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**Slips and Trips Priority Programme: Baseline
evaluation of awareness, knowledge and
attitudes held by industry to inform the Slip and
Trip Priority Programme evaluation.**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

This work forms the initial stage of an evaluation that will look at the effectiveness of the projects falling within HSC/HSE's Slip and Trip Priority Programme, in raising awareness of slip and trip issues across industry and their effectiveness in influencing employers to implement strategies to reduce slip and trip incidents.

Objectives

By consulting with key members of organizations across industry representing employers, employee and Health and Safety professionals, gain an indication of:

- The attitude and awareness of Industry to slip and trip issues
- The impact of HSE's Priority Programme on Industry's' behaviour in its approach to reducing slip and trip accidents.

Using consultation results advise the Priority Programme on Slips and Trips as to its approach to evaluating this programme.

Methodology.

A semi-structured questionnaire was constructed based on discussions with subject matter experts within HSE. Using purposive sampling, organizations and key members within those organizations, were identified to provide a broad spectrum of opinion, across industry, as to the knowledge and awareness of HSE's Slip and Trip Priority Programme. Results were thematically analysed.

Background

Recent Health and Safety Executive statistics have shown that pedestrian slipping is the single most common cause of injuries in the UK workplace (HSE, 2001). An average of 2 fatalities, over 8,500 non-fatal major injuries (30% of total) and 26,000 over 3-day work absence injuries are a result of a slip, trip or fall on the same level (20% of total). In the Local Authority enforced sector, slips and trips account for more than 42% of major injuries and 23% of over 3-day injuries to employees (HELA, 2001a). The statistics on the number of slip and trip accidents have changed little in the last 5 years, which led the Health and Safety Commission to include slips and trips as a priority area in their 'Revitalising Health and Safety' strategy (DETR, 2001). The programme requires a 10% reduction in the number of reported slip and trip accidents by 2010. In order to meet these targets the HSE enforced sector has been included in this programme in recognition of statistics that show that 75% of major slip and trip accidents occur within this sector.

In order to monitor the effectiveness and impact of the programme, data are required on knowledge, awareness, attitudes and compliance among key stakeholders, and how employers' attitudes, behaviour and actions change in response to programme activities and interventions.

Main Findings

Despite the statistics on slip and trip accidents, respondents did not believe that the Slip and Trip Priority Programme is widely known across Industry, although most professionals in health and safety are probably more aware of it through their professional bodies, e.g. IOSH, RoSPA.

The low profile which slips and trips has for the majority of industry suggests that outreach activities will be a necessary part of the Priority Programme, to both increase awareness and educate industry on slips and trips and how they can be reduced.

There are a lot of other competing issues for industry, apart from slips and trips, therefore the thrust of the Priority Programme should be aimed at those sectors within industry for which slips and trips are a more salient issue e.g. NHS, Local Authorities (both as enforcer and employer), retail, etc. but also to identify those sectors which are likely to be least influenced by competing agendas, e.g. stress.

However, 'getting the message across' by itself will not work unless there are follow up activities with organizations, including monitoring of activities and evaluation. Wherever there is uptake of the Priority Programme message by organizations, HSE must keep the initial momentum going and provide support to them.

There is also an 'open door' for HSE to work with some of the above organizations and use them as a conduit in getting the Priority Programme messages across. HSE should also make full use of the opportunities available to present slip and trip issues to organizations such as IOSH, ROSPA, TU's, FoSB and the CBI, at their conferences and branch meetings, as well as producing articles for their Journals and publications.

In putting across Priority Programme messages 'bite size chunks' may be better to capture immediate attention and interest rather than trying to get all of the message(s) over at once. Once attention has been 'grabbed' then a slow filtering of information can take place. If information is not wanted, or more is given than is wanted, and/or is untimely, then there is less likelihood of an audience for it.

Once the Slips and Trips Priority Programme Board have agreed the sector(s) to be targeted and the strategy to be employed in the intervention, then an evaluation methodology will be designed to take account of the particular characteristics of that sector and of the intervention strategy employed.

- Identify sectors where slips and trips are a major issue and where there is less competition from competing agendas.
- The emphasis of the Priority Programme should be on outreach activities, e.g. road shows, exhibitions, presentations at conferences, etc.
- A further emphasis must be on follow up and evaluation activities with organizations.
- Engage professional organizations in both health and safety and industry to further the Priority Programme messages.
- Present information on slips and trips in easily digestible formats.
- Involve Insurance companies in communicating the Slips and Trips Priority Programme.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

This work forms the initial stage of an evaluation that will look at the effectiveness of the projects falling within HSC/HSE's Slip and Trip Priority Programme, in raising awareness of slip and trip issues across industry and their effectiveness in influencing employers to implement strategies to reduce slip and trip incidents.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

By consulting with key members of organizations, representing employers, employees and Health and Safety professionals, gain an indication of:

- The attitudes and awareness of Industry to slip and trip issues
- The impact of HSE's Priority Programme on Industry's behaviour in its approach to reducing slip and trip accidents.

Using the consultation results, advise the Priority Programme on Slips and Trips as to its approach to evaluating this programme.

1.3 BACKGROUND

Recent Health and Safety Executive statistics have shown that pedestrian slipping is the single most common cause of injuries in the UK workplace (HSE, 2001). An average of 2 fatalities, over 8,500 non-fatal major injuries (30% of total) and 26,000 over 3-day work absence injuries are a result of a slip, trip or fall on the same level (20% of total). In the Local Authority enforced sector, slips and trips account for more than 42% of major injuries and 23% of over 3-day injuries to employees (HELA, 2001a). The statistics on the number of slip and trip accidents have changed little in the last 5 years, which led the Health and Safety Commission to include slips and trips as a priority area in their 'Revitalising Health and Safety' strategy (DETR, 2001). In order to monitor the effectiveness and impact of the programme, data are required on knowledge, awareness, attitudes and compliance among key stakeholders, and how employers' attitudes, behaviour and actions change in response to programme activities and interventions.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

Through Purposive Sampling (Mason 2002, Patton 2002), directors of the following organizations, CBI, TUC, Federation of Small Business, RoSPA and IOSH were identified, to reflect the state of knowledge held by British Industry in relation to health and safety and more specifically the attitudes to and awareness of, slip and trip preventative measures. In particular:

- The prominent issues surrounding slip and trip awareness;
- The best method of capturing this knowledge from their individual memberships.

Purposive Sampling, or criterion based sampling, means that participants are chosen because they have particular knowledge, pertinent to the questions to be explored. This enables a

detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes of the issues. This ensures that, all constituencies of relevance to the subject matter are covered and that within each of the key criteria, some diversity is included. This allows for the impact of the characteristics concerned to be explored. Although deliberate choices are made as to whom, or who is not, included in the sample, the process of purposive sampling requires clear objectivity to enable divergent themes to emerge. This approach also allows for economy of scale, as the views expressed by the respondents should be representative of both their organizations and their membership.

By accessing the following organizations information should be gained on both employers and professionals' attitudes to and awareness of, slip and trip issues across industry.

- The CBI should provide insight into attitudes and awareness of large, national organizations.
- The Federation of Small Businesses should do likewise for small and medium organizations.
- IOSH should give an insight into the attitudes of Health and Safety professionals working in industry on slips and trips.
- The TUC and its associated Trades Unions provide training for their members, to act on Health and Safety Committees and as Health and Safety Representatives in organizations, they should be able to provide an industry wide perspective on slip and trip issues.
- RoSPA as a body concerned with the reduction of accidents should be able to provide an overall view on attitudes to and awareness of, slip and trip issues.

The initial sample was $N = 5$. Should the results prove to be inconclusive and no, or limited, consensus found, on the issues being explored, then a further sample would be identified and this process would continue until the contribution to information from the interview process, had been exhausted, (Moser and Kaltman 1979, Ritchie et al, 2003).

A semi structured interview schedule was constructed, (see appendix 1) based on discussions with subject matter experts (Moser and Kaltman 1979), within HSE. All interviews lasted between one to one and a half hours.

1.5 RESULTS.

Results were thematically analysed, (Ritchie et al. 2003) and a summary for each organization was produced. These were themselves thematically analysed to produce one composite summary of all interview responses across the five organizations. Discussions then took place with the key stakeholders for this study, to determine the completeness of the responses, face validity, reliability and the need for further interviews to take place (Robson, 2002). The interview methodology dictates that interviews continue until there is no new information being gathered (Moser and Kaltman 1979). The key stakeholders would decide if there were any gaps in the information obtained and/or if the information obtained pointed to the need for further enquiry (Robson 2002).

Results were consistent across the participant organizations, whilst at the same time emphasising the concerns and issues relevant to their individual memberships. There was no further need to increase the sample size, as it was unlikely any further new information would materialise by doing so. Composite responses are set out under the emergent themes.

1.6 OVERALL SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

1.6.1 Knowledge/Awareness of the Priority Programme

Despite the statistics on slip and trip accidents, respondents did not believe that the Slip and Trip Priority Programme is widely known across Industry, although most professionals in health and safety are probably more aware of it through their professional bodies, e.g. IOSH, RoSPA.

The majority of respondents did not think that slips and trips are (nor should be) seen as an issue in their own right, neither did they believe that slips and trip hazard control measures are a part of management decision-making. At the unit (e.g. workplace) level slip and trip incidents are rare. This could be that they are underreported (due to an ‘embarrassment’ factor, or, {this needs to be treated with caution until further work is done on it}, there may be an element of personal responsibility attributed to such accidents by the individual, resulting in them not reporting incidents). Whichever is the case, the general perception that results (across industry) is that slip and trip accidents are rare events. This in turn results in them being given a lower priority status in terms of other accident causes, such as work-place transport.

Respondents generally believed that there was not a ready ‘market’ for slips and trips information and the ‘market’ has to be created first. One respondent talked about there having to be a ‘thirst’ for information (on any topic) before effective communication could take place.

1.6.2 Attitude of Industry to the Priority Programme

Industry balances out, in terms of cost, those incidents that are more likely to cause loss of life or serious injury compared to those incidents that are only likely to cause short-term absences e.g. slip and trips, for priority. Slips and trips are also likely to compete with other issues that arise such as stress. Workplace stress is widely publicised throughout the press and it is surrounded by publicity that indicates large payouts being awarded by the courts, if organizations fail to address the issue. Therefore, it (stress) does not need ‘selling’ to employers as an issue. Other competing issues, certainly for management, relate to proposed government legislation, e.g. the Corporate Manslaughter Bill. Such issues as the latter will occur from time to time and will tend to take precedence, in the mind of management, over the more mundane issues (perceived), such as slips and trips.

The overall impression, gained from respondents, is that because of the short term nature of the majority of slip and trip accidents e.g. a couple of weeks off work, industry does not associate them with the long term ‘costs’ to individuals general health over time, nor to the costs to society, NHS etc. of deteriorating health e.g. arthritis, past working age.

1.6.3 Small Businesses

For Small Businesses health and safety per se is an issue but because they normally do not plan for more than a year or so ahead, the short-term outlook of such businesses mean they are

looking for a more generalised Health and Safety ‘package’, that will address their health and safety concerns ‘now’. The majority are unlikely to respond to specific issues of Health and Safety e.g. slips and trips because of limited resources.

The perception of all respondents is that slips and trips have become a mundane and boring issue for most employers, *‘Everyone knows that the answer is good housekeeping’*. If slips and trips are to gain a priority status within industry it will need to be re packaged.

1.6.4 Communication Strategy/Awareness Raising

In terms of communicating the Slips and Trips Priority Programme respondents suggested television and local radio campaigns, but with examples linked specifically to the workplace i.e. not to household or street/public incidents, to raise public awareness. Some respondents would also positively welcome speakers at branch meeting from HSE Inspectors.

Respondents did not see a uniform, cross-industry wide campaign as being effective. Instead, suggestions were that sectors in which slip and trip incidents are a major concern should be identified and targeted, especially where there is less likelihood of ‘contamination’ from other Priority Programme/health and safety agendas, e.g. stress.

From past campaigns some respondents noted that it could take several years before any effects arising from any campaign would be noted. It was also noted that that there would be a need for continual follow up to assess progress and to maintain momentum for such campaigns. Even after this time, the likelihood would be that only a percentage of those targeted would have taken any action, a further percentage would be in the process (or still thinking about taking action), whilst the remainder would have done nothing.

1.6.5 Evaluation Strategy

Amalgamating the views of the respondents a strategy for evaluating the Slip and Trip Priority Programme initiatives can be proposed within the prevailing health and safety climate.

- Identify those sectors for which slip and trip accidents are a major issue having none or few competing agendas.
- Identify and target companies within those sectors for a communication strategy.
- Record contact details of all companies targeted and alert contacts to future follow up.
- Follow up, at regular intervals progress for each company. Nil returns would indicate no progress.
- Assess slip and trip and general accident/incident rates for all targeted companies when identified for the communication strategy.
- Re-assess accident/incident data over a two-year period.

This strategy allows the targeted organizations to ‘self-select’ their own groups, e.g. those who do something and those who don’t. A control group could be comprised of organizations in the same sector, deliberately not targeted for the communication strategy but followed up as to the plans they have put into place to reduce/control slips and trips. Differences in accident/incident rates over time may show the effectiveness of the Priority Programme strategy. However, as some of the respondents of this study, would argue the fact that some organizations take on board the messages of the Priority Programme and take action to implement them, this itself

would indicate positive success for the Programme even though accident figures were not immediately influenced.

1.6.6 Wider Evaluation

To widen the evaluation further, other sectors could be used where it is known that there are competing health and safety agendas and organizations targeted within these sectors, following the same strategy as above. A control group could be identified following the above strategy. By comparing the results across all sectors this would give a broader picture of the effectiveness of the communication strategy. However, because the results from the organizations in the wider evaluation may be influenced by other competing agendas, the overall objective of the Slip and Trip Priority Programme may not be influenced greatly by involving them. An effect on the response to the Slip and Trip Priority Programme, due to the influence of other competing agendas, however, may be determinable.

1.6.7 Decision Making Processes

Using this strategy will not be informative as to why decisions were made by organizations to act, or not to act, on the Priority Programme message(s), to determine the decision-making processes involved would require a further study.

1.7 CONCLUSIONS

The low profile which slips and trips has for the majority of industry suggests that outreach activities will be a necessary part of the Priority Programme, to both increase awareness and educate industry on the issues of slips and trips and how they can be reduced.

There are a lot of competing other issues for industry, apart from slips and trips, therefore the thrust of the Priority Programme should be aimed at those sectors within industry for which slips and trips are a more salient issue e.g. NHS, Local Authorities (both as enforcer and employer), retail, etc. but also to identify those sectors which are likely to be least influenced by competing agendas, e.g. stress.

However, 'getting the message across' by itself will not work unless there are follow up activities with organizations, including monitoring of activities and evaluation. Wherever there is uptake of the Priority Programme message by organizations, HSE must keep the initial momentum going and provide support to them.

There is also an 'open door' for HSE to work with some of the above organizations and use them as a conduit in getting the Priority Programme messages across.

HSE should also make full use of the opportunities available to present slip and trip issues to organizations such as IOSH, ROSPA, TU's, FoSB and the CBI, at their conferences and branch meetings, as well as producing articles for their Journals and publications.

In putting across Priority Programme messages 'bite size chunks' may be better to capture immediate attention and interest rather than trying to get all of the message(s) over at once. Once attention has been 'grabbed' then a slow filtering of information can take place. If information is not wanted, or is more than is wanted, and/or is untimely, then there is less likelihood of an audience for it.

O'Hara (2000), noted that, whereas mail-shot information from commercial organizations advertising health and safety products and services was, for the most part, distrusted and ignored, HSE information was regarded as more trustworthy. However, there was a reluctance to approach HSE in case it led to an inspection visit. She further noted that informal sources of information e.g. trade publications; word of mouth, use of friends etc. were seen as important.

Once the Slips and Trips Priority Programme Board have agreed the sector(s) to be targeted and the strategy to be employed in the intervention, then an evaluation methodology will be designed to take account of the particular characteristics of that sector and of the intervention strategy employed.

1.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify sectors where slips and trips are a major issue and where there is less competition from competing agendas.
- The emphasis of the Priority Programme should be on outreach activities, e.g. road shows, exhibitions, presentations at conferences.
- A further emphasis must be on follow up and evaluation activities with organizations.
- Engage professional organizations in both health and safety and industry to further the Priority Programme messages.
- Present information on slips and trips in easily digestible formats.
- Involve Insurance companies communicating the Slips and Trips Priority Programme.

2 APPENDICES

2.1 APPENDIX 1

2.1.1 Slips and Trips Priority Programme: Baseline evaluation of awareness, knowledge and attitudes - Interview Schedule

This is the initial stage of an evaluation that will look at the effectiveness of the projects falling within HSC/HSE's Slip and Trip Priority Programme, in raising awareness of slip and trip issues across industry and their effectiveness in influencing employers to implement strategies to reduce slip and trip incidents. In order to monitor the effectiveness of the programme data are required on knowledge awareness attitudes and compliance among key stakeholders and how employer's attitudes behaviour and actions change in response to programme activities.

By consulting with key organizations, HSE wishes to gain an indication of Employers' attitudes to and awareness of slip and trip issues

What is your organizations (insert name) attitude to slips and trips?

What is the attitude to slips and trips of your members?

What are employers' attitudes to slip and trip accidents?

What are employees' attitudes to slip and trip accidents?

Does your Organization run training courses on health and safety for its officers and members:

Is slip and trip prevention a	Major component
	Minor component
	Not covered on the training courses you run

In what areas/or sectors in industry is slip and trip a major cause for concern?

How has the Slip and Trip Priority Programme affected Employers attitudes?

What has been the impact of HSE's Priority Programme on employers' behaviour in their approach to reducing slip and trip accidents?

Is your Organization aware of the HSE slip and trip priority programme?

Has the existence of this programme been communicated to your membership?
(How)

Has your membership reported back on behaviour change, e.g. Increased activity to reduce slips and trips?

In your opinion, what is the best way of getting the messages of the slip and trip priority programme across to Industries?

What are the prominent issues surrounding slip and trip awareness for your membership?

What is the best method of capturing this knowledge from your individual membership?

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