. Small companies don't bother with it. It's almost impossible for them to even bother with it because they haven't got the manpower and the turnover to do it. Big companies have, they

should implement it continually. They've got the clout behind them, they're in the public eye as well and they've got money. They should be able to do everything that entails working with health and safety. For a small company health and safety is something you take on board yourself, it's there and you worry about it if it happens. There may be only four or five people in the company and you look after yourself. Big companies can do it and they should.

It's not a really major difference. But small firms tend to be slacker. If you're doing a private job you wouldn't wear a hard hat. At major sites you're made to wear hard hats.

The very big farms have more health and safety, more regulations, more training. The smaller ones generally have less, cut a few more corners, depends on if they are making money or not.

In contrast, some of the young people believed the opposite was true with small firms being safer:

Probably more risk of getting injured in a big company 'cos there'll be more people and more bigger machines.

Large firms have a greater risk of harm because they are likely to have more machinery than a small firm.

All the big firms want to get it done quick don't they? And are probably cutting corners and the small firms probably more steady. Not really bothered as long as they get it done.

One young person was unsure, but still believed smaller firms are less likely to take health and safety seriously:

Yeah, small companies you do what you can to get the job done and there's not so much danger around. Big companies are probably a bit more safe, they make sure you're wearing your hand gloves, boots, coloured clothing and whatever but at the same time there's more danger there with there being machines with fork lift diggers and stuff. I think the smaller ones will take it less seriously.

5.8 OTHER GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGNS

5.8.1 Have you encountered other government campaigns?

The majority of the young people stated they had come across other campaigns which had attracted their attention. Two of the young people believed that the campaigns can attract attention but only with certain caveats:

Leaflets only if I was sat waiting for something. The ones on TV are in your face which is why they attracted my attention.

Yeah, my brother's just been caught recently [drink driving] so erm that's one of the main things. But I think the thing is you learn more about stuff like that when it affects you unfortunately.

However, there were three young people who claimed that the campaigns did not attract their attention, because it did not tell them anything new:

It was just another advert.

Yes, but the problem is people know it anyway. People choose to drink and drive.

Yes, but there was nothing I didn't already know. I don't think it really attracts your attention, because people already know about it.

5.8.2 Do you think HSE should copy the above campaigns for health and safety?

Most of the young people believed HSE should copy other government campaigns by using 'shock tactics' and hard hitting campaigns:

Makes you think oohh, that could be me, you know what I mean?

I think in society today, it's the only way it will work because pussyfooting around and being all nice has ceased working years ago.

Four of the young people believed that the use of shock tactics is not so straightforward, and that it will not necessarily always work:

Not for younger people. It works to a point for the odd one or two

Yes, but the problem is people know it anyway. People choose to drink and drive.

*I don't think it's the best way through. If people are going to take drugs, they're gonna take them whatever so ... it depends how severe it is, it all depends on the age group you are trying to aim at. A 16 year old will react differently to someone else. It's only gonna be a short term thing where you go 'oh f*****g h**l' and for the rest of the day you might be a bit weary, but after that it can't really have a long term effect. There's no real harm in trying it out, but I suppose, you think is it really worth all that taxpayers' money for a short term thing?*

Scare tactics. I don't think so, I personally don't think so. It's sort of like bullying people into something. They should have freedom, they should be able to make their own mind up without being scared into it. I think that's morally wrong as well. People have no option they think well, I don't want to end up like that I might as well do it. Even if they choose to reject health and safety it's their choice, it's their option at the end of the day. That choice shouldn't be taken away from them.

5.8.3 Do you think the mass media is an effective way of getting messages through to young people?

All the young people stated that the mass media is an effective way of getting through to them. However, one young person did mention that it is only effective if used correctly:

... as long as they don't go over the top. As long as they don't sort of like, mass hysteria type of publicity, like tabloids tend to use. Young people know roughly the risk of drink and drugs anyway, if they blow it up then you think it may have happened to this one person, but it doesn't generally happen anyway.

Most of the young people stated the television or radio was the most effective form of the mass media. However, newspapers and posters were also mentioned:

*A lot of people don't like reading do they, they'd rather just see it in picture.
Because it has pictures and sound [TV and radio] it has a bigger impact than just on a magazine.*

Radio, 'cos you can hear it in your car.

On site, the radio is always on anyway.

Yeah, radio's a good one as well. You get a lot of listeners and they always say on the radio, if you wanna advertise, best place to do it.

*I always look at the posters in bus stops. You just walk past and they're like, you look up. If you get small little squinty posters no one's going to read that.
Like on signposts, people just walk past that ...*

Probably papers and magazines because a lot of people read papers and magazines. When they're on work breaks they just have a flick through.

Everybody reads the newspaper. When you get on the bus or train everyone reads the free Metro newspaper.

5.8.4 Do you think HSE should use famous celebrities in health and safety campaigns?

Most of the young people believed it is a good idea to use celebrities to promote health and safety:

I suppose if you're gonna try and influence younger people then yes it can work. Maybe use a footballer or something like that. It would help for younger people, because they are influenced by idols and stuff like that.

Could do, more likely to pay attention to it. Like the police adverts they have at the moment, young kids look up to like pop stars and stuff.

You can use the Tweenies for the really young ones, cartoons and caricatures are very good. As you get older you use less famous people but people who have clout behind them to do health and safety.

Yeah, 'cos then it would stay in people's memories more and they might talk about the advert more. People will remember it more and probably talk about it more as well. Also people look up to celebrities and they might take more notice ...

Some of the young people stated that it will only be effective with particular celebrities:

It's a good idea if you can get the right celebrities. A David Beckham or a Michael Owen or someone. You couldn't have an Elton John or George Michael you know, not enough people would pay attention to it. It's gotta be high profile so everyone admires them and looks up to them. People have got to take them seriously, you couldn't have a Woodgate or a Bowyer or anyone, because people just don't take them seriously the way they are. The Beckhams and the Owens and Linford Christie or someone like that, just people who are respected in general.

*We used to get that for our GCSE's. We used to do GCSE bite size and they used to get people, famous people, and celebrities - B-list, C-list - to try and encourage you to do your revising and you just thought 'you t***s' and you just think what's the point cos they're not going to get an A-list celebrity. I don't know, my personal opinion I think it won't work. I think you can definitely influence the younger generation but when you get to our age you don't give a s**t about stuff like that. I suppose when you're nine or ten, you're looking up to idols and all the rest of it, you do sort of take notice. If David Beckham said do this, all the young people who are into football will think 'right I've got to do that'. But I suppose to our age group we don't really have idols any more, it sort of faded away all that stuff.*

If it's relevant. There's no point in using Sol Campbell [footballer] to promote the CDM [construction design and management] regs. You have to use well known people but at the same time they have to be relevant to the subject matter. At school level you can use famous people to put it across. At A-level age maybe start getting members of departments in or people from industry because at that point famous people don't work so well. You'll get the students questioning why they've got a footballer telling them about health and safety.

One of the young people was unsure:

Well yes and no. People may notice major celebrities don't they? I think general people in the real world who have been on the building site. But then celebrities, people take more notice don't they? Then people say, 'oh they're talking that but they've never been on site'. It's like we think as well like, men come on with suits telling us what to do and we're like 'you've never actually worked on site what would you know?'

Some of the young people believed that it would not be appropriate to use celebrities:

No, no, 'cos they ain't experienced it themselves have they? It's just the same as getting I don't know, any person off the street who hasn't been on site. They're just saying what they've been told to say. You do really need people who have been on site and have experienced it and can say 'that can happen'. On site, the main argument is he's never worked, he's never done a proper day's work in his life, you know what I mean?

Not really. You can use anybody really. Like you mentioned early on, in Canada they put people been injured, they could do that with adverts couldn't they. Show a little clip of someone who's been injured at work or something.

It could bring a lot more people to get involved, but I don't think it's relevant. If you want to know about health and safety you do it yourself you don't just do it 'cos there's some famous person doing it.

It doesn't work [the use of celebrities]. You listen to someone who knows what they're saying, and you need to respect the person you see. Maybe use another young person, but who is genuinely qualified.

No 'cos they don't know nowt about our work. They don't know about real life do they? We know more than they do. It's all scripted.

5.8.5 If you were in charge of health and safety, what would you do to make young people know about health and safety?

The most common response was to introduce health and safety at a younger age in schools:

When I injured myself I was young about 13 or 14 [years old]. If I had been taught about health and safety I would have been able to avoid it. The other thing is you're still growing at that age so it's important you look after yourself.

Make health and safety a GCSE subject.

They should start teaching it from an early age. Maybe basic skills at primary school.

More input in schools 'cos not everyone goes to college.

Start teaching from school towards the end year 10, year 11 [15, 16 years old]. They then know when they go to hit that real world, they know awareness about it a bit - even though they get more training at college. College is the main bit about it, if you've got the awareness before ...

One of the young people believed that the impetus should be on the teachers in schools:

Maybe have better training for the teachers so they can teach health and safety better in the schools.

Other common responses included more health and safety advertising, and the use of interactive teaching techniques to make young people more aware of health and safety:

Get more ads on more of the time. Either when they come back from school or college, or between films.

Advertising to catch people's eyes and get them interested, if you catch someone's eye you're more likely to get them to read it.

Those adverts for drink driving really get to you. Using them for HSE would be good.

Show videos to show that accidents can happen.

Use every media facility that you have at your disposal to get the message across. Talks in schools, talks in colleges, presentations. And for people that show a keen interest maybe courses for them to go on if they want to.

Make videos and web sites, have articles to make them more aware.

There should be more interactive programmes for young people.

A couple of young people stated that they would make the information more interesting:

Try and liven things up a bit. Especially with young people. You have to make it interesting don't you? You try and make it as interesting as you can.

Make it more enthusiastic. It does matter who's teaching you and whether they can get your attention.

In addition, a further two young people made a very interesting point about using cartoons to convey health and safety messages:

You can use cartoons and caricatures and maybe have the celebrity providing the voice-over.

You need to get health and safety across to people at a fairly young age. By incorporating cartoons and captions, it's probably better than say like a car coming with a big smash ... Maybe use them in cartoon strips for young people. If you get them started at a young age on their favourite cartoon characters or whatever it will show them to be health and safety. Cartoons give them something they are interested in and it also informs them at the same time.

A number of other interesting points were raised to this question:

Pay them for it. Pay the young people to learn and get to a certain grade 'cos it's the only way you'd get through.

Have an extra half hour of lessons in colleges on health and safety.

Maybe have a health and safety advice centre in schools and youth clubs?

Spread the message round in youth clubs and community centres.

Should get more people interested in schemes such as Duke of Edinburgh.

They should make it an option that when they leave school, and if they are going to go into agriculture, that they have a free course.

6 APPENDIX

HSE guidance shown to participants



Young people at work

a guide for employers



Managing health and safety on

WORK EXPERIENCE

A guide for organisers



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