



**Partners for Better Health at Work  
Newsletter  
Issue 11 - July 2007**



**Welcome to Issue 11 of the Partners for Better Health at Work Newsletter** - In this quarter's edition I am pleased to bring you information on the new HSC Chair, a key ruling from the European Court of Justice as well as updates on Stress, MSD and Health, Work and Well-being amongst other things.

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.

**Scott Tubbritt – HSE, Health and Work Division.**

**HSC CHAIR:**

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has announced the appointment of Judith Hackitt CBE as the next Chair of the Health and Safety Commission in succession to Sir Bill Callaghan who retires from the role on 30 September.

Ms Hackitt is returning from an assignment as Director of the Chemistry for Europe project with the European Chemical Industry Council based in Brussels:

[www.dwp.gov.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases/2007/jul/hsc030-100707.asp](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases/2007/jul/hsc030-100707.asp)

**SFAIRP - So far as is reasonably practicable (SFAIRP):**

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) upheld one of the key elements of British health and safety law – the use of the key phrase “*so far as is reasonably practicable*” (SFAIRP) rejecting the European Commission’s claim that the use of “so far as is reasonably practical” does not implement the Framework clearly.

The European Commission challenged the use of the phrase because the directive, which lays down EU employers’ duties to protect the health and safety of their workers, has no such qualification. The UK robustly defended the case and today the ECJ dismissed the European Commission’s case and ordered it to pay

the UK Government’s costs. You can read the full press release at:

[www.hse.gov.uk/press/2007/c07007.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/press/2007/c07007.htm)

**STRESS:**

In 2006, HSE held **the** Healthy Workplace Solutions workshops to help tackle work-related stress in public sector organisations. By way of follow-up to the workshops, we will be holding a series of ‘one day’ masterclasses across the UK.

These will provide targeted advice on aspects of the management standards where organisations have indicated they needed further help. The first of the masterclasses was held on 3 July 2007.

For more information:

[www.hse.gov.uk/stress/news.htm#masterclasses](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/news.htm#masterclasses)

**WORKLIFE SUPPORT:**

In parallel with its Management Standards implementation activity, HSE has been working in partnership with Worklife Support (WLS), a social enterprise business. WLS's National Well-Being Programme (NWP) is an approach broadly equivalent to the Management Standards and designed specifically for schools.

Since the NWP's inception in 2000, WLS has worked with over 2,000 schools across 50 Local Authorities. HSE has let two research contracts with WLS.

One to test the effectiveness of a 'streamlined' version of the Programme in a cross-section of 400 schools drawn from eight LA's and the Independent sector.

The other to test the impact of rolling out the current NWP in a significant proportion of schools in two LA's currently untouched by that programme.

The final reports from these two research projects are due to be published in July and September respectively, and will help inform wider implementation of the standards. For more details:

[www.worklivesupport.com](http://www.worklivesupport.com)

#### **MSD:**

This year's European Week campaign (22nd-26th October 2007) '**Lighten the Load**' is dedicated to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and manual handling which remain the most common cause occupational ill health both in the UK and across Europe. Work-related MSDs affect 1.0million people in Great Britain alone each year.

During European Week, training will be given in assessing both manual handling risks – using the Manual Handling Assessment Charts (MAC) - and Upper Limb Disorder (ULD) related risks. For more details:

[www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm)

[www.2007.osha.europa.eu/about](http://www.2007.osha.europa.eu/about)

#### **HSC/E GOVERNANCE:**

Following formal consultation on the Health and Safety Commission's proposals in "A Stronger Voice for Health and Safety", the Commission has formally agreed to proceed with the merger of the Health and Safety Commission/Executive. The next stage of the project will be for our Minister to conduct a further consultation on the details of the intended changes to the HSW Act. Earliest date for changes is expected to be April 2008.

#### **Institute of Directors (IoD):**

Following evaluation of existing arrangements on director leadership, Health and Safety Commission (HSC), directed HSE to work with IoD and others to prepare new guidance for directors on their responsibilities for health and safety. Consultation on the new guidance closed 15 June.

HSC's request was made following its last consideration of the issue of director's responsibilities at its May 2006 meeting. At that meeting, the Commission underlined the importance of clear and credible guidance on directors' responsibilities for health and safety, and the need to build on

progress made since the publication of their current guidance in July 2001.

#### **SENSIBLE RISK - Myth of the month:**

HSE's on-going campaign to get the focus away from trivia and bureaucracy and on to the risks that cause real harm and suffering continues. June's myth of the month explores the suggestions that trapeze artists should wear hard hats.

For more details:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/myth/index.htm>.

#### **Health Work and Well-being (HWWB):**

Dame Carol Black, the National Director for Health and Work is to lead a comprehensive review of the health of the working age population, assessing current health levels and providing a benchmark against which to measure future workplace health improvements. The review will increase understanding of the beneficial link between work and health and help identify where the greatest improvements can be made to the health of those who are in or want to return to work.

To find out more about the review:

[www.dwp.gov.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases/2007/mar/hsc021-270307.asp](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases/2007/mar/hsc021-270307.asp)

If you have received this newsletter through a contact and would like to sign up to the regular mailing list, please send your details to:

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