

A Strategy for improving Health and Safety in Wales

This is a strategy for the co-ordinated delivery of better health and safety regulation in Wales so as to secure better compliance. The strategy has been developed to deliver in Wales the Health and Safety Commission's 2 Strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond" The collaborating partners in the development of the strategy are the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Local Authorities in Wales and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

The strategy has been developed to deliver health and safety in Wales more effectively, concentrating on priorities, risk, and poor performance to deliver tangible and sustainable outcomes. It seeks to build on the good work that has already taken place in Wales, particularly in partnership working and joint project delivery and in the development and implementation of good practice. It looks to develop health and safety practice in such a way as to ensure the delivery of interventions with successful and reproducible outcomes based upon positive and interactive engagement with businesses. Interventions will be evidence and risk based, using tried and tested techniques, but without undue caution; we will pilot and evaluate new techniques that we introduce. Interventions will be based upon positive and interactive engagement with businesses. We will identify, develop and promulgate good practice and capture this guidance.

The strategy embraces new ways of working and the removing barriers to effective partnership working and shared priorities. It will require compromise so that effective partnerships can develop. Particularly it encourages closer and more integrated work by the HSE and Local Authorities, building on and supplementing the effectiveness of each of the partners but at the same time not reducing the individual cogency of each, and using their joint resource better to maximise their impact on securing compliance and achieving positive outcomes for workplace health and safety.

The incidence of work related ill health and the number of accidents and injuries that result from work related activities are unacceptably high. The strategy recognises that for Wales to be successful economically it needs a strong and vibrant work environment. The business case for better health and safety is well established; the strategy recognises that work place accidents and ill health result in lost productions, costs to the health care sector and damage to individuals, and that having a fit, healthy and well motivated workforce benefits business. It therefore seeks to strike the right balance between the need to reduce unnecessary burdens on business and securing the health and safety of the workforce of Wales, and also those of others likely to be adversely affected by work activities. It has been informed by 'Reducing Administrative Burdens: effective inspection and enforcement' (the Hampton Review), the HSC Revitalising agenda, The HSC/E 'fit for work, fit for life, fit for tomorrow' Fit 3 Programme, the Welsh Assembly Government Health Challenge Wales, Making the Connections and Excellence Wales initiatives.

We consider that it is a strategy that will discharge the health and safety regulatory function delegated by the HSC to Local Authorities and the Health and Safety Executive in an effective, efficient and cohesive manner, raising and maintaining the standards of health, safety and welfare on the workplace to the benefit of the work force and economy of Wales.

The Health and Safety Executive and Local Authorities in Wales will reduce injuries, reduce ill health and reduce absence in the work place by:

1. (i) Providing assistance and support to businesses to help them achieve compliance
(ii) Securing compliance by the use of proportionate and targeted interventions, balancing preventative work with investigation
2. Deliver tailored interventions that address the key themes of Health Challenge Wales and thereby promote the health, safety and welfare of the workforce of Wales,
3. Promoting better compliance through the use of the right evidence based interventions
4. Concentrating on priorities, risk and poor performance,
5. Engaging with the workforce
6. Identifying, developing and promulgating an evidence base,
7. Identifying, developing and promulgating good practice in regulation and using this to drive pan-Wales projects that maximise impact
8. Making better use of campaigns and publicity
9. Engaging in partnership with carefully chosen organisations,
10. Jointly directing our resources to maximise positive impacts on health, safety welfare and benefit to business in Wales promoting encapsulation of health and safety as part of sound and cost effective business practice

11. Jointly directing our resources to maximise positive impact on the levels of knowledge and awareness of employees and the self employed ensuring high levels of individual engagement with health and safety across the employed workforce of Wales.

How will we deliver the Strategy for improving Health and Safety in Wales?

We will deliver the Health and Safety Strategy for Wales by building on the partnership working that has taken place in Wales to date and by supplementing this with new and innovative ways of working.

Specifically we will :

1. Develop and implement from April 2006 a joint agenda that will reflect and contribute to the aspirations of
 1. HSC Fit 3 Programme
 2. Health Challenge Wales
 3. Making the Connections
 4. Excellence Wales
 5. Community Strategies
2. Use our joint resources in the most effective way to reduce risk in the workplace
3. Identify and tailor interventions to address both national and local needs,
4. Deliver a targeted, consistent, transparent and proportional enforcement regime,
5. Focusing intervention and enforcement activities on priorities, risk and poor performance ,
6. Collaborate with such other organisations and agencies as shall be appropriate to develop and deliver interventions which maximise impact,
7. Develop and populate an evidence base to demonstrate the effectiveness of interventions,
8. Deliver training and developmental activities to ensure and enhance competence of practitioners,
9. Share information
10. Remove barriers that impede joint working
11. Communicate effectively horizontally and vertically and internally and externally,
12. Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, learn from failure and celebrate success,
13. Encourage support for and participation in the Corporate Health Standard amongst all sectors of industry,
14. Publish annual report, detailing what we have done and how we have done it, and the contribution we have made to achieving the aims and aspirations of the programmes highlighted at 1 above, and how we will promulgate the lessons we have learned.

We will also work jointly and separately with other organisations within Wales on national and local projects the aim of which shall be to reduce accidents, ill health and sickness absence to the benefit of business in Wales. Our culture will be one of encouragement and support for compliant businesses and intervention and remediation for the non-compliant. We share the ultimate aim of the Health and Safety Commission 'to see health and safety as a cornerstone of a civilised society and, with that, to achieve a record of workplace health and safety that leads the world'.

Specifically we will:

1. Ensure our communications with business and with employees are effective,
2. Promulgate to business the benefits of managing health and safety and sickness absences,
3. Work collaboratively with businesses,
4. Promote exemplar businesses, working with them to develop and disseminate best practice.