



Home Office

BUILDING A SAFE, JUST
AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

Revitalising Health & Safety

The Health & Safety Strategy of the National Probation Service

2003 – 2006



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE

for England and Wales

Enforcement, rehabilitation and public protection

“Health and safety and a good working environment really do matter to staff. I wish the conference every success.”

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of the letters 'H' and 'B' followed by a flourish.

Hilary Benn

INTRODUCTION

by the Director General of the National Probation Service



The *Revitalising Health and Safety* initiative was launched by the Deputy Prime Minister to inject new impetus into the health and safety agenda 25 years after the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. At the heart of the Strategy Statement are the first ever targets for Great Britain's health and safety system:

- To reduce the number of working days lost per 100,000 workers from work-related injury and ill health by 30% by 2010;
- To reduce the incidence rate of fatal and major injury accidents by 10% by 2010;
- To reduce the incidence rate of cases of work related ill health by 20% by 2010;
- To achieve half the improvement under each target by 2004.

The Thematic Review of Local Area Health and Safety Management was commissioned by the National Probation Directorate to identify the level of compliance of the NPS with health and safety legislation and with the Government's 'Revitalising Health and Safety Strategy'. It was anticipated that the review would also identify evidence of good practice and Areas who were working towards a positive health and safety culture.

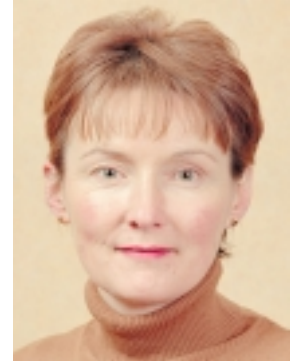
A positive health and safety culture and compliance with health and safety legislation is in line with the first of our core values as identified within 'A New Choreography' – Valuing NPS staff and partnership colleagues – recognising them as the organisations greatest asset. To demonstrate our commitment to our staff and partners we must be able to demonstrate that we are protecting their health and safety.

The NPD is committed to the provision of a consistent approach to health and safety across the NPS. We want to develop the good practice that already exists in some Areas and share that

with Areas that need our support. To achieve our objective of being an excellent organisation as measured by the European Excellence Model by 2006 consistently applying good health and safety practice across the organisation is crucial. The results of the review have provided us with some exciting challenges which are an opportunity to implement positive changes across the Service. The people management strategy 'Achieving through People' is the framework for this health and safety strategy. My Strategic Board and I are fully committed to improving the health and safety of all those employed in the NPS and that of our partners. We support the strategy and action plan and commend it to you as an opportunity for continuous improvement. It will contribute to ensuring that we are an employer of choice, that recognises and values staff as it's key resource, and takes an active and continuing responsibility for service users, visitors and to the public at large.

Eithne Wallis

REVITALISING HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE



The 1980s and 1990s have been characterised by significant health and safety legislative activity, much of which has been driven by the European Union. The challenge is to convert legal standards into real changes in culture and behaviour in the workplace, since only this can deliver continuous improvements in standards. We must be alert to new areas of risk and be ready to develop strategies to tackle these.

Health and safety cannot be viewed in isolation. People management issues, such as stress, change and violence, continue to pose a threat to the effectiveness of the modern workplace. This action plan is part of a package of programmes that demonstrates our commitment to employee care. The people management strategy of the National Probation Service 'Achieving Through People' launched last year includes specific objectives for health and safety and occupational health.

HR Policy and Practice:

Objective 2

To undertake and implement the findings of the national audit of the National Probation Service into corporate occupational Health and Safety

Objective 3

To provide through the NPS' Health and Safety Forum and the NPS' Health and Safety Practitioners Group H&S information that will stimulate discussion, inform policy, develop best practice, contribute to the reduction of workplace accidents and the delivery of the Government's Health and Safety strategy

Objective 6

To research on the current access to occupational health facilities across the NPS and to develop a best practice model, reviewing the benefits of local versus national funding

Key to delivering health and safety in the workplace is effective engagement of the workforce themselves; that in turn means effective representation of the workforce in decisions relating to the safety regime. The NPD attaches great importance to the role played by safety representative in securing good standards of health and safety. It has been identified that... "Workplaces with trades union safety representatives and joint health and safety committees have significantly better accident records – over 50% fewer injuries – than those with no consultation mechanism." (Revitalising Health and Safety, Strategy Statement, June 2000. Page 29) The NPD attaches great importance to promoting partnership on health and safety issues, recognising that co-operation on health and safety can provide the building blocks for co-operation on other matters.

The actions outlined in this document form the basis of a Health and Safety management System. This will provide local managers with the 'tool kit' required to manage health and safety within their Area. The action plan is three years in duration and details of phase one are contained in this document. The action plan is front loaded so that legal compliance issues are prioritised. The Health and Safety Executive have considered our action plan and their priorities are contained in phase one. The actions will be addressed, wherever possible, in working groups containing all the key stakeholders including representatives from the PBA, Area staff, Unions and partnership agencies.

Much has already been achieved. A National Health and Safety Forum has been created and meets quarterly. An Occupational Health and Safety Group has also been established to ensure that local area practitioners are kept abreast of developments. I am very grateful to areas that make their staff available to attend these groups and look forward to your continued support to turn our strategy into action.

Julia Evans

Strategic Head Human Resources
National Probation Directorate

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ACTION PLAN OF THE NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE (2003-2006)

Five-point Strategy Statement

(i) Health and safety systems must not only prevent work-related harm but also promote better working environments characterised by motivated workers and competent managers. Educating employers and staff in good practice will contribute towards a reduction in health and safety failures.

(ii) Occupational Health will be a top priority. The NPS recognises that work makes an important contribution to the health of its employees. The work environment should be used to promote positive health messages. An effective occupational health service will promote good health as well as helping the organisation to cope with the consequences of ill health.

(iii) Health and safety must be fully integrated into general management systems cultivating the culture of self-regulation. We will promote the business case for effective health and safety management.

(iv) Partnership on health and safety issues is crucial. Partnership between the NPD, Local Area Boards, Local Area staff and the Unions will enable us to have an innovative response to the challenges presented by the changing world of work.

(v) As part of Government we are committed to lead by example. We must demonstrate best practice in health and safety management and procurement and promote best practice right through the supply chain.

Action Plan

Phase 1 (April 2003-December 2004)

The policies and practices that we adopt affect the lives of all our staff and the performance of the Service. If we are to truly aspire to being an excellent organisation, that achieves our statutory aims, we need to adopt and adapt national and international good practice health and safety management to meet the needs of the National Probation Service. Whilst acknowledging and considering local differences to meet the needs of local accountability we need effective and detailed national standards that are open to scrutiny and evaluation. (HR Policy and Practice, 'Achieving Through People' Page 11)

Objective Ensure the appointment of 'in house' Health and Safety Competent Persons in each Area and/or provide financial assistance for relevant training, where required

1

Objective Introduce a national accident/incident recording and reporting system to ensure we have national data creating a benchmark to monitor improvements against

2

Objective Develop and deliver a Board/Senior Management briefing

3

Objective To encourage greater prominence for health and safety at board level including the recommendation that every Area Health and Safety Committee has an identified Board Member and Senior Manager as members of it

4

Objective Provide a national Health and Safety Policy defining the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of all staff and the arrangements for complying with legislative requirements

8

Objective Develop a system to ensure that asbestos in the estate is managed appropriately

5

Objective Develop a national Health and Safety risk assessment pro forma

9

Objective Proactively manage, monitor and audit the health and safety aspects of the NPS Estate

6

Objective Develop a national Manual Handling risk assessment pro forma

10

Objective Conduct an Occupational Health audit across all 42 Areas to identify the current level of occupational health provision and identify the most effective method of service delivery

7

Objective Develop a national Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) risk assessment pro forma

11

Phase 2 (January 2005-December 2005)

Proposals to include:

A national health and a safety inspection checklist; a set of generic risk assessments identifying minimum safety standards for probation work activities; generic health and safety risk assessments for Community Punishment projects; health and safety briefing to be included in induction programmes; allocation of funding to health and safety by Areas to be subject to review; the inclusion of health and safety in annual reports; ensuring the provision of occupational health services are consistent, meet the needs of the organisation and are accessible to all staff; adequate first aid provision is made and that records of training are kept; workstation assessments are conducted and levels of health and safety training for all staff will be identified nationally for implementation locally.

Phase 3 (January 2006-December 2006)

Proposals to include:

Contract specifications to make explicit reference to health and safety requirements wherever appropriate; review of the level of OH Provision across the NPS; provision of some generic COSHH assessments for commonly used hazardous substances throughout probation; provision of some generic guidance for compliance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, particularly in relation to portable electrical appliances; identification of national guidelines for safety in probation offices; provision of some generic Manual Handling assessments for common hazardous manual handling tasks; contingency plans for Approved Premises to be developed and arrangements for improving support from Areas and NPD to be considered.

Delivering the strategy – ‘Revitalising Health and Safety’

This strategy and action plan is unambiguously about recognising staff as our key resource and demonstrating this through the provision of a robust and consistent approach to health and safety across the NPS.

Each of the objectives in the action plan will be managed through the National Health and Safety Forum and will be delivered through short life working groups that will include all key stakeholders.

The strategy can only be delivered through close partnership working between Areas, PBA, Unions and NPD, acknowledging the role of Areas as employers.

Wherever appropriate we will involve partners from partnership agencies or other supply partners.

