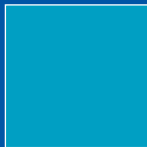




Corporate Plan

2005 - 2008



hseni
CONTROLLING RISK TOGETHER



2

We are pleased to present HSENI's third Corporate Plan. The Plan comes at a time of great change in the shape of public administration in Northern Ireland. It comes at a time when public bodies like HSENI, who are involved in the delivery of front line services, are rightly being asked to be more accountable, more responsive and more effective.

We believe that HSENI is well placed to meet these challenges given its pre-eminent role as the regional health and safety authority for Northern Ireland. That said, HSENI is not complacent about what it needs to do.

HSENI for its part will continue to provide a service that meets real rather than perceived need. Central to the Plan is a desire to ensure that scarce resources are effectively used on those activities that have the greatest impact. This means more resources aimed proactively at work sectors that have a poor health and safety record and less on those where the risks are well managed or are of low significance. It means beginning to actively recognise good performance. It also means becoming more responsive and accessible to small and start-up businesses that need most help and support. HSENI will also resist being drawn into specific areas of public safety that are already well regulated by others. HSENI will also strive to act professionally in all that it does and thereby instil confidence in the citizen that HSENI is independent in action and authoritative in standing.

In taking forward these strategic programmes HSENI will be:

- developing further HSENI's regional based compliance team approach to focus attention on high risk work sectors by making more use of targeted inspection programmes and health and safety awareness events;
- creating an environment in which a culture of recognition of excellence in health and safety can be nurtured. This will grow out of the work already begun to transpose the United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Voluntary Protection Program to Ireland. HSENI will also explore the possibility of introducing a prestigious health and safety business award;
- expanding its business friendly Small Business Advisory Service to meet the well recognised needs of this important segment of the Northern Ireland economy;
- opening up a dialogue with a range of other regulatory authorities to ensure that HSENI is not inappropriately involved in health and safety incidents that they are better able to deal with, thus avoiding overlap and duplication;
- ensuring that access to appropriate and understandable health and safety information is made easier for everyone by exploring opportunities for community-based portals.

HSENI will also maintain its strong commitment to the implementation of Northern Ireland's long-term and crosscutting workplace health strategy *Working for Health*. Implementation will flow from the three year *Working for Health* Action Plan published in October 2004.

We believe this Plan aligns well with government policy regarding the delivery of public services. It will, we believe, also make a significant contribution to the achievement of the Economic Vision which sees Northern Ireland as a *high value-added, highly skilled, innovative and enterprising economy which enables us to compete globally leading to greater wealth-creation and better employment opportunities for all*, given the strong economic and business case for managing health and safety risks effectively.

In moving the Plan forward little will be achieved unless HSENI can work in partnership with those who can influence their constituencies to effect change. Partnership working is at the very heart of HSENI with the social partnership make-up of its Board. It is against this background that HSENI will continue to develop and maintain effective working partnerships with, amongst others, our co-enforcers the Northern Ireland District Councils, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and employer representative bodies.

Underpinning the Plan will be HSENI's firm commitment to ensuring that our equality obligations are met in full. HSENI will also be diligent in ensuring that it moves to fully meet the recommendations of the Review of Criminal Justice and any future scrutiny by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate. HSENI also welcomes Government's commitment to reform the law on corporate manslaughter and to introduce proposals for the removal of Crown immunity and greater penalties for health and safety offences.

Health and safety at work issues are global issues and as such HSENI needs to ensure that it keeps abreast of developments nationally and internationally. To that end, HSENI will maintain its close ties with the Health and Safety Commission and Executive in Great Britain and the Health and Safety Authority in the Republic of Ireland. In addition, HSENI will continue to work with the European Commission's occupational safety and health structures and OSHA in the United States.

We earnestly believe that HSENI has in this Plan set itself a real challenge but one that, with the ongoing commitment of our Board and staff, we can overcome, thereby allowing us to go on to achieve our objectives and targets. Much has yet to be done but rest assured that the work of HSENI over the lifetime of the Plan will be characterised by its guiding tenets of recognising the best, challenging the worst and supporting the weakest.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter McKie".

Peter McKie CBE
Chairman



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Keyes".

Jim Keyes
Chief Executive



HSENI as the regional health and safety authority in Northern Ireland works closely with its sister authorities in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. Through this invaluable interchange HSENI is able to ground its ideas and benchmark its actions.

It is against this background that this Plan has emerged with its shape and the scope greatly influenced by the following strategic, policy and operational considerations.

Priorities and Budget 2004–2006

HSENI wishes to play its part in helping deliver the Government's vision for Northern Ireland. In doing so it will strive to improve its services, be responsive to real not perceived need and continue to put in place innovative approaches to service delivery that allow for greater responsiveness and flexibility as well as operational productivity. HSENI will continue to provide the leadership necessary to implement Northern Ireland's workplace health strategy *Working for Health* and thereby tackle key health issues and health inequalities in a workplace setting. Furthermore, HSENI will contribute to improvements in the overall economic and social well being of the working population of Northern Ireland by driving down rates of workplace illness and injury and concomitant with this reducing the annual cost of health and safety management failures which currently stands at £500 million per year.

Economic Vision

HSENI will contribute to the achievement of the Economic Vision for Northern Ireland by bringing forward a range of interventions aimed at reducing the costs, including the insurance premium costs, experienced by businesses as a result of health and safety failures by encouraging the adoption of effective health and safety risk

management strategies. It will also, through the implementation of the long term and cross cutting workplace health strategy *Working for Health*, ensure that the skills base is not further eroded by reducing the risk of people leaving the labour market due to work-related illness and providing effective rehabilitation to ensure that people who do become ill can return to work as soon as possible.

Review of Public Administration

Streamlining the delivery of public services in Northern Ireland lies at the heart of the ongoing Review of Public Administration (RPA). Whilst structural change is inevitable, the top priority has to be the ability to deliver high quality public services. Such a goal resonates well with HSENI, which is already Northern Ireland's regional health and safety authority. As such it is the authoritative body on workplace health and safety and one that instils confidence in the citizen. Tailoring its services to meet real as opposed to perceived need has been at the heart of HSENI's approach to service delivery. HSENI's ability to be responsive to need has been greatly enhanced by the fact that it functions with all the checks and balances of democratic oversight and accountability as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). It engages fully in policy development, strategic planning and standard setting for Northern Ireland, which feed off and feed into the delivery of regional services. Thus HSENI is confident that it more than meets the criteria of a regional authority as spelt out in the RPA model.

Social Economy

The social economy is a wide and diverse sector which has been operating and developing over a number of years in Northern Ireland with a strong tradition of supporting local communities. There are many types of social economy enterprises and

examples would be community businesses, credit unions and co-operative societies, housing associations and local enterprise agencies.

The sector is an integral and vital element of the NI economy. However, it is widely recognised both within and outside central Government, that a more integrated approach to the sector's development is needed to promote increased awareness of its value and its potential for development and further growth. Accordingly, Government has developed a Three-Year Strategic Plan (2004/07) to ensure a more integrated approach to the social economy in order to maximise its contribution to the NI economy. The Plan embraces three strategic objectives; provides a framework for action for 2004/05 by individual Departments/Agencies; and details how Departments will work together in partnership with the sector in pursuit of the strategic objectives which are:

- to increase awareness of the sector and establish its value to the local economy;
- to develop the sector and increase its business strength; and
- to create a supportive, enabling environment.

HSENI is fully committed to the strategy and its objectives. In responding to them HSENI will provide support and assistance to social economy enterprises. HSENI's support to the sector will mainly be in the form of specially tailored information and advice from HSENI's recently established Small Business Advisory Service.

Criminal Justice Review

The Criminal Justice Review Group was set up in June 1998 under the Good Friday Agreement and tasked with undertaking a wide-ranging review of criminal justice. It reported in March 2000, making nearly 300 recommendations for change across the criminal justice system. On the foot of this, the Government published a Criminal Justice Review

Implementation Plan in June 2003, which set out the progress that had been made in implementing the recommendations made by the Criminal Justice Review Group, together with detailed plans and timescales for the continuing implementation process.

Many of the recommendations relate to the prosecution service and involve restructuring and extending the remit of the existing Department of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). Indeed, the Justice (NI) Act 2002 makes provision for a single fully independent prosecution service (the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland) responsible for undertaking all criminal prosecutions instituted on behalf of the police but also allows that it may conduct criminal prosecutions in any other case where it appears appropriate to do so. The phased implementation of the new Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland is scheduled for completion by December 2006.

HSENI is of the view that, in relation to its prosecution work, it should move to focus on delivering a highly proficient and professional investigation service and in turn passing all cases warranting prosecution to the Public Prosecution Service. This approach is on all fours with the views expressed in the Criminal Justice Review, which sees a clear distinction between the investigator and the prosecutor. HSENI will continue to work closely with the DPP's office and the Departmental Solicitors' office to ensure its role is fully consistent with the review recommendations.

Also under the Justice (NI) Act 2002, the Government appointed a Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland in June 2003 to assist in the establishment of a new independent Criminal Justice Inspectorate (CJI) for Northern Ireland. This Chief Inspector is responsible for inspecting or ensuring the inspection of all aspects of the criminal justice system, other than the courts. HSENI is one of the

organisations specifically within the remit of this new Inspectorate. As such HSENI looks forward to co-operating fully with the CJI and to playing its part in ensuring a criminal justice system in Northern Ireland that is effective, transparent, accountable, responsive and progressive.

Investing for Health

The health of the people of Northern Ireland remains one of the overarching priorities for Government and without question workplaces have an important role to play in contributing to the overall health of our community.

This is clearly recognised in the public health strategy, Investing for Health, which identified the workplace as a priority setting for tackling health issues and health inequalities.

Working for Health, which was published in April 2003, is a long-term and crosscutting workplace health strategy, which fully complements the public health strategy and provides for the delivery of a holistic, innovative and practical approach to enable the development of "a work culture that protects, promotes and supports health and wellbeing".

Today, more than ever before in the world of work, our people are our key asset and their skills and knowledge our most important raw materials. HSENI, through the Workplace Health Strategy Implementation Group, will work to ensure that the skills base of our productive workforce is not further eroded by reducing the risk of people leaving the labour market due to work-related illness and providing effective rehabilitation to ensure that people who do become ill can return to work as soon as possible.

Working for Health is primarily intended to tackle the major causes of workplace ill health, such as musculoskeletal disorders, work-related stress, noise induced hearing loss, occupational asthma, dermatitis and asbestos related diseases.

However, Investing for Health embraces other initiatives, including the five year Tobacco Action Plan and the Drug and Alcohol Strategies, which also have relevance to the workplace. Indeed, issues such as passive smoking and the misuse of drugs and alcohol still present significant challenges for many of our workplaces.

E-Government

Modernising Government and E-Government – A Strategic Framework for Public Services in the Information Age established the Government's commitment to modernising public services through radical change and, in particular, exploiting the opportunities presented by technology.

The OnlineNI Strategy, "A Vision for 21st Century Government for Northern Ireland", sets a vision for e-Government in Northern Ireland in which the relationship between Government, the citizen and business is transformed to one where customer choice, service accessibility, responsiveness and social inclusion will be the key drivers for the provision of Government services. Services will be joined up, easy to use and convenient to access. In March 2004, DETI published its revised e-Business Strategy, which, in addition to setting out how it would achieve the delivery of 100% of its key services electronically by 2005, also indicated how the Department would continue to develop its use of electronic channels and information systems for internal and cross-Government purposes.

HSENI is fully playing its part in the delivery of this e-Business Strategy by bringing forward a new Knowledge Management System by the end of 2005. The Knowledge Management System will embrace fully the aims of e-Government both at the level of the citizen, through initiatives such as on-line/contact centre incident reporting, and at a cross-departmental level through the use of portal technology and the full utilisation of intranet and internet accessible information and information sharing.

HSENI like all public bodies is faced with making difficult choices about how it makes use of its finite resources and whilst HSENI will work hard at improving its efficiency and productivity it will not shy away from seeking additional resources if warranted. HSENI must act decisively to ensure its deployment of resources meets real need and realistic expectation and in all of this good intelligence that allows for the development of an evidence-based approach will be vital.

Prioritising Resources

Trying to do everything is no longer an option. Not only must HSENI prioritise what it will do but it must also make it clear what it is it will not be doing.

This means diverting resources to where the risk is greatest and applying a light touch where risks are well managed or are of low significance. HSENI will also resist being drawn into specific areas of public safety that are already well regulated by others. To that end HSENI will over the life of the Plan seek to put in place memoranda of understanding and agency agreements with other regulatory bodies such as Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the Civil Aviation Authority and the proposed Health and Personal Social Services Regulation and Improvement Authority for Northern Ireland.

However, it is necessary to bear in mind the highly reactive nature of much of what HSENI does. Whilst it will plan to skew time and resource to specific high-risk work activities such as construction, agriculture and quarrying, it must also be able to respond appropriately to reported workplace incidents and work-related complaints.

In this regard HSENI's success in raising awareness of health and safety, backed by a proactive and outreaching information and advisory service, brings in its wake a not

unexpected increase in customer expectation and demand.

Apart from high-risk sectoral work priorities such as agriculture, construction and quarrying, there must be added the causative priorities of:

- musculoskeletal disorders;
- work-related stress;
- asbestos;
- falls from height;
- transport in the workplace; and
- slips and trips,

which continue to be responsible for disproportionate numbers of cases of ill health and injury.

Service Delivery

As the regional authority for health and safety in Northern Ireland, HSENI, as a frontline service provider, is fully committed to the delivery of quality health and safety services that are responsive, customer focused, accessible and targeted to achieve maximum impact where it counts. HSENI has achieved a lot and is committed to doing more.

Since the establishment of HSENI in 1999, much progress has already been made in reforming those services involving promotion, communication and compliance. Since April 2004, the regional hub of services based at Ladas Drive, Belfast has now been supplemented by 3 sub-regional compliance teams who are specifically tasked with focusing on the high-risk work sectors of construction, agriculture and quarrying.

These teams concentrate on poor health and safety performers, using a variety of interventions such as focused inspection initiatives and campaign work and play a major role in the local delivery of services.

HSENI also provides a very broad range of promotional and advisory services, including:

- conferences, seminars, workshops and the very successful health and safety awareness days;
- delivery of health and safety awareness campaigns such as *Be Aware Kids*, its new Child Safety on Farms campaign; and
- the provision of relevant and appropriate information and advice through a range of channels including its free phone helpline and website.

HSENI remains committed to listening to its customers to identify what works and is most receptive to trying new and innovative approaches to achieve its objectives.

To further improve its services, HSENI will over the course of this Corporate Plan establish a call centre to provide a “one stop shop” where customers can obtain information, seek advice, report an accident or make a complaint about working conditions.

Evidence Based Policy

In its Economic Research Agenda, published in March 2003, DETI states that the collection and analysis of evidence is essential to determine the extent to which existing policy is efficient, effective, appropriately targeted and provides value for money.

Any policy that HSENI proposes or develops should, apart from being both forward and outward looking, be above all evidence based. Consequently having access to reliable and robust data is vital.

Research undertaken in 2002 by KPMG Consulting, in association with the University of Ulster and on behalf of HSENI, estimated that work-related injuries, illnesses and non-injury accidents cost the NI economy up to £500 million per year. It is important that these costs are monitored on a regular basis to establish if current and future policy on health and safety at work is effective in reducing the costs, and hence the underlying incidence of work-related injury and ill health.

HSENI also requires much better intelligence in relation to the actual incidences of work-related injury and ill health, both on a regional basis and on a sectoral basis. This would allow it to more effectively deploy and direct its own resources, and those of its co-enforcers, to meet needs where they are greatest.

Research, undertaken in conjunction with DETI, will examine the cost to the NI economy from work-related injuries, illnesses and non-injury accidents on a regular basis. Research will also examine whether it is feasible to measure reliable and accurate information about incidences of work-related injuries and illnesses/accidents on a sectoral basis. HSENI will also work alongside the Health and Safety Executive in Great Britain as it continues to develop the concept of a dedicated workplace health and safety survey and will consider how such a survey might be extended to Northern Ireland.

The previous chapter has sketched out the broad outline of how HSENI will approach its task of seeking to improve health and safety at work standards. What follows is the palette from which HSENI will draw the colours that will allow it to complete the picture of its work over the next three years.

Recognising Excellence

For too long workplace health and safety has been characterised by focusing almost exclusively on poor performance with the associated metrics of counting failures. What then of good performance? It has largely gone unrecognised. This, HSENI believes, is a mistake as it fails to feed into the health and safety at work equation examples of good practice to which others can aspire. Such beacons of health and safety excellence, although unfortunately too few in number, can be very influential in encouraging positive change in others, particularly in the supply chain.

HSENI in an attempt to redress this deficiency is piloting a recognition programme known as the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). This pilot is being taken forward in a partnership ratified in a letter of agreement signed in Dublin in June 2004 with the Republic of Ireland's Health and Safety Authority and the United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration. VPP will allow companies to prove their ability to effectively manage workplace health and safety and thereby exempt themselves from proactive inspection by the regulatory authority. In addition to this high-level recognition programme, HSENI will also continue to look at other ways to recognise good performance including the sponsorship of a health and safety at work business award.

Encouraging Worker Involvement

It is recognised that there are not enough employers who properly involve and consult their workers on health and safety, and that there are not enough workers who feel able to take on health and safety responsibilities. Workers who have a voice can make a difference. Building relationships between workers and employers based on collaboration and trust is essential if real improvements in health and safety are to be achieved.

Much has been achieved through the work of trade union safety representatives. In attempting to recognise and profile the work of safety representatives, a number of initiatives have been introduced such as the HSENI Annual Safety Representatives Award and the Safety Representative contact card scheme. Much more, however, remains to be done to improve the levels of health and safety involvement and consultation between employers and workers, particularly for non-unionised workforces.

In Great Britain a Workers' Safety Adviser scheme has been introduced and has resulted in some very effective partnerships being developed to encourage workforces to become involved and work in partnership with management.

Over the course of this Corporate Plan, HSENI will continue to work with the Trade Unions to consider ways of improving worker involvement including the piloting of a Northern Ireland Workers' Safety Adviser scheme.

Work-related Ill Health

The first *Working for Health* Action Plan, covering the period 2004-2007, was launched in October 2004. This Action Plan sets out how each of the five main elements of the *Working for Health* strategy, namely Support, Awareness, Compliance, Rehabilitation and Intelligence will be effectively pursued.

The very high sickness absence rates that presently exist in work sectors in Northern Ireland, particularly in the public sector, remain a cause for great concern. Whilst absence due to work-related ill health is but one aspect of sickness absence, it is a significant aspect and, crucially, one that can clearly be tackled. The *Working for Health* Action Plan provides for the first time a concerted and joined up way of doing this.

HSENI will continue to vigorously support the Workplace Health Strategy Implementation Group and its five Programme Action Teams to ensure the delivery of the actions set out in the Action Plan so that the workplace health needs of employers, employees and others affected by work activities are addressed in a way that is both effective and comprehensive.

Health issues of particular concern to HSENI are:

Asbestos

Asbestos is recognised as the greatest single cause of work-related deaths in Northern Ireland, resulting in approximately 90 deaths each year. Whilst there are now very stringent controls in place covering work with asbestos materials, the legacy of past exposure to this material is unfortunately predicted to run for many decades to come.

There is undoubtedly an increasing awareness of the problems associated with asbestos and consequently a growing demand for information

and reassurance. Consequently HSENI plans to establish an Asbestos Advisory Service to give even more prominence to what is a priority health issue.

This Service will not only continue to ensure compliance with the legislation covering work with asbestos containing materials, but will also engage in a more inclusive public awareness campaign aimed at bringing reassurance to the public who view such materials with great concern. The Service will also be able to provide its expertise to the voluntary and community sector to help them meet their statutory duties under the relevant legislation.

Passive Smoking

A ban on smoking in all enclosed workplaces with certain exceptions, such as those afforded to prisons, psychiatric hospitals and hotel bedrooms, came into force in the Republic of Ireland on 29 March 2004.

Also, on 10 November 2004, the Scottish Executive announced plans to introduce a ban on smoking in enclosed public places in Scotland, effective from Spring 2006.

In the UK generally, the Department of Health issued a consultation document "*Choosing Health*" on 3 March 2004 that included questions seeking views on whether to use legislative measures to make all enclosed workplaces/public places smoke free. A White Paper announcing the conclusions arising from this consultation was published on 16 November 2004, which included proposals to regulate on the issue. The details of how these proposals will be administered will be the subject of further public consultation and also parliamentary debate.

On 21 December 2004, Angela Smith, the Minister with responsibility for health, social services and public safety, launched a 20 year Regional

Strategy for Health and Social Services in Northern Ireland. The Strategy acknowledged the harm caused by tobacco and public opinion is being sought by 25 March 2005 on three options to control smoking in public places. These are:

- to encourage greater adoption of smoke-free provision through self-regulation;
- to prohibit smoking in most enclosed public places and workplaces, while still allowing smoking in some pubs and bars other than those preparing and serving food; and
- to ban smoking in all enclosed public workplaces.

In addition to this, a Five Year Tobacco Action Plan for Northern Ireland already exists. This was developed as part of the Programme for Government's *Investing for Health* strategy and was officially launched on 8 July 2003 by the Chief Medical Officer.

This Plan includes an action for HSENI and the Health Promotion Agency to *work with Trade Unions, employers' organisations, Chamber of Trade, Chambers of Commerce, local councils etc to promote the adoption of no smoking policies in the workplace.*

The latest phase of the public information campaign on tobacco, which focuses on exposure to second-hand smoke in the workplace, was launched on 5 January 2005. The NI Civil Service became smoke-free with effect from 1 January 2005 and other public and private sector organisations are considering similar approaches.

HSENI fully supports any moves that will reduce the exposure of employees and others to harmful substances in the workplace, including

environmental tobacco smoke. It will therefore continue to work with the Health Promotion Agency and others to promote the adoption of workplace-based policies aimed at prohibiting smoking.

Musculoskeletal Disorders

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) are the most common cause of occupational ill health in the UK and it is estimated that around 31,000 people are affected in Northern Ireland. MSDs are problems affecting the muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves and other soft tissue and joints. The back, neck and upper limbs are particularly at risk. MSDs can occur in a wide range of industries but the sectors most at risk include construction, health care, agriculture and meat production.

HSENI recognises that much needs to be done to bring about a significant reduction in the prevalence of MSD and it intends to undertake a dedicated campaign to address the problem. HSENI will work with other committed stakeholders to undertake a public awareness campaign aimed at raising awareness and changing attitudes on how to deal with back pain.

HSENI will seek to support this campaign with specific guidance. Its front line staff will seek to improve compliance with the law and other codes of good practice and will also seek to increase the involvement of safety representatives in achieving compliance. HSENI will also explore the use of the new Manual Handling Assessment Chart Tool (MAC Tool), which has been developed by HSE(GB), to help identify and assess hazardous manual handling activities in the workplace.

Work-Related Stress

Work-related stress is the second most commonly reported work-related condition (after musculoskeletal disorders) in the UK and affects an estimated 16,000 people in Northern Ireland. Though not an illness in itself, stress can, if prolonged, cause a range of physical and mental conditions including cardiovascular disease and depression. The impact on sickness absence is likely to be considerable as it is estimated that the average annual number of days lost for each stress case is approximately 30.

Much of the evidence relating to work-related stress demonstrates that the public sector is particularly vulnerable. In the 2001/02 Self-reported Work-related Illness survey, teaching and research professionals and health and social welfare associated professionals were amongst the occupational groupings most likely to report a problem with stress at work.

The management of work-related stress is therefore a particular challenge for the public sector. Within the Northern Ireland Civil Service a number of initiatives relating to mental well being have already taken place and a number of Departments have published guidance on stress. There is undoubtedly much scope for sharing existing examples of good practice with others.

The Health and Safety Executive in Great Britain has developed management standards relating to work-related stress, which they published in late 2004, and HSENI has followed these developments very closely.

Work-related stress has been identified as a major issue under the *Working for Health* strategy and HSENI will continue to ensure that it raises awareness of this issue as well as providing organisations with the practical tools for managing stress in the workplace effectively. In doing so, it will also be contributing to the implementation of the Mental Health Strategy and Action Plan for 2003-2008.

High Risk Work Sectors

Unfortunately construction, agriculture and quarrying continue to account for a disproportionate number of fatal accidents and major injuries.

Agriculture

Within the agricultural sector, the elderly farmer and children who live on farms are particularly vulnerable. As a consequence HSENI has embarked upon a number of initiatives aimed at the sector. One such effort is "Be Aware Kids", a child safety on farms campaign supported by the Ulster Farmers' Union and aimed at eliminating all work-related fatal accidents to children on farms. HSENI has also introduced "Health and Safety Awareness Days", a new approach that brings farmers together to learn from farming practitioners about safe ways of working.

Construction

In construction much more needs to be done to improve standards. Helping in this drive will be BUILDSAFE-NI, an initiative launched in April 2003 by Ian Pearson MP, the then Minister with dual responsibility for health and safety and the construction industry. Its key target is to reduce the number of major injury accidents to construction workers in Northern Ireland by 50% over a 5-year period. BUILDSAFE-NI operates under the auspices of the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland (CIFNI) and involves a cross cutting industry partnership bringing together representatives from Government (as clients), the industry (contractors, subcontractors and professional bodies), the Trade Unions and HSENI. A significant development within the BUILDSAFE-NI initiative has been the role played by Government procurement in influencing health and safety standards in public sector building and civil engineering contracts. That said HSENI is

keen to explore how this approach can be extended to all major Government procurement contracts. The success of BUILDSAFE-NI is very dependent upon the contribution that all partners will make through the delivery of their own specific targets. The involvement of all parts of industry is essential to achieve the widespread commitment and cultural changes that are necessary. HSENI in fully supporting this initiative will play a full and active role in the delivery of its programme of action and will encourage and support full participation by all parts of the industry.

Quarrying

The quarrying sector also presents as high-risk, given the high number of serious accidents and the relatively low number of persons working in the sector. HSENI is fully committed to working with key industry stakeholders, such as the Quarry Products Association of Northern Ireland, to improve the safety record of the sector.

This will see the adoption of a shared and challenging target for the reduction of quarry related accidents by 50% over a 5-year period. In support of this target the industry will put in place a comprehensive programme that will focus on improving the health and safety competence of the quarry workforce and see the introduction of health surveillance programmes across the sector. HSENI in turn will carry out a programme of inspection initiatives that will focus on machinery guarding, workplace transport and working at height. In addition HSENI will recruit a specialist compliance officer to assist with the licensing of shot firers.

Small and Micro Businesses

The NI economy is dominated by small and micro businesses. Competitive small firms are vital to the future of the Northern Ireland economy yet one of the biggest hurdles to the successful development of such businesses can be failures in their management of health and safety at work.

A report by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) commissioned by HSENI revealed that for most young, small and growing businesses it is a struggle to cope with risk management, particularly in relation to health and safety at work issues. Most small businesses need assistance in order to cope with their safety and health duties and responsibilities. Many do not know where to start the process; others see it as a “bolt on” legislative requirement and not an integral part of the business and, for others, health and safety at work is simply not on their business agendas. More specifically, barriers include a lack of resources (e.g. time, money), a lack of appropriate information and advice tailored to the needs of the small business, a fear of contacting the enforcers for help coupled with a negative cultural mindset to health and safety at work. Few recognise that effective health and safety management will bring practical business benefits and enhance competitiveness if it were fully integrated into the management of the business.

To begin to tackle these issues and to break down the real barriers that exist between HSENI and small businesses, a Small Business Advisory Service has been established to provide specially tailored health and safety information and advice to small/micro businesses. The move to develop this service was in response to a need expressed by the small business community in Northern Ireland for non-threatening help and assistance to enable them to deal in a measured way with their health and safety issues.

The Small Business Advisory Service is separate and distinct from HSENI's more traditional enforcement based teams. Small business advisors providing this confidential service will have no enforcement role but concentrate on awareness raising and signposting small businesses to appropriate sources of information. They will work closely with various stakeholders, including the Federation of Small Businesses and key intermediaries such as the Invest NI supported Enterprise Network.

Vulnerable Groups

The protection afforded by the health and safety at work legislation takes on a special significance when focused on vulnerable groups. In recent years there has been an increasing number of migrant workers employed in Northern Ireland particularly in the agriculture and food processing sectors. These workers are vulnerable due to language difficulties and this can impact in areas such as health and safety training, instruction and in the development of safe systems of work. The issue of temporary and agency workers is also an issue that merits special attention to ensure that high standards of health and safety are maintained.

Other vulnerable groups that require specific attention include:

- children who live on farms – in Northern Ireland most farms are family homes as well as dangerous workplaces;
- the elderly and retired who live and help out on farms – unwise risk taking is an underlying problem and those working on their own are especially vulnerable;
- those who experience literacy difficulties – they must be provided with information in a format that they understand;
- young workers – in particular, those joining the workforce for the first time and those taking part in work experience programmes;

- workers with certain disabilities – health and safety risk assessments and reasonable adjustment under the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 should address any areas of vulnerability.

Greater thought and attention is needed to ensure that the rights of all workers, including the most vulnerable, are properly safeguarded.

Gender Issues in Health and Safety

A proactive approach is needed to ensure the health and safety of the entire workforce. However, taking a 'gender-neutral' approach to risk assessment and prevention can sometimes result in risks to female workers being underestimated or even ignored altogether. Careful examination of real work circumstances and systems can indicate that gender specific risks may exist and these must be addressed in an appropriate manner. This is particularly relevant in the case of the pregnant worker.

Gender issues must therefore be considered in risk assessments to identify any issues that present higher risks to any specific sex. HSENI is committed to ensuring that gender sensitive approaches to risk prevention are taken by employers. To take this forward HSENI will appoint a Board member to lead a working group to consider how the gender dimension can be best integrated into risk management.

Insurance Market

Over recent years Northern Ireland companies have experienced a steep rise in the level of their Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance (ELCI) premiums. Although increases have been seen throughout the UK, they have been particularly high in Northern Ireland.

In December 2003 the second stage Report into the Review of Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance from the Department of Work and Pensions in Great Britain was published. This Report advocated a long-term strategy to tackle the high level of ELCI premiums directed at three specific areas:

- tackling costs - reducing the legal and administrative costs of resolving claims and a move towards increased rehabilitation;
- improving the availability and flow of information - Insurers should recognise companies that manage health and safety effectively and that this could be better reflected in premiums;
- working to improve health and safety practice in the UK - the Report identified that a key driver in reducing ELCI costs was improving companies' management of health and safety risks.

Indeed, HSENI has recognised for some time the need for the insurance industry, the business community and regulators to work in partnership to mitigate against the trend of increasing insurance premiums. Over the course of its last Corporate Plan, HSENI embarked upon a campaign to promote sensible risk management for all businesses through its "Managing Risk: A Key Investment" campaign. This campaign has been very successful in selling the business case to a broad range of audiences by using practical and tailored case studies in addition to highlighting the financial and insurance benefits that can be achieved. The insurance industry provided a key input to the campaign by demonstrating the insurance risks companies face if they fail to manage health and safety effectively and conversely the benefits of doing so. HSENI plans to continue with this tripartite approach over the lifetime of this Corporate Plan.

Improving Public Services

Reducing the high level of sickness absence in the public sector is a key factor in Government's reform plans aimed at improving public services. The delivery of efficient public services is obviously improved when good sickness records are achieved, staff are safe and healthy at work and when effective rehabilitation programmes are in place to assist in a return to work.

Health and safety risk management has an important preventative role to play in reducing the levels of work-related injury and ill health. Whilst work-related injury and ill health is not the sole cause of sickness absence in the public sector, it does constitute a significant proportion of the overall sickness level, particularly in certain areas of work.

HSENI is fully committed to supporting the Government's reform plans as far as they relate to improved public sector health and safety. To that end HSENI will work with, amongst others, the Central Personnel Group of the Department of Finance and Personnel to assist with the development of effective health and safety risk management programmes across all parts of the public sector.

This is HSENI's third Corporate Plan and while it builds on and develops further the strategic direction of the second Plan, which is reviewed in Annex 1, it above all recognises the need to adapt and change to meet the challenges arising from the changing world of work.

Fast disappearing are traditional industries such as textiles and engineering. These are being replaced by knowledge based businesses and a mushrooming service sector. Part time and flexible working are becoming the norm with women representing a growing percentage of the workforce.

Whilst it is important not to lose sight of the acute impact of workplace safety failures, increasingly HSENI's attention is being focused on the chronic impact of workplace ill health. Together these failures cost the Northern Ireland economy, conservatively, £500 million per year.

Society at large too often sees health and safety risks in simple and absolute terms due in no small measure to the fear of litigation. The result is the "nanny state" mentality that exploits health and safety to perpetuate a do nothing, risk nothing culture. Risk does exist and risk can be managed.

It is against this background that HSENI has developed its new vision, which is:

To achieve world-class performance in workplace health and safety and therefore improve the overall economic and social well being of our community.

The essence of the work that HSENI will undertake in pursuit of this broad vision is encapsulated in the HSENI mission statement:

To ensure that risks to peoples' health and safety arising from work activities are effectively controlled.

In turn, HSENI will deliver its mission statement through its five key objectives:

- **To provide the highest standards of service delivery at the regional level.**
- **To promote key workplace health and safety messages and themes to targeted sectors and groups.**
- **To communicate appropriate, timely and practical workplace health and safety information and advice.**
- **To improve compliance with health and safety standards through inspection and investigation activities.**
- **To ensure that an effective and up-to-date health and safety at work regulatory framework is maintained.**

Targets

Public Service Agreement Targets

Over the life of its last Corporate Plan HSENI committed itself to consulting with key stakeholders on establishing shared long-term regional targets for reductions in the number of work-related injuries and illnesses in Northern Ireland. The outcome of this has been the establishment of Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets relating to serious accidents generally and to fatal accidents in the agriculture sector.

In 2002/03 there were 859 serious accidents (fatal and major injuries) reported to HSENI under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 (RIDDOR). HSENI has established a shared target for Northern Ireland to reduce this number of fatal and major injury accidents reported by 5% by March 2007.

Over the 5-year period 1999-2003, there has been an average of 2 fatal accidents each year to children as a result of farming activities. HSENI has therefore established a target to reduce child fatal accidents in agriculture to zero by March 2007.

In the past decade alone, over 500 construction workers have been seriously injured and over 40 have been killed. Therefore under the BUILDSAFE-NI initiative launched in April 2003 a high level target of reducing the number of major accidents to construction workers by 50% over a 5 year period has been established. This will contribute to achievement of the overarching serious accident reduction PSA target referred to above.

HSENI is also working closely with the Quarry Products Association of Northern Ireland to establish accident reduction targets for the quarrying sector. Again this shared sectoral target will contribute to the headline PSA target.

Unfortunately in relation to intelligence on work-related ill health, the picture is far from complete. However, based on information from the 2001/02 Labour Force Survey it is estimated that 70,000 persons suffered from ill health either caused or made worse by work. The two most common types of work-related illness are musculoskeletal disorders and those caused by stress, which together accounted for over 70% of all work-related illnesses. HSENI is keen to establish similar regional targets relating to work-related ill health and it will continue to address this issue in conjunction with the Intelligence Programme Action Team established under the long-term workplace health strategy for Northern Ireland, *Working for Health*.

To provide the highest standards of service delivery at the regional level.

HSENI's service delivery will be characterised by:

- being a single and clearly recognisable and authoritative body that instils confidence in the citizen;
- being autonomous – professionally, legally and technically;
- being open and transparent in all that it does;
- being accountable for its actions;
- being consistent and even-handed; and
- being guided by consensual policy and strategy developed through the working of its social partnership based executive Board.

- deliver on the commitments given in the HSENI Customer Care Charter; and
- abide by the obligations given in the HSENI Publication Scheme.

19

Key Performance Target

During the period of this Plan HSENI will:

- undertake a customer satisfaction survey;
- hold HSENI Board meetings at various locations throughout Northern Ireland;
- post Board minutes on HSENI website;
- publish Corporate and Operating Plans, Annual Reports and Audited Accounts;
- operate in accordance with the principles set out in the HSENI Enforcement Guidelines;

To promote key workplace health and safety messages and themes to targeted sectors and groups

Key aspects of HSENI's promotional programme will be to:

- focus on the **Priority Issues**;
- continue to put health and safety on the business agenda;
- work in partnership with other key stakeholders where appropriate;
- focus on the needs of small businesses; and
- focus on workplace health issues.

Key Performance Target

During the period of this Plan representatives of 1,500 companies, employing organisations and trade unions will participate in HSENI promotional events:

- 60% of companies or employing organisations will have made improvements to their workplace health and safety standards as a result of participating in HSENI promotional events; and
- 25% of those attending HSENI promotional events will be new delegates.

During the period of the Plan HSENI will organise and deliver 9 Health and Safety Awareness Days for farmers.

During the period of this Plan, HSENI will, through Health and Safety Works NI - its small business advisory service - reach 30,000 start-up and existing small businesses participating in Invest NI's Start A Business programme with specially tailored health and safety information and advice.

To communicate appropriate, timely and practical workplace health and safety information and advice

Key aspects of HSENI's approach to communicating information and advice will be to:

- focus on the **Priority Issues**;
- focus on the needs of small businesses;
- provide easy access to information and advice, making full use of communication and information technologies; and
- focus on workplace health issues.

Key Performance Target

- During the period of this Plan HSENI will distribute, both proactively and reactively, in excess of 50,000 items of published information/advisory material (leaflets, booklets etc) to employers, employees and members of the public, both directly and through intermediaries; and
- 50% of all requests from employers for published information and advice from HSENI's Information and Advice Centre will result in improvements to workplace health and safety standards.
- During the period of this Plan HSENI will distribute 30,000 items of electronically published materials via downloads from its website and through the issue of Info4U CD Roms.

To improve compliance with health and safety standards through inspection and investigation activities

Key aspects of HSENI's approach to inspection and investigation will be to:

- focus on the **Priority Issues**;
- carry out inspection and investigation activities on a risk-related basis;
- ensure compliance through the provision of information and advice and, where necessary, through enforcement in accordance with HSENI's Enforcement Guidelines;
- deploy resources in a manner appropriate to the needs and demands of the sector; and
- focus on workplace health issues

Key Performance Target

During the period of this Plan 15,000 inspections will be conducted across all work sectors for which HSENI is responsible; and

- 75% of employers inspected and found to have an unsatisfactory level of compliance will have demonstrated a satisfactory improvement when re-inspected; and
- all employers found to have an unsatisfactory level of compliance when re-inspected, will be considered for enforcement action in accordance with HSENI's Enforcement Guidelines.

To ensure that an effective and up-to-date health and safety at work regulatory framework is maintained

In pursuance of this objective HSENI will:

- ensure that due account is taken of relevant EU Directives;
- ensure that legislative parity with Great Britain is maintained where appropriate; and
- ensure that appropriate and proper consultation is undertaken in relation to HSENI's proposals to introduce new Regulations and Approved Codes of Practice.

Key Performance Target

During the period of this Plan 100% of proposals for the making of health and safety regulations required to satisfy EU Directives will be submitted to the Department within 6 months of the corresponding regulations being made in Great Britain.

Corporate Governance

HSENI is committed to the highest standards of corporate governance and pays due regard to:

- accountability;
- integrity and propriety;
- the conduct of the Board including the disclosure of members' interests; and
- risk management and internal control.

Policy Development

In setting out in this Plan its strategic objectives over the next three years HSENI is aware that policies and strategies must continuously evolve and develop with changing circumstances. Therefore HSENI will be vigilant, ensuring that its policies continue to be focused and effective, are consistent with the broader Government policy framework and meet the needs of the local economy. In addition to those areas covered in the section on Strategic, Policy and Operational Context earlier in this Plan, HSENI will also have regard to the need to address the following issues:

Equality

HSENI is fully committed to the fulfilment of the section 75 obligations on the promotion of equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation, between men and women generally, between persons with a disability and persons without and between persons with dependants and persons without.

HSENI is equally committed to the promotion of good relations between people of different religious, political and racial groups.

HSENI has prepared an *Equality Scheme*, which has been approved by the Equality Commission. This scheme sets out how HSENI will fulfil its statutory equality duties. Amongst other things this will entail:

- conducting Equality Impact Assessments on all HSENI policies;
- monitoring the uptake of its services and the impact of its policies on section 75 groups;
- developing a communication strategy that will ensure optimal access to its information and services by all section 75 groups;
- consulting in accordance with the Equality Commission's Guide to the Statutory Duties; and
- providing adequate and appropriate training and awareness raising for all HSENI staff.

Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic law. As with all public bodies, HSENI must ensure that where its decisions or actions impact on the rights of individuals those decisions or actions comply with the Convention.

Human Resources

HSENI is fully committed to the principles of business excellence. Achieving this will be by fully realising the skills and experience of its entire staff. Consequently HSENI will:

- create an inclusive, safe and healthy working environment for all staff;
- actively promote fairness and equality;
- continue its commitment to Investors in People;
- encourage team working within an open and participative management culture; and
- maintain good industrial relations and liaise regularly with Trade Union representatives.

Quality of Service

In order to support its key objectives and targets, HSENI will:

- operate in a consistent and co-ordinated manner in the application of the Service First principles;
- treat all its customers in an open, fair and impartial way;
- put things right if they go wrong and explain how to complain if dissatisfied;
- ensure that suppliers are paid promptly in line with Better Payment Practice;
- have an independent customer satisfaction survey carried out within the lifetime of this Plan; and
- exploit the benefits of information technology in the delivery of its services.

Research

Under its statutory remit, HSENI may commission or sponsor research concerned with securing the health, safety and welfare of persons at work or the control of dangerous substances. In discharging this role, HSENI aims to develop partnerships in relevant research with universities and other institutions. To this end HSENI maintains close working relationships with the Health and Safety Executive in Great Britain.

HSENI will only support research that derives from, and underpins, its policy and operational needs. Quality, affordability and value for money will be important considerations before decisions are taken to support new research projects.

Efficiency and Value for Money

HSENI in ensuring that the public resources allocated to it are used to best effect will:

- regularly monitor performance;
- conduct internal audits of its operating systems;
- adopt a strategic approach to risk management;
- keep its performance measurement mechanisms under review;
- keep administrative costs to a minimum; and
- recover costs where appropriate.

Enforcement Guidelines

HSENI's Enforcement Guidelines draw heavily on the principles contained in the Enforcement Concordat produced by the Cabinet Office in March 1998.

HSENI will, when enforcing the provisions of the relevant health and safety legislation, abide by the following principles:

- **Proportionality** - relating enforcement action to the risks;
- **Targeting** - targeting activities with the most serious risk;
- **Consistency** - taking a similar approach in similar circumstances to achieve similar ends;
- **Transparency** - helping duty-holders understand what is expected of them and what they should expect from Inspectors; and
- **Accountability** - being accountable for its actions and having effective procedures for dealing with comments and handling complaints.

Our Values

- We value people as our most important resource.
- We are committed to ensuring exemplary standards of health and safety for everyone.
- We are committed to equal opportunity, openness, respect for individual differences and a workplace free from harassment.
- We foster an environment that encourages personal development allowing everyone to reach his or her full potential.
- We believe in a team approach to work with everyone feeling involved, valued and supported.
- We value commitment, motivation, enthusiasm, innovation and creativity.
- We strive for professionalism, quality and excellence in all that we do.

Annex 1 - Review of the period 2002-2005

26

Annual Operating Plan Targets		02/03	03/04	04/05 ¹	05/06
Number of seminars aimed at putting health and safety on the business agenda	Target	4	4	4	3
	Output	4	4	2	
Number of days (representing visits) to be devoted to inspections in all work sectors	Target	1,100 (2,000)	1,300 (2,400)	1,350 (2,500)	5,000 ²
	Output	1,580 (2,891)	2,015 (3,692)	2,253 (4,127)	
Number of days (representing visits) to be devoted to investigations in all work sectors	Target	700 (950)	950 (1,200)	900 (1,100)	N/A ²
	Output	940 (1,310)	973 (1,357)	910 (1,206)	
Percentage of reportable fatal accidents investigated	Target	100	100	100	100
	Output	100	100	100	
Number of days to be devoted to enforcement activities	Target	85	120	120	N/A ³
	Output	72	186	130	

Corporate Plan 2002/2005 Targets

02/05

Number of representatives of companies participating in HSENI events	Target			1,200
	Output			1,247
Percentage of companies making improvements to their workplace health and safety standards as a result	Target			60
	Output			84
Percentage of those attending these events who are new delegates	Target			25
	Output			40

1 Outputs for 04/05 are best estimates at time of going to print.

2 Numerical targets for inspections and investigations are combined under a collective inspection target (visits only)

3 Numerical target not to be set in relation to this area for 05/06

Corporate Plan 2002/2005 Targets

02/05

27

Numbers of items of published information/advisory material distributed to customers.	Target	50,000+
	Output	242,062
Percentage of requests for practical advice from employers result in improvements in workplace health and safety standards	Target	50
	Output	58
Number of days (representing visits) to be devoted to inspections across all work sectors for which HSENI is responsible.	Target	4,000
	Output	(7,000) 5,848 (10,710)
Percentage of employers inspected and found to have an unsatisfactory level of compliance to have demonstrated a satisfactory improvement when re-inspected.	Target	70
	Output	82
Percentage of employers found to have an unsatisfactory level of compliance when re-inspected to be considered for enforcement action.	Target	100
	Output	100
Percentage of proposals for health and safety regulations to implement EC Directives to be submitted to DETI within 6 months of the corresponding regulations being made in GB.	Target	100
	Output	100

Status and Role

HSENI, the regional health and safety authority for Northern Ireland, was established on 1 April 1999 as an executive NDPB with Crown status. This was brought about by an Order in Council amending the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978. An executive NDPB has a role in Central Government but is not a Department or part of one. HSENI is funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI).

HSENI's business is to ensure that risks to people's health and safety arising from work activity are properly controlled, in ways that are proportionate to risk, allow for technological progress and pay due regard to costs as well as benefits; and in all that it does, seek to promote better management of health and safety at work, through systematic approaches to identifying hazards and assessing and controlling risks.

HSENI, subject to the DETI Minister, has primary responsibility under the above Order for the regulation of health and safety at work in Northern Ireland. This involves the proposing and setting of necessary standards and securing compliance with those standards and undertaking other forms of activity designed to stimulate or support necessary action on the part of people and organisations that actually create risk.

Board

To oversee its operation and to provide strategic guidance HSENI has a ten member Board. The Board is appointed by, in the case of the Chairperson, the Secretary of State and, as regards the members, the DETI Minister, in accordance with the guidelines published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland and following consultation with HSENI's social partners.

Board Members

Peter McKie CBE - Chairman
Des Lowry - Deputy Chairman
Patrick Archer
David Mills
Barbara Martin
Geraldine Alexander
Derrick Nixon
Ashley Haslett
Roger Gillespie
Gerri Rice

(nominated by organisations representing employers, employees, district councils and others).

The Board is responsible for ensuring that the statutory functions for which HSENI has responsibility are implemented in an economic way. In fulfilling this role the Board is required to:

- give a strategic lead on policy development;
- provide advice to the Minister on major issues of policy and strategy in work-related health and safety matters;
- act as a major channel of communication with HSENI's social partners and other health and safety regulatory bodies to ensure the continuing relevance of its strategies and policies;
- consider and endorse HSENI's three-year Corporate Plan and the annual Operating Plan before submission to the Minister;
- be responsible to the Minister through DETI for the achievement of HSENI's targets; and
- ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil its duties and responsibilities.

Executive

The Executive comprises officials who collectively represent a broad range of administrative and professional skills, expertise and experience. HSENI works in close co-operation with the devolved Departments, the Northern Ireland Office and the District Councils in developing its policies and in delivering its services.

It is the regional enforcing authority for health and safety in a range of work situations including:

manufacturing; schools and universities; chemical plants; hospitals and nursing homes; construction; disciplined services; transport; district councils; gas supply and distribution; government departments; agriculture; fairgrounds; mines and quarries.

These employment sectors account for over 400,000 employees spread across tens of thousands of workplaces.

As an enforcing authority a significant proportion of its resources are directed towards ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory provisions. This is achieved through a combination of workplace inspection and investigation activities, which are underpinned by Inspectors' extensive enforcement powers.

It plays a key role in the preparation of new health and safety legislation in order to ensure compliance with EU Directives and maintain parity with Great Britain.

It places great emphasis on the promotion of workplace health and safety best practice, which it backs up with practical information and advice.

Whilst HSENI is the lead body responsible for the promotion and enforcement of health and safety at work standards in Northern Ireland, it shares this responsibility with the 26 District Councils who are the enforcing authorities for many work situations other than those listed above, e.g. retail and wholesale shops, offices, restaurants, hotels, etc. Together HSENI and the District Councils cover all work situations in Northern Ireland that are subject to the 1978 Order.

It is therefore vitally important that HSENI and the District Councils work in partnership to ensure that their combined resources are used to maximum effect to improve health and safety at work standards in Northern Ireland. A Committee of HSENI's Board, known as HELANI, has a membership drawn from both HSENI and the District Councils and exists to ensure that a consistent approach is maintained across all the enforcing authorities.

Resources

HSENI has a staff of 101 of whom 62 are engaged in frontline service delivery and is funded by way of a grant-in-aid from DETI. It is estimated that in 2005/06 the grant-in-aid will be close to £4.1m of which almost £3.5m will be to cover staff salaries and wages and running costs. The remaining monies of some £600,000 will comprise a programme budget to cover expenditure on items such as promotional activities and the provision of an information and advisory service.

Following a review by Invest NI of its core business activities, plans are at an advanced stage to transfer scientific staff to HSENI. These staff make up Invest NI's Occupational Hygiene Unit whose role is to identify, assess and control risks to health arising from hazardous materials in the workplace. Much of the work of the Unit relates to work undertaken on behalf of HSENI in relation to all aspects of asbestos. It is anticipated that the transfer process will be completed in time to allow the Occupational Hygiene Unit to become an integral part of HSENI's Workplace Health Support Group by 1 April 2005.

HSENI also has a senior medical officer seconded from DHSSPS to provide support to HSENI on workplace health issues, including the delivery of its Employment Medical Advisory Service. DHSSPS meets the cost of this officer's salary and expenses.

The resources available to HSENI will be kept under constant review and, when appropriate, bids for additional resources will be made to DETI where these are needed to ensure that HSENI is equipped to deal with emerging pressures and to provide for future organisational development.



HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
83 Ladas Drive, Belfast BT6 9FR, Northern Ireland

Telephone: (028) 9024 3249
Helpline: 0800 0320121
Textphone: (028) 9054 6896
Facsimile: (028) 9023 5383
Email: hseini@detini.gov.uk
Web: www.hseini.gov.uk

A large type version of this text is available on request from HSENI.
The text of this document is also available on the HSENI website: www.hseini.gov.uk