

Partnership on Health And Safety in Scotland

Promoting the Partnership and its messages about investing in sensible health and safety (agenda item 3.7)

Issue

1. Opportunities for members to promote the Partnership and the value of investing in sensible health and safety.

Background

2. Discussion at the last meeting on the issue of holding a second Partnership conference led to the conclusion that a better alternative to a stand alone conference was to seek opportunities for members to participate in other key events in the Scottish diary.
3. The aim is to integrate messages about the value to business and the Scottish economy of investment in health and safety into appropriate events on mainstream issues. Members were asked to identify events with the potential to receive the health and safety message and at which we might offer a speaker to promote 'sensible health and safety' and the role of the Partnership in Scotland. Annex 1 repeats agreed key messages about the Partnership itself.

Speaking/influencing engagements

4. Some examples from Stewart's and Margaret's diaries, include:
 - Healthy Working Lives National Advisory Group Meeting (14 September 2006)
 - REHIS (26 September 2006) - Health and Safety Update Course
 - Society of (Scottish LAs) Directors of Personnel (November 2006) — health and safety in a modern public sector.
 - RoSPA Scotland conference (27 September 2006) - networking for a healthier Scotland
 - Hazards campaign (16 November) – focus tba
5. Partnership members are speaking at the forthcoming Healthy Workplace Solutions workshops on managing sickness absence and reducing work-related stress.
6. In addition, it would be useful to involve Partnership members more in media activity associated with relevant campaigns, for example, the recent launch of HSE's sensible risk principles (see Annex 2).
7. At RoSPA Scotland this year, there will be several HSE speakers on a range of topics including sensible health and safety. A generic brief based on this presentation could be prepared for members of the Partnership to use on future occasions.

Opportunities

8. Events which have the potential for a speaker on the health and safety dimension are often spotted once they are advertised, and the programme already finalised, for example: Public Services Private Principles: Scotland's Public Productivity conference; Right Time? Scottish conference on the UK Welfare Reform Bill. What the Partnership needs however, is advance warning to allow time for approaches to be made to the organisers.

Events and sources of information on forthcoming events

9. Heathy Scotland convention (November 2006); STUC 2007; CBI Scotland events, Chambers of Commerce events; FSB Scotland events; SCDI events;

Mainstream policy:

Holyrood Magazine <http://www.holyrood.com/conference.asp>

H&S/technical:

Safety and Health Practitioner <http://www.shponline.co.uk/>

Business skills focus:

Scottish Enterprise http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/sedotcom_home/events.htm?Category=All&Region=All

Business Gateway <http://www.bgateway.com/bg-events>

Action

10. Members are invited to:
- discuss the suggestions in this paper;
 - put forward ideas for other opportunities;
 - provide a steer on speaking note/briefing materials that they might find helpful; and
 - suggest one or two key events for the Partnership to target over the next six months.

September 2006

Key messages about the role of the Partnership

PHASS brings together a **partnership** of representatives from the health and safety system in Scotland including devolved, reserved and local government to help **deliver higher standards of workplace health and safety in Scotland.**

This is necessary in order to consider **the Scottish context – evidence, economy, culture etc – for implementing the Health and Safety Commission’s Strategy for Workplace Health and Safety to 2010 and Beyond.**

The work of PHASS will be **steered by a committee meeting at least three times a year**, chaired by the Health and Safety Commissioner, Margaret Burns. Publicising its membership and whom they represent will be important.

Ideas and suggestions for **priorities in Scotland are decided against the evidence and HSC’s Strategy** – already the product of wide consultation.

Action will be implemented using the expertise and resources of the whole health and safety system in Scotland including the business community, trade unions, occupational health and safety professionals and practitioners, Scottish government departments, local authorities and HSE. The media are also part of that system.

SCO/018/06

23 August 2006

“GET A LIFE”, SAYS HSC

The Health and Safety Commission (HSC) has urged people to focus on real risks – those that cause real harm and suffering – and stop concentrating effort on trivial risks and petty health and safety. To help take this forward the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has launched a set of key principles: practical actions that we believe sensible risk management should, and should not, be about. The principles can be found at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/sensible.htm>.

Stewart Campbell, HSE Director for Scotland said: “I’m tired of hearing that ‘health and safety’ is stopping people doing everyday activities when at the same time others are suffering real harm and even death as a result of mismanagement at work.

“Some of the ‘health and safety’ stories are just myths. There are also some instances where health and safety is used as an excuse to justify unpopular decisions such as closing facilities or stopping services. But behind many of the stories, there is at least a grain of truth – someone has made an irrational decision. My question is that if you’re claiming that health and safety is stopping everyday activities – is it because of a real risk, or is it for different reason nothing to do with preventing injury or ill health?”

Ian Tasker, STUC Health and Safety Officer and member of the Partnership on Health and Safety in Scotland said: "Our health and safety system in Britain has developed over the years built on identification of hazards and controlling subsequent risks. Unfortunately, in recent years this system has been undermined by a growing number of ridiculous cases that HSE have had to waste already stretched resources dealing with.

"The perception that there is a growing threat of litigation from unscrupulous claims companies – though not actually true – means that many employers and local authorities have tended to be more risk averse to the detriment of many in society who can no longer enjoy the activities they used to.

"The STUC welcomes these principles. Trade union health and safety representatives will continue to work with employers using the principles of risk

management to ensure our members are protected and, as far as possible, other parties affected by their operations do not suffer".

CBI Scotland's Professor Russel Griggs, added:

"Employers should be free to get on with the job of managing those risks that have the potential to cost their business and society dear, rather than being diverted by overbearing bureaucracy. Scottish businesses will welcome the new principles for their common sense approach, and for helping to kick start a national debate on society's approach to risk. The acid test of course will be how these principles are put into practice in the workplace."

Both organisations are members of the Partnership on Safety and Health in Scotland.

Sensible risk management **IS** about:

- Ensuring that workers and the public are properly protected;
- Providing overall benefit to society by balancing benefits and risks, with a focus on reducing real risks – both those which arise more often and those with serious consequences;
- Enabling innovation and learning, not stifling them;
- Ensuring that those who create risks manage them responsibly and understand that failure to manage real risks responsibly is likely to lead to robust action; and
- Enabling individuals to understand that as well as the right to protection, they also have to exercise responsibility.

Sensible risk management **IS NOT** about:

- Creating a totally risk free society;
- Generating useless paperwork mountains;
- Scaring people by exaggerating or publicising trivial risks;
- Stopping important recreational and learning activities for individuals where the risks are managed; and
- Reducing protection of people from risks that cause real harm and suffering

Stewart Campbell added: "We are already taking action to put the principles into practice; last month HSE published new, straight-talking guidance on risk management, but we cannot do this alone. That's why I welcome the support from members of the Partnership for this initiative.

“These principles will help drum home the message that health and safety is not about form-filling, back-covering, or stifling initiative. It’s about recognising real risks and tackling them in a sensible way. It’s about keeping people safe – not stopping their lives.”

Notes to Editors

- 1) *Five Steps to Risk Assessment* and example risk assessments can be found on the risk management web pages on the HSE website at: www.hse.gov.uk/risk The pages are written in everyday language for managers, not health and safety experts and include links to more information and a section for frequently asked questions.
- 2) In 2005/06 in Scotland, 32 workers were killed, and 14 members of the public. Across GB, this period also saw 35 million working lost days overall (1.5 days per worker), 28 million due to work-related ill health and 7 million due to workplace injury. Further information on HSE statistics can be found at: www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/index.htm
- 3) The Partnership on Health and Safety in Scotland brings together businesses, trade unions, UK, Scottish and local government, the Health & Safety Executive and health and safety professionals to help implement HSC’s GB-wide strategy to improve workplace health and safety. It aims to prioritise action in the context of Scotland’s evidence on health and safety, the Scottish economy, industry and culture.
- 4) HSC has overall responsibility for occupational health and safety regulations in Great Britain. The commission consists of 10 people nominated by bodies with an interest in workplace health and safety. They are sponsored by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The DWP minister for occupational health and safety is Lord Hunt of Kings Heath.

The HSE and Local Authorities are the enforcing authorities that work in support of the Commission. HSE looks after health and safety in nuclear installations, mines, factories, farms, hospitals and schools, offshore gas and oil installations, the safety of the gas grid and the movement of dangerous goods and substances, and many other aspects of the protection of workers and the public.

Public enquiries

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Information about HSE in Scotland may be found at www.hse.gov.uk/scotland
