



Partners for Better Health at Work Newsletter 2 December 2004



Welcome To Issue Two Of The Partners For Better Health At Work Newsletter

Since we last published we have launched the new Return To Work And Managing Sickness Absence guidance and the Stress Management Standards. As well as this Constructing Better Health has begun to provide a service, there have been new statistics and the Worker Safety Advisor Challenge fund second round is underway. Naturally this issue includes updates on all these projects and others. As ever we have endeavoured to include web links or contact points for each article.

You are more than welcome to extract information from the articles or distribute this newsletter to anyone you feel may have an interest in its contents. If you have any comments, suggestions or you have received this through a contact and would like to sign up, contact: Joanne Morgan at oh.strategy@hse.gsi.gov.com.

Simon Thornhill

Workers' Safety Advisers

The second round of the Worker Safety Adviser (WSA) Challenge Fund was launched on the 1st of December 2004. The fund supports innovative projects leading to the greater involvement of workers in occupational health and safety.

The aim of the fund is to inspire organisations to collaborate on projects that encourage and promote employees and their employers to work together to drive improvements in managing health and safety. The scheme focuses on small firms and organisations that lack such arrangements. Traditionally trade unions have not been strongly represented in smaller businesses and there is a need to encourage support mechanisms for workers in those businesses

Applications need to be completed and returned to Project North East (PNE) by 21 January 2005. Interested parties and potential partners can go to www.pne.org or contact Les Johnson on 0191 261 6009 for further information.

Health and safety performance indicator for SMEs

Following the Government's 2003 review of Employer's Liability Compulsory Insurance, HSE was asked to develop a tool which would enable insurers to link SME's ELCI premiums to health and safety performance.

The 'Health and Safety Performance Indicator for SMEs' was developed in association with the Association of British Insurers, the British Insurance Brokers Association and the Federation of Small Businesses. It works by asking a series of questions on key SME hazards and incident frequency. A score out of ten is calculated for each.

Businesses can use their results to measure their own performance, identify areas to improve and benchmark against others. Although users are anonymous, they may, if they wish, pass on their results to insurers and brokers; their performance could then be taken into account when insurance terms are set.

The tool is free to use. It can be found online on the 'liability insurance' pages of www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/home, along with details on how to contact us about it.

New Management Standards for work-related stress launched

The new Management Standards for Work-Related Stress were launched on the 3rd of November. These are part of a new approach to help organisations across Great Britain tackle work-related stress.

The Management Standards, toolkit and guidance will help employers and employees work together to manage sensibly the risks from work-related stress. The Management Standards are not new regulations they are clear, simple, and practical statements about good management practice, which will enable employers to gauge stress levels, identify causes and work with employees to resolve any problems.

The Standards, along with simple step by step guidance on how to use them in the workplace are now available free of charge on the HSE website at www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards.

For more information you can also email Martin Jones at martin.jones@hse.gsi.gov.uk

HSE 'Highlights' statistics for 2003/4

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) published on the 18th of November the latest statistics on workplace safety, work-related ill-health and enforcement action in Great Britain. These statistics include the latest Self-reported Work-related Illness (SWI) figures; our main source for health statistics. The overall picture for occupational health shows an improvement on last year. There are indications that we are turning the corner and have stopped the year on year rises in the main causes of ill health.

Commenting on the figures, Health and Safety Commission Chair Bill Callaghan said; "...there are welcome signs on ill health: a downturn in musculoskeletal disorders and a levelling off in the earlier rise in work-related stress. But since ill health accounts for around three-quarters of working days lost, there is still a lot of work to do. We remain committed to the Revitalising Health and Safety targets as representing the improvements we want to see. While the Commission and Executive have a pivotal role to play, we need to continue to work in partnership with others, including industry, unions and local authorities, if we are to substantially reduce the rate of workplace ill health and injuries."

The report is available to download for free at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/overall/hssh0304.pdf>.

New web pages and publications

As reported in Issue 1 **Constructing Better Health** was launched on the 22nd of October. Visit www.fitbuilder.com for more information and the latest news.

HSE's best practice approach to return to work and managing sickness absence was launched on the 27th of October. Visit www.hse.gov.uk/sicknessabsence for more information and free leaflets for employees and SME's. A managers and employers guide to sickness absence and return to work is available from HSE books (www.hsebooks.com tel.01787881165) priced at £9.95 (Reference HSG 249, ISBN 0717628825).

HSE has launched new web pages demonstrating the **Business Benefits of Health and Safety**. Visit www.hse.gov.uk/businessbenefits for more information on how H&S affects your business and case studies how others have saved money through effective H&S policies.

New guidance on manual handling lifting aids has been published and is available to download free from www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg398.pdf. The leaflet is aimed at SME's and contains case studies showing the cost effectiveness of controlling the risks from manual handling, information on the many different types of lifting and handling aids which are available, and the circumstances where they can be successfully used. Visit www.hse.gov.uk/msd for more information on musculoskeletal disorders.

Next issue due in March/April 2005