

HSE Strategies, Plans and Priorities

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Paul started out as an inspector for the HSE in Northampton 25 years ago. His background is within operations and his presentation focused on the work and priorities of the HSE Field Operations Division. He is currently in the Manufacturing Sector, part of the Engagement and Policy Division, whose role is to liaise with operational staff and industry to identify problems and their solutions.

The message Paul made very clear early on is that the two-fold purpose of Health and Safety is to:

- Save Lives
- Prevent Suffering

He reminded all professionals that systems, procedures and practices should always have this focus.

The Helping Great Britain Work Well strategy covers six priority areas, of which Tackling Ill Health is the main topic discussed here. The overall aim is to protect lives, improve quality of life and livelihoods and enable businesses to become more productive, prosper and grow.

The HSE Health and Work Strategy supports the overall one and was published in December 2016. It sets out the three priority areas where they will concentrate future resources:

- Occupational lung disease – greater control of hazardous substances eg silica, wood and flour dust and welding and foundry fume
- Musculoskeletal disorders – especially those encountered in agriculture, forestry and fishing, construction, transportation and storage, and health and social care
- Occupational stress and mental health – of increasing concern affecting all workplaces

Paul stressed that these priorities will not lead to other issues being ignored.

Two lung disease case studies within the presentation slides (with links to video content) dramatically highlight the human cost and suffering, to both workers and their families, arising from work-related ill health - which in many cases results from exposure decades earlier. Thus making the important point of the necessity to control risks and hazards today, to ensure future workers do not suffer a similar fate.

HSE will be working in partnership with employers, employees and the wider Health and Safety community (eg organisations like BHSEA) to reduce incidence rate and number of

new cases within these key areas. There is also a need to control the likelihood of low-frequency, high-impact catastrophic incidents.

HSE inspection and enforcement activity will be focused where it can have the most effect, paying particular attention to those companies who are not controlling the risks.