

Local Authorities and HSE Working Together



The HSC has set a new strategic direction for the health and safety system in Great Britain. The HSE and LAs are HSC's enforcing authorities. The new HSC strategy envisages a significant change in how HSE and LAs work together. The HSC has asked HSE and LAs to establish a Strategic Programme, that will over the next 15-18 months develop and deliver the detailed arrangements for working together in an effective partnership.

The Programme will contribute to HSC's vision of gaining recognition of health and safety as a cornerstone of a civilised society. The principal aim of the Programme is a more effective use of HSE and LA resources collectively, in reducing accidents and ill-health at work. This will contribute to initiatives for regeneration, health and well-being in local communities and thereby enhance employment and business viability.

Vision

The Programme vision is of LAs and HSE working jointly and in partnership, locally, regionally and nationally, to a common set of goals and standards, committed to focusing resources on agreed health and safety priorities. The aim is to minimise harm to those in the workplace or those affected by workplace activities, and contribute to the health and well-being of local communities.

The Programme will develop and maintain structures within HSE and local government to facilitate closer working between HSC, HSE and LAs. It will establish an infrastructure across Great Britain between HSE and LAs that will seek to ensure partnership working:

- Is embedded within the enforcing authorities' cultures
- Reflects the equivalent status of LAs and HSE as enforcing authorities
- Makes the best use of joint resources
- Reflects the priorities of LAs and devolved administrations within the overall context of the HSC strategy
- Is supported by sharing of information and expertise
- Has clear and effective communication tools and systems.

The Programme must raise the public and political profile of health and safety so that it is recognised as a vital component of worker and public protection which significantly contributes to local community health and well-being.

Statement of Intent

A joint statement of intent, agreed by HSC, HSE and local authority representative bodies in July 2004, sets out the high-level commitments which provide the framework of objectives for the Strategic Programme and achievement of the vision (see overleaf)

Local Endorsement of Statement of Intent

We endorse this Statement of Intent and are committed to working in a closer partnership so as to tackle national, regional and local priorities for health and safety at work.

.....
Signed for
Local Authority
Date:

.....
Signed for
Health and Safety Executive
Date:

Statement of Intent

The HSC, LGA, WLGA, COSLA, LACORS and HSE recognise the importance of making sensible health and safety a cornerstone of a civilised society. We also recognise the need to raise the public and political profile of health and safety so that it is seen as a vital component of worker and public protection and an intrinsic part of community health and well-being. To achieve these aims and to improve health and safety in Great Britain, we need to change attitudes and cultures and work together – and with others – in closer partnership.

We endorse this Statement of Intent for the 'Local Authorities and HSE Working Together' Strategic Programme. We believe that it provides a sound framework for a joint programme of work between local authorities and HSE towards achieving a record of workplace health and safety in Great Britain that leads the world.

We are committed to:

1 Developing an effective and coherent partnership between HSE and LAs, based on the principle of making the best use of their respective strengths, and applying collective resources in the best way to tackle national, regional and local priorities for health and safety.

There is no lasting logic to the current division of enforcement responsibility between HSE and LAs and their ways of working, which do not capture the full potential of HSE and LAs to work together. HSE and LAs will work in a closer partnership based on a mutual understanding of their respective strengths and the value of local and central interventions. Joint working will reflect the HSC's overall strategy and contribute to relevant local strategic objectives such as those for healthy communities.

As a start, to exemplify this new partnership approach, HSE and LAs will build on and publicise current examples of best practice.

2 A joint approach to developing the arrangements to deliver these commitments.

The HSC will engage LA elected members with the Programme and aim to secure their support for its strategic objectives for health and safety.

The Programme will be overseen by a Steering Group that has members from HSC and elected member nominees from the LA Associations of England, Wales and Scotland. A joint HSE and LA board (officials and officers) will lead the detailed work and the Programme team will be jointly staffed. The input of HSE and LA staff to the Programme is essential to developing practical proposals which meet national, regional and local needs.

3 Improving communication between HSC, HSE and LAs to ensure, in particular, that LAs and their representative organisations are adequately involved in the development of policy advice to the HSC, and in the planning and delivery of the operational activities which carry them into effect.

This will require a change of attitudes and culture to ensure that LAs are able to effectively contribute in a timely manner and their interests are seen as an important and necessary consideration in HSC's and HSE's work.

4 Providing information, guidance and support to enforcing authorities equitably.

We are aiming to move quickly to better ways of sharing the guidance that supports the day-to-day work of enforcing authorities and their staff. We will also develop systems for sharing training and information, and for access to expertise and specialist resources.

5 Examining and adapting as necessary the institutions and legal framework which currently underpin the relationship between HSC, HSE and LAs.

We will revisit the effectiveness and value of all our supporting institutions to ensure that they are fit for purpose to deliver our new aspirations, including completion of the current review of the HSE/LA Enforcement Liaison Committee (HELA). In particular we need to consider how we can deliver effective governance of the partnership at local and regional level, with the support of LAs' elected members. HSE will aim to put in place a locally-based framework of support staff and other necessary resources for the partnership, and to review the role of HSE's existing Enforcement Liaison Officer network.

We also recognise that the Enforcing Authority Regulations may need to be amended or replaced in order to support new ways of working. But our approach will be first to determine how the partnership can best work, and only then to see what changes are needed to the legal framework to enable this to happen.

6 Developing arrangements for monitoring and auditing the work of the enforcing authorities which properly reflect the status of HSE and LAs as partners.

We wish to see arrangements for overseeing the performance of HSE and LAs which are applied equitably to the work of both partners in the new relationship. In taking this forward we will seek and take account of the views of the Audit Commission and other central and devolved government interests in accountability.

7 Contributing effectively to current and future initiatives to improve the consistency and coordination of central and devolved government requirements which impact on regulatory services, in the context of expectations, priorities, minimum standards, monitoring and intervention.

We are committed to working with others to ensure a joined-up approach that helps to support the enforcing authorities and their drive for improvement. The aim is to promote a consistent approach by different government departments that have an interest in LAs and their responsibilities for delivering regulatory services.

We will follow the principles established in accordance with the Enforcement Concordat and which are reflected in HSC's Enforcement Policy Statement.