

Watchdog wants councils to get behind commitment to H&S

Britain's workplace health and safety regulator is urging local authorities (LAs) across the country to make a statement of commitment to work with others to improve health and safety standards in the sectors they regulate.

Figures collected by The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) show failures in the management of occupational health and safety in LA enforced business sectors result in more than 100,000 new cases of ill health, 5000 major injuries and the deaths of around 10 workers each year.

LAs predominantly cover the retail, consumer services, entertainment and warehousing/supply chain sectors which account for two thirds of all business premises, around half of the total GB workforce.

Many of those harmed are vulnerable workers not provided with reasonable workplace protection, and around 15 members of the public, including children are killed each year in avoidable incidents because of workplace activity.

Many LAs in Great Britain face a challenging environment that impact on the way they deliver a wide range of regulatory services and statutory duties so a Statement of Commitment (SoC) has been developed by the HSE and LA representative bodies across GB.

It has been designed to strengthen and maintain long term senior commitment to delivery of their legal duty as enforcers of workplace health and safety and asks that LAs collaborate with other bodies to deliver effective and correctly targeted solutions to keep workers safe.

The SoC has been endorsed by HSE's Board, the Local Government Association (LGA), the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and the Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland (SOCOEHs).

Councillors, Chief Executives and Heads of Regulatory Services in LA's are also being encouraged to publicly commit to the SoC and embed the principles within their service plans.

The SoC recognises that:

- LAs must target and prioritise regulatory resources to meet their legal duties;
- Continued delivery of effective co-regulation will require ongoing evolution in both the LA and HSE approaches to regulatory delivery, and
- The HSE and LA co-regulatory partnership plays a vital role in delivering the 'Help GB Work Well' strategy.

HSE launched the SoC on its website in April 2019. It is available to view at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/statement.htm>

HSE will be working with LAs to develop further supporting materials which will be made available in due course.

LA Chief Executives and Heads of H&S regulatory services are encouraged to publicly endorse the SoC and HSE are seeking opportunities to promote it via articles in appropriate publications and via newsletters etc.

Notes to Editors

1.The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. We also work with local authority co-regulatory partners who enforce in the entertainment, leisure, commercial and consumer service sectors. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. www.hse.gov.uk

2.For more information please contact la.enquiries@hse.gov.uk

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