



## College Responses to HSE letter – June 2010 CHASTE – Executive Summary

### Q1. The need for strong leadership

#### (i) *Who takes the senior lead for health and safety in the college?*

- Approximately 50% of replies indicate that the senior lead for health and safety is the Principal (five Colleges state the Principal chairs the H&S Committee). However, it is clear that even in those Colleges who state the Principal as the senior lead, in reality, it is another member of the senior management team who has the “day to day” responsibility for leading and directing health and safety strategy.
- HR Directors (including Directors of Organisational Development) are the next largest group indicated as taking the senior lead for health and safety (20%). Again it is clear from the responses that, in the vast majority of Colleges, the Health and Safety Practitioner reports directly to the Director of HR. Also, the majority of Health and Safety Committees seem to report to the College’s HR Committee.
- The rest of the replies identify various other members of the College Senior Management Team as the health and safety lead, e.g. Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal and Director of Corporate Services. Two Colleges identified the Board of Management as the lead and one College stated the Health and Safety Officer was the lead.

#### (ii) *Does your College have a Board Member who is nominated as a “champion” to lead health and safety?*

- The majority of Colleges, approximately 60%, do not have a Board Member nominated as health and safety champion. One College in particular was keen to argue that, as Board Members have no management responsibilities, it is not appropriate for a Member of the Board to be nominated as health and safety champion.
- Approximately 40% of Colleges state a Member of the Board has been nominated as health and safety champion. Two Colleges state the Board Member is the Principal, as technically they are members of the Board of Management.

"NB- The "senior lead" is considered a management position while "a Board Member who is nominated as a CHAMPION.." would generally be a "lay" member of the Board"

- The vast majority of Colleges recognise that the Board has an important part to play in health and safety management. However, only two have indicated that the Board has had any health and safety training.

**(iii) *How are these arrangements working?***

- Approximately 94% of respondents indicate their arrangements are working “well” or “very well”. The majority gave no hard evidence to support this conclusion. However, a number quoted a variety of initiatives as evidence of their health and safety management system working well e.g. RoSPA awards, CHASTE support visit reports and external audit reports. A few colleges also quoted Scottish Healthy Working Lives awards. Two Colleges (6%) responded “not applicable”.
- A minority of colleges indicated they appreciated that health and safety management systems need to be continuously maintained and assessed to ensure an appropriate level of resources are allocated.

**Q2. Building Competence**

**(i) *Who profiles the risk across the College to understand what is important?***

- There were eight main categories of staff identified. Approximately 22% of respondents state it is the Health and Safety Advisor who profiles risk across the College. Again, 22% state it is the Senior Management Team (SMT). (A number of colleges in this group actually said it was the “Risk Management Group (RMG)”. However, it is clear that in the majority of cases, the RMG equates to the SMT.

Approximately 20% identified a combination of the Health and Safety Advisor and individual Heads of Departments. The remaining 36% of replies are fairly evenly split between the following categories and combinations of staff:

- Health and Safety Committee and all staff
- Health and Safety Committee and external consultants
- Health and Safety Committee
- Assistant Principal/Vice Principal
- Health and Safety Advisor and HR Director

**(ii) *How is the senior team kept up to date?***

- The vast majority, approximately 66%, of respondents stated that the Senior Management Team are kept up to date by a combination of different reports, briefings and Minutes, e.g. briefings by Health and Safety Advisor and the publication of Health and Safety Committee Minutes.

- 15% of respondents identified maintaining the College’s “Risk Register” as the primary method of keeping the SMT up to date. However, the majority of Colleges in this category also use a variety of different briefings and Minutes as identified above.
- The remainder of replies identified a variety of primary methods by which the SMT was kept up to date, e.g.
  - Reports and briefings from Assistant Principals/Vice Principals
  - Reports from Heads of Departments
  - Reports and briefings from HR / Organisational Development Directors

### **Q3. Involving the Workforce**

(i) ***The goal is a genuine management/workforce partnership based on trust, respect and cooperation. What positive actions have you taken to build the partnership?***

- This question provoked a wide variety of responses both in terms of length of answer, from one sentence to over a page, and also methods employed. However, the vast majority of replies, approximately 82%, were clear on the importance of promoting an effective and efficient Health and Safety Committee. Combined with this are various other initiatives and procedures, including good communications with staff, promoting an inclusive culture, and involvement with SHWL and RoSPA initiatives.
- Approximately 22% of replies included staff training as a major component of building the partnership.

### **Q4. Health and safety priorities**

(i) ***What are the greatest health and safety risks in your college – tell us about your top ten risks/priorities.***

- From the replies received, it is extremely difficult to produce a definitive/sequential list of priorities. Some respondents include different issues as one risk eg. Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV) and Legionella, student placements and field trips. A significant number of replies list 10 risk/priorities but make it clear they are in no sequence of priority. Also, it is apparent that some of the risks identified are “business” risks taken from the College Risk Register and cannot be classified as health and safety risks, e.g. loss of key postholders, failure to teach, procurement issues, and dilapidation surveys.

For the reasons given above, the following list of sequential risks/priorities should not be considered definitive:

1. Health and safety management in high risk subjects, e.g. construction, engineering and catering (this also includes working with machinery)
2. Stress (wellbeing in general)
3. Slips, trips and falls
4. Occupational health issues including DSE, noise, vibration, dermatitis and asthma
5. Fire
6. Musculoskeletal disorders
7. Managing contractors
8. COSHH
9. Student placements
10. Competency of staff

Other significant issues include:

- Supervision of students, specifically those considered particularly vulnerable, e.g. disabled, young people and expectant mothers.
- Excursions and external visits
- Compliance with health and safety legislation
- NB CHASTE Comment: Agricultural colleges site working with livestock is a major risk

#### **Q5. Taking a wider perspective**

*(i) What are you doing to build a workforce for the future that understands real risks across GB's activities?*

- It is apparent that this question was not well understood, indeed one respondent stated that they did not understand the question and did not answer it. The majority of replies, approximately 60%, concentrate on initiatives to ensure vocational students understand the importance of health and safety in their working lives. However, a considerable number, approximately 40%, assumed the question was aimed at the College's own workforce and concentrated on what they were doing regarding health and safety training for staff.
- Approximately 36% of total replies stated that they are actively building health and safety into curricula.
- Other initiatives include involving students in the risk assessment process, working closely with trade organisations, e.g. CSKILLS and involving the College's Health and Safety Advisor in student induction.
- One College stated that they "feel that more could be done to

enhance the health and safety competency and knowledge of the workforce of the future with the introduction of a recognised health and safety qualification linked to every student award”.

**Q6. Does the college utilise its accident/incident/occupational ill health data and/or the results from monitoring processes, to:**

**(i) *Help direct its health and safety strategy and procedures***

- Without exception, every respondent confirmed that their Health and Safety strategy and procedures are shaped by collecting and analysing their accident/incident data. Whether or not each College includes Occupational Health data in this process is much more ambiguous, e.g. it is not clear what (if any) Occupational Health information is collected and analysed. Occupational Health issues and the College’s wellbeing agenda are frequently confused. In a number of colleges, Occupational Health issues in general and “data” in particular are seen as part of HR’s absence management remit and not part of Health and Safety.

**(ii) *Benchmark its own performance against others in the sector***

- Approximately 50% of Colleges indicate they do not benchmark their own health and safety performance against others in the sector. Whether or not they are unaware of the CHASTE accident/incident data collection and analysis Scheme, or are aware of the scheme but choose not to use it, is not clear.
- Approximately 42% include the CHASTE scheme within their benchmarking procedures.
- Approximately 20% of those Colleges who say they do benchmark their performance against others in the sector include their participation in local health and safety forums (facilitated by CHASTE).
- Other methods of benchmarking include participation in RoSPA (and similar) awards schemes and discussing health and safety performance at HR Communities of Practice (HR CoP) meetings.
- One College mentioned that they take part in the DLA Piper Scheme (a three year initiative of the HR CoP - due to finish in 2010), which compares HR information and has a small section devoted to health and safety.
- 3 Colleges have implemented or are about to implement OHSAS 18001 as an auditing tool. One College states “it would benefit the entire sector if a set health and safety audit

standard was to be developed, e.g. OHSAS 18001, HSG 65, or RoSPA or perhaps the development of specific sector health and safety standard which could be undertaken, similar to HMIE audits”.

- A College has developed a set of Health and Safety Performance Indicators (based on the “value for money in public service corporate sections” published by UK Audit Agency). They hope to promote this scheme with other Colleges.