



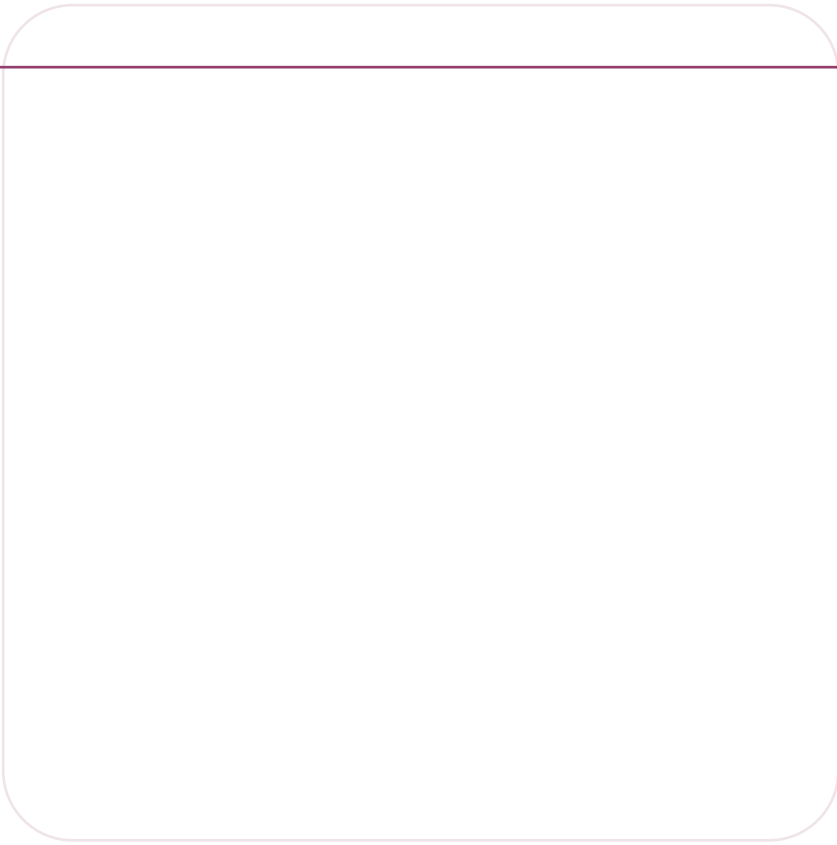
HELANI REPORT

ON HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENFORCED BUSINESS SECTORS IN NORTHERN IRELAND
1ST APRIL 2004 – 31ST MARCH 2007

HELANI
HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND/
LOCAL AUTHORITY ENFORCEMENT
LIAISON COMMITTEE

hse ni
CONTROLLING RISK TOGETHER

 **cehog**
Chief Environmental Health Officers Group NI

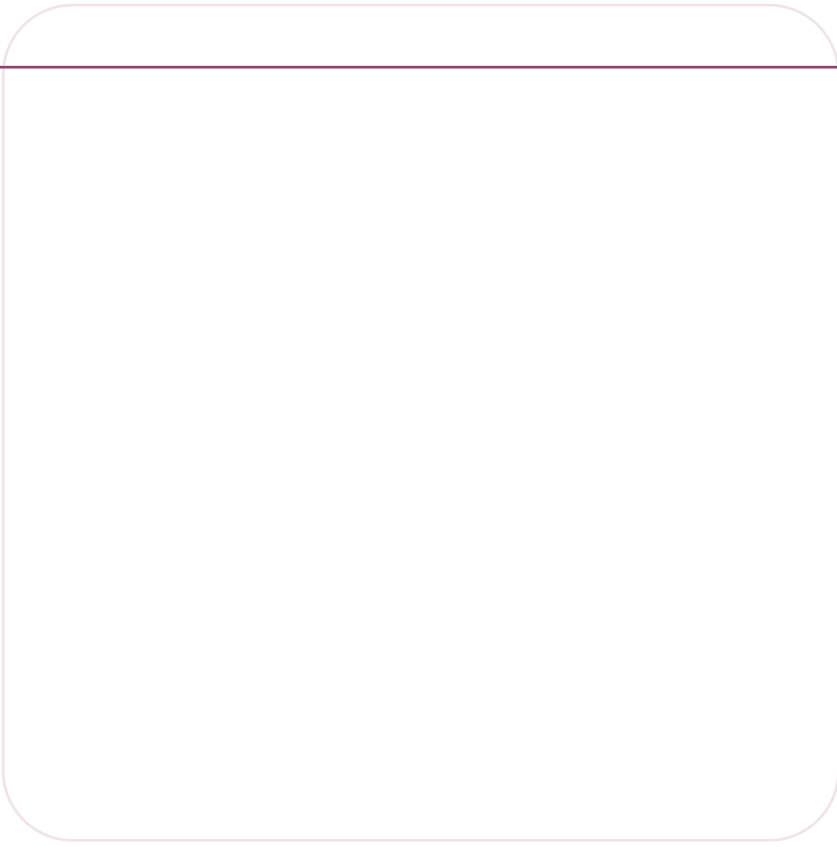




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The HELANI Partnership

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) and the 26 District Councils share responsibility for securing health and safety at work standards in Northern Ireland. District Councils and HSENI apply similar legislation in different business sectors. It is therefore appropriate that their respective work programmes are complementary and that common goals and objectives are shared.

In June 2000, the Health and Safety Executive/Local Authority Liaison Committee for Northern Ireland (HELANI) was established as a HSENI Board Committee. The primary aim of HELANI is to ensure that combined resources are used to maximum effect, and that employees, the public, trade unions and employers can expect consistency, proportionality, targeted use of resources and transparency in the delivery of health and safety enforcement services.

The HELANI committee consists of 8 representatives from HSENI and District Councils. These comprise of:

2 HSENI Board members

2 members of the Chief Environmental Health Officers' Group (CEHOG)

Chair and Secretary of CEHOG's Health and Safety Liaison Group

Deputy Chief Executive of HSENI

Head of Local Authority Unit (HSENI)

In 2002 HELANI produced its first strategic plan setting out the strategic framework for health and safety in the District Council enforced sectors for the period 2002 to 2005. A second three-year plan was produced in 2005 to cover the period 2005 to 2008.

Both plans are consistent with and complimentary to the HSENI Corporate Plans for the same period, and form the basis for operational planning at regional, group and District Council level.

It contains a number of broad strategic themes and guidance on how District Councils both collectively and alongside HSENI can work in a more effective and focussed manner to maximise impact and address the key health and safety at work issues relevant to the people of Northern Ireland. These are

- Effective management of the health and safety function.
- A focus on priority issues.
- Partnership working and the engagement of stakeholders.
- An emphasis on achieving compliance in relation to workplace health.

The strategy recognises that District Councils are uniquely placed to both establish key partnerships and integrate workplace health and safety with their other functions at a local level. It encourages Councils to be innovative when tackling the strategic themes and to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the use of enforcement, promotion and the provision of information and advice.



Introduction

This report details the health and safety activity undertaken in the District Council enforced sectors for the period 1st April 2004 to 31st March 2007.

In addition to providing a statistical account of inspection, investigation and enforcement activity, the report outlines non-routine interventions (promotional, advisory and educational), which demonstrate how the 26 District Councils and 4 Group Environmental Health Committees (Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western*) have delivered upon the various themes within the HELANI Strategic Plans 2002 – 2008.

The report also highlights the degree of co-ordination and partnership working that has been achieved through both the Group Committee system and the work of the Northern Ireland Local Authority Health and Safety Liaison Group (NIHSLG).

Increasingly District Councils are working together, and with HSENI, within the strategic framework developed by HELANI, to deliver regional campaigns. This limits, but does not preclude, the development and delivery of individual initiatives focussing on local issues or in response to emerging issues.

In the second Strategic Plan, HELANI introduced a number of measures to permit the Committee to monitor how effectively the plan was able to meet its aims. This report seeks to identify progress against these measures where possible.

Data collection

District Councils and Group Environmental Health Committees make an annual return to the Local Authority Unit (LAU) of HSENI. This information is used to produce a statistical report for the District Council enforced sectors detailing enforcement activity in terms of visits, prosecutions, service of formal and informal enforcement notices, workplace injuries and dangerous occurrences, number of premises and staffing levels. Comparisons of this statistical data can then be made for defined reporting periods such as the term of each successive HELANI strategic plan, where practicable, to determine trends which will assist with future planning.

Other qualitative data on non-routine work is also gathered to illustrate the wide variety of promotional, training and support initiatives which councils engage in, both individually and collectively, to improve health and safety standards across Northern Ireland.

Format of the report

This report does not contain individual case studies but provides a summary of joint initiatives and regional improvements that demonstrate implementation of the strategic themes.



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It also contains statistical data detailing the range of District Council interventions across the three consecutive reporting periods, 2004-2005, 2005 – 2006 and 2006 – 2007.

The Northern Ireland Local Authority Health and Safety Liaison Group (NIHSLG)

The NIHSLG provides a forum for professional expertise in health and safety that facilitates liaison across all District Councils and between the Environmental Health profession and HSENI at an operational level.

It provides policy advice to the Chief Environmental Health Officers' Group in Northern Ireland promotes consistency of enforcement, co-ordinates promotional initiatives and encourages the provision of a quality health and safety service.

Its membership includes Environmental Health representatives from the four Group Environmental Health Committees, Belfast City Council and one of the remaining 25 District Councils, HSENI representatives from the LAU and one representative from the University of Ulster (Environmental Health Degree course).

Acknowledgements

HELANI and the Local Authority Unit would like to thank the Health and Safety Liaison Group for their assistance in the production of this report.

* The constituent councils of the four Group Environmental Health Committees are:

Northern Group

Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Cookstown, Larne, Magherafelt, Moyle and Newtownabbey.

Southern Group

Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Dungannon and South Tyrone and Newry and Mourne.

Eastern Group

Ards, Castlereagh, Down, Lisburn and North Down.

Western Group

Derry, Fermanagh, Limavady, Omagh and Strabane.



Implementation of HELA LAC 67/1 (rev3): Priority Planning

HELA Local Authority Circular 67/1 provides guidance on inspection programmes and an inspection rating system as part of the “adequate arrangements” made by a local authority for the enforcement of health and safety. In July 2004 revision 3 was issued.

The revision was deemed necessary after HELA endorsed the adoption of the topic inspection approach in October 2003 and sought its implementation by all local authorities by the end of 2005/6. To avoid confusion over whether priority should be given to inspection programmes over topic inspections and other focussed interventions, the HELA LAC was revised and reissued. The LAC now focuses priority planning on a comprehensive interventions programme with particular emphasis on topic inspections so that resources are targeted where they are likely to have the greatest impact. The revised LAC also made changes to the inspection rating system and to the recommended inspection frequencies. It recommended that the lowest risk premises be taken out of inspection programmes altogether and dealt with by other intervention strategies.

Whereas in the main the LAC merely formalised some of the strategic developments and new partnership approaches already adopted by District Councils and incorporated into the HELANI Strategic Plan, it was felt that guidance on the correct interpretation of the LAC would be appropriate. The NIHSLG produced this guidance, which was issued in March 2005. The guidance clarified the position on priority planning in relation to existing mandatory guidance, the HELANI Strategic Plan and the LAE1 return. It re-emphasised the importance of database maintenance both in terms of an accurate premises register and updating risk ratings, gave advice on how interventions should be recorded for reporting purposes and recommended a tighter policy on revisits.

In conjunction with the production of this guidance the NIHSLG has worked to revise the LAE1 return so that non-inspection interventions and work targeting the HELANI priority areas can be captured and reported alongside accident and inspection activity. This work has involved a growing number of software companies since 2005 and was delayed awaiting revisions in the GB format. It is hoped that the new LAE1 will run from 01 April 2008, permitting District Councils to demonstrate qualitatively as well as quantitatively their delivery of the HELANI Strategic Plan.

Quality and Performance Matrix/Auditing Framework

The Quality and Performance Matrix was devised by CEHOG in 2004 and approved by DoE as the performance indicator for the Environmental Health Service across Northern Ireland (for food safety and health and safety only). It is an internal management tool based on national audit frameworks, which delivers scores across both defined categories (e.g. enforcement policy and practices, investigations, staff competencies etc.) and three performance indicators – management, performance and review. The scores are then judged against a NI standard, permitting areas of poor performance to be highlighted and addressed both collectively by NIHSLG and individually by each council.



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The health and safety matrix was drafted with the assistance of the NIHSLG and the latter also produced guidance on its use in January 2005. Revision of the matrix question set and scoring advice has continued to date in response to user feedback. Version 2 of the guidance was issued in June 2006.

Training and development of Inspectors

The HELANI Committee issued mandatory guidance on the provision of a trained and competent inspectorate in June 2004. NIHSLG then worked to produce two pieces of guidance for District Councils – an Authorisation Policy and Competence and Development Guidelines for Officers Enforcing Health and Safety Legislation. Both documents were issued in August 2005.

The authorisation policy provides a template for councils to adopt that clearly sets down how the powers given to enforcement officers through their authorisation are linked to their individual competencies. It also provides information on appointment and authorisation documentation and appropriate officer records.

The guidelines on competence and development of officers link directly to mandatory guidance and provide advice to councils on how they might operate an induction and performance appraisal system to assess and develop officer competence. Examples of appropriate documentation are provided.

In addition to the above the NIHSLG has planned and delivered a comprehensive programme of training over the period 2004 to 2007. Training provision reflects on going inspector needs and takes account of regional initiatives and other opportunities presented by such partners as HSENI, CIEH (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health), NIO Firearms and Explosives Branch, Health Promotion Agency for NI and Central Government.

During the reporting period training was delivered on such diverse topics as work-related stress, MSDs, asbestos method statements, falls from a height, cosmetic piercing, racking safety, gas safety, firework displays, the “Workwell” initiative, sampling for Legionella, E-COSHH, the introduction of new smoke free legislation and enforcement of the manufacture and storage of explosives regulations.

Mandatory Guidance

During 2005, the NIHSLG worked with the HELANI Committee to complete two further pieces of mandatory guidance, namely “Enforcement Policy and Procedures for NI”, and “The Requirement to Produce a Service Plan, including Investigation of Accidents and Complaints”. The HELANI Committee issued both documents in October 2005.

Early consultation with the NIHSLG ensured that the final documents not only provided clear direction in terms of enforcement and planning arrangements but also were sufficiently flexible to enable District Councils to comply within their current policy and planning frameworks.

Memorandum of Understanding with Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

During 2006/2007 NIHSLG worked with the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) to produce a memorandum of understanding relating to coordination of the fire safety enforcement roles for the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001.

When introduced on 1 December 2001 the regulations amended the 1978 Order and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations to the extent that those aspects of control of fire risks are removed for enforcement purposes from the main body of health and safety legislation. These provisions are now enforced via the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001 by the NIFRS. This resulted in an enforcement split, with the NIFRS being responsible for the enforcement of general fire safety provisions and Councils/HSENI retaining responsibility for process fire risks within workplaces.

The memorandum of understanding confirms local liaison arrangements that have already proved to work well in clarifying grey areas of enforcement responsibility and the sharing of information on fire risks to ensure timely and appropriate enforcement action. The memorandum also clarifies the operating boundaries and the notification and contact arrangements for all parties. The document came into effect in August 2006.



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Backs NI Initiative

Following the success of the GB “Backs 2005” campaign, planning for a joint District Council and HSENI enforcement initiative in Northern Ireland on musculoskeletal disorders was undertaken by the Workplace Health Enforcement Team from August 2005 onwards. The initiative was led by a co-ordinator based in HSENI (Rosemary Campbell) and supported by a District Council co-ordinator (Patricia Allen). Entitled “Backs NI” the initiative aimed to improve compliance with the law relating to manual handling and to reduce the risk of work-related back injury in workplaces in Northern Ireland.

The initiative had four phases, namely:

- Training
- Publicity
- Inspections
- Follow-up visits

Formal Backs NI training was delivered in April 2006. A total of 110 people attended training including speakers and support staff. The training introduced inspectors to the inspection protocol produced for the initiative, looked at manual handling risk assessment and in particular the use of the MAC (Manual Handling Assessment Chart) Tool and detailed how ergonomic support would be provided as part of the initiative.

Publicity for the initiative took the form of a press release to local newspapers and trade and business journals and the creation of a Backs NI page on the Working for Health website. In advance of an inspection, businesses were sent an information pack giving details of the initiative and user-friendly manual handling advice and guidance.

All participating inspectors were asked to conduct 10 visits over the month of June 2006.

Premises were selected on the basis that a focus on manual handling activities would be expected to make a real difference. A total of 531 businesses received an inspection visit as part of the initiative (155 by HSENI and 376 by District Councils). Data collected during the inspections suggests that the initiative should potentially have impacted on at least 51,000 employees. In respect of the action taken by inspectors, approximately 57% of inspections resulted in verbal agreements and in only 4 cases was formal action taken to secure improvements. Twelve visits were undertaken with the support of an ergonomist.

Where, as a result of the initial inspection, duty holders had given a commitment to make improvements, inspectors were asked to conduct a follow-up visit by the end of December 2006. The aim of this visit was to establish whether agreed action had been taken and whether the risk of manual handling injury had now been reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable. Reports received from inspectors indicated that a total of 292 follow up visits were conducted. In 84% of cases businesses had either completed or were in the process of taking remedial action to reduce the risk. In addition, 45% of businesses had introduced other improvements. As a result, inspectors found that further contact with businesses was only required in 63 cases.

2
A focus on
priority issues

Evaluation of the initiative was conducted by NISRA in the form of two surveys in February 2007 – a telephone survey targeting all 531 businesses and an internet based survey of the 74 inspectors involved in the initiative. Both surveys indicated a high level of support for the initiative with 81% of businesses reporting that they had taken action to reduce the risk of back pain in their workplace as a result of the initiative.

A full evaluation report of the joint initiative will be published in Autumn 2007.

Falls from a Height Campaign

In April 2005 NIHSLG established a small working group to work alongside HSENI to consider the introduction of the Working at Height Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 and how the topic inspection approach suggested by HSE might be implemented in Northern Ireland. In October 2005 the working group delivered training to inspectors from all 26 District Councils with assistance from Ken Logan (HSENI) and Ridgeway (a local supplier of fall arrest and access equipment). The training provided a background on fatal accident incident rates in Northern Ireland and an introduction to the new regulations. Training also highlighted common accidents and the range of equipment available for working safely at height.

Inspectors were encouraged to implement the topic inspection approach and to consider local enforcement initiatives as a means of raising awareness of the new legislation within the retail and wholesale sector. The working group produced and distributed a significant topic inspection toolkit and guidance pack during the training event. This included information for use with businesses such as template letters, a working at height self-assessment checklist, guidance on the new regulations and the 'Safety Pays' leaflet on ladders/step ladders. To assist inspectors conduct an enforcement initiative the toolkit provided an inspection record based on three target areas (identification, equipment and contractors) and guidance on when to serve notices.

Stress Joint Programme

In August 2005 HSENI and District Council inspectors attended joint training on the Stress Management Standards, delivered by HSE. Subsequently it was agreed that the Workplace Health Enforcement Team (WHET) should develop a joint programme for work-related stress activity for the period 2005 to 2008. This programme detailed the various interventions and sectors where resources would be targeted as well as plans for ongoing training and support between HSENI and the 26 District Councils.

The majority of activity programmed for District Councils is due for delivery in the period 2007/8 when the financial sector will be targeted. However work conducted jointly between Jennifer Murphy (Belfast CC) and Dr. Skan (EMAS) testing a stress audit technique in call centres was reported on in 2006. During 2006/7 District Councils were kept informed of HSENI initiatives, e.g. cross border project and Work Positive Pilot, via the WHET mechanism.

Slips, Trips and Falls Resource Pack

A resource pack specifically designed to address slips, trips and falls was produced for councils, funded jointly by CEHOG and HSENI, and launched in May 2004. To coincide with the launch many District Councils distributed information to local businesses and obtained press coverage.

The pack provides comprehensive training materials which inspectors can use to deliver training to local businesses (SMEs). It also contains a number of resources to assist with focussed inspections and planning contacts. These include standard letters to businesses, architects and commercial interior designers highlighting the risks and appropriate technical advice and standards, an inspection checklist, template enforcement notices and useful websites for further information.

Asbestos Promotional Initiative

All 26 District Councils took part in an asbestos promotional initiative during May 2006. This was organised by a working group of NIHSLG, which included Carl Stuart from HSENI's newly established Asbestos Advisory Service. The initiative was delivered to coincide with the second anniversary of the new duty to manage asbestos in buildings. It involved the distribution of press releases and articles highlighting the duty to manage and how businesses could get support and advice from the new HSENI service. Councils also distributed advice to local businesses and business intermediaries directly and placed information on their websites in the form of Frequently Asked Questions about asbestos.

Vulnerable Workers

Working with Nancy Henry (HSENI) the NIHSLG organised a workshop in September 2004 for recruitment agencies to discuss their health and safety responsibilities. It was felt that a partnership approach with this sector would help improve the quality of both pre-employment risk assessments and the health and safety information provided to both workers and their host employers.

The workshop was well attended and from the feedback received it was agreed that written guidance should be produced for businesses that might employ temporary workers from employment/recruitment agencies. The guidance was aimed at assisting employers to understand their legal obligations and in particular how temporary workers should be included within the business's health and safety policy. It also provided the answers to some common questions around reporting accidents and supplying protective equipment.

Work on this advice sheet was then incorporated into the review of Safety Pays literature during 2005/6 and from October 2006 guidance to employers was incorporated within the new small business publication "Protect Your Profits".



Partnership working and the engagement stakeholders

Partnership working at all levels is a continuing theme for District Councils. During the period of this report Environmental Health Officers worked alongside a variety of other groups and disciplines to deal with crosscutting issues at a regional level. Examples of the work undertaken are outlined below, as well as featuring under the other themes in this report

Health and safety information for small businesses - review of the 'Safety Pays' and development of 'Protect Your Profits' literature.

A review of the Safety Pays packs, a comprehensive health and safety information resource targeted at small and medium sized enterprises, commenced in 2004. The review looked at how this successful project might be further developed in light of technological advances both within businesses (new hazards) and communication (e-government) and from a production viewpoint made more sustainable. Working with HSENI, it was proposed that a new information pack for small businesses, which could be used jointly by HSENI and District Councils, should be developed. The new booklet renamed "Protect Your Profits" now incorporates information on key health, safety and well being issues applicable to any business and is supplemented by a series of industry specific or topic specific sheets. Both the new booklet and all the individual insert sheets have gone through the rigorous "Plain English Campaign" and have achieved Crystal Mark status.

Low-resolution versions of the booklet and inserts have been supplied to councils to enable the information to be placed onto websites, thus helping to reduce printing and meet e-government targets. A joint launch of "Protect Your Profit" took place in Belfast during Enterprise Week in October 2006.

Development of new HELANI Strategic Plan

NIHSLG and the HELANI Committee worked together to produce the second HELANI Strategic Plan for 2005 - 2008. The three strategic themes included in the previous plan - the effective management of the health and safety function; a focus on specific workplace health and safety priority areas; partnership working and the full engagement of stakeholders - were retained and a fourth theme - an emphasis on achieving compliance in relation to workplace health - was added. This was considered necessary to raise the enforcement profile of workplace health issues and support the "Working for Health" action plan published in Northern Ireland in 2004.

Another new feature of the strategy was the inclusion of monitoring and review arrangements. These were designed to provide a set of measures whereby HELANI could assess progress against the implementation of the strategy.

Given the importance the HELANI Committee has attached to raising the public and political profile of health and safety in Northern Ireland, it was decided that the Strategic Plan would be launched at an event to which elected members of all 26 District Councils would be invited. The launch was held in Cookstown in June 2005.

The Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations (MSER)

The Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations (Northern Ireland) were enacted in 2006, and came into operation on 1st December 2006. NIHSLG, on behalf of CEHOG, worked alongside



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officials from the Firearms and Explosives Branch of the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) to prepare a service level agreement giving Councils powers to enforce the provisions of the regulations relating to storage of Type 4 pyrotechnic articles and power cartridge devices. District Councils as a consequence now undertake an inspection service on behalf of the Secretary of State as and when applications for registration for small-scale storage are received.

District Councils were provided with a programme of training on the new regulations and service level agreement. NIHSLG assisted with administrative arrangements in respect of authorisations for designated inspectors and will act as the point of contact for all future liaison. The service delivered by councils is in addition to the service provided to NIO in respect of the assessment and monitoring of licensed firework displays.

Legionella Technical Supplement

A comprehensive technical document was developed by members of NIHSLG, in consultation with Consultants in Communicable Disease Control, Epidemiologists, HSENI and the Public Health Laboratory at the City Hospital. The supplement provides a definitive guide on how to respond to cases of Legionnaires Disease, including the establishment and running of an outbreak control team, identifying potential sources, taking environmental samples and dealing with the media. During the period when the technical document was being drafted NIHSLG also delivered training on sampling for Legionella (September 2006). The Northern Ireland Legionella Technical Supplement was completed early in 2007, although its launch at a CEHOG event could not be scheduled until July 2007.

Sunbeds

District Council representatives continue to play an active role alongside other professionals from Health and Social Services Boards, Area Health Promotion departments and Medical Physics Agency and the Ulster Cancer Foundation in support of the Northern Ireland Melanoma Strategy Implementation Group (NIMSIG).

Sitting on the Sunbed Working Group (a subgroup of NIMSIG) NIHSLG representatives successfully lobbied to have sun beds removed from all council facilities and were instrumental in producing and distributing public information on the risks of using sunbeds. During this period, a regional conference on sunbeds was planned (and delivered in May 2007). The purpose of the conference was to contribute to the contemporary knowledge on the operation of sunbeds and the risks and trends associated with sunbed use. The target audience for the conference was a broad range of health professionals from the UK and Ireland.

The members of the Sunbed Group also developed a methodology and a standard research tool for use across Northern Ireland during this period. This was designed to be used as part of a major sunbed survey, scheduled for June 2007 in support of the Northern Ireland Melanoma Strategy Implementation Group. Members led investigations following concerns being raised at local level regarding the provision of Type 4 sunbeds in tanning facilities and the potential health risks associated with use of this particular type of equipment by the general public.

E-COSHH

During 2004 HSE in GB established a project group to promote the delivery of E-COSHH and NIHSLG put forward Sue Small (Small Business Adviser), Belfast City Council as a member. Sue worked from August 2004 with colleagues across England, Scotland and Wales, helping to plan and deliver events to EHOs and business intermediaries. NIHSLG asked Sue to roll out this work in Northern Ireland during 2005/6.

Sue led a Northern Ireland working group comprising of EHOs and a representative from Health and Safety Works NI (HSWNI), which was tasked to deliver training on E-COSHH to other EHOs and HSWNI colleagues. The group was also tasked to consider the feasibility of delivering business seminars on this topic. EHO/HSWNI training was subsequently delivered in early 2006 and two business seminars ran in June 2006 (Castlereagh and Omagh) with at least 30 businesses attending.

Evaluation of the E-COSHH seminars for business was completed and presented to NIHSLG in December 2006. Although the seminars were judged to have been a success, it was decided that no further training was required in the short term.

Guidance on employee contacts

Following a review of the implementation of the first HELANI Strategy by Councils, NIHSLG identified that a high proportion of councils were not being proactive in making employee contacts during their inspections or in encouraging employers to undertake effective employee consultation on health and safety issues. In response NIHSLG produced a guidance note for officers that was issued in August 2005.

The guidance contained a template policy for adoption by councils on the arrangements for making contact with safety/employee representatives during visits to workplaces and also the disclosure of information. The guidance also encouraged councils to raise awareness with employers on their duties to consult using appropriate literature and council websites, and to amend inspection records so that officers would be prompted to seek information from employers on their consultation arrangements.

Following the circulation by HSE of a new topic pack on worker consultation and involvement in December 2006, NIHSLG began work to revise the guidance, which was subsequently issued in 2007.

GasWise

In response to concerns raised regarding the safety of LPG installations in the catering sector 'GasWise' (a 3-year gas safety initiative) was planned and launched by NIHSLG in September 2005 in conjunction with HSENI and CORGI (Council for Registered Gas Installers). The launch, which took place at the Construction Industry Training Board's (CITB) training facility at Nutts Corner and involved Lawrence Hanna (HSENI), and James Murray (CORGI). Lecturers from CITB provided a short practical training element on the day. To accommodate inspectors from all 26 District Councils the launch was completed over two days.

Enforcement guidance, standard letters and promotional materials specifically branded for “GasWise” were produced and distributed to allow councils to support and join in with the initiative in whatever format suited their particular health and safety work programmes from September 2005 onwards. The working group for the project continued to meet on a regular basis to receive feedback from participating councils, to publicise and promote the initiative in trade journals and with other bodies such as the General Consumer Council and Firmus, to liaise with HSENI on grey imports, and to update the information within the initiative pack. Interim evaluation of the initiative was conducted early in 2007 and an evaluation report is currently being prepared.

Royal Mail

Concerns regarding the handling of excessive loads in Royal Mail were raised by the Communications Workers Union in 2005. In response, a working group led by NIHSLG, and comprising 5 councils and John Wright (HSENI) met to discuss correspondence from the Communications Workers Union. A programme of joint visits was conducted but no major health and safety issues were discovered.



An emphasis on achieving compliance in relation to workplace health

The main areas of work, MSDs and work-related stress, undertaken in relation to workplace health during the period have already been detailed within section 2. The following are examples of other initiatives that have been delivered under the workplace health banner.

Noise in the entertainment sector

To coincide with the European Week of Safety and Health 2005, a promotional initiative on the theme of noise was successfully conducted between October and Christmas 2005. This initiative involved working with the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, and included press coverage, articles in newsletters and trade journals and distribution of information packs targeting those most at risk of hearing loss.

CDs featuring popular artists were offered as an incentive to encourage those attending pubs and nightclubs to ask for the packs.

Workwell training

“Work Well” is a workplace health promotion initiative, targeted at small business employers (those with 10 to 50 employees). The key aims are to create a healthy and safe working environment, to put policies in place to make healthier choices and provide opportunities and support for employees to promote healthier lifestyles. NIHSLG members attended Health Promotion Agency (HPA) training in the use of the Workwell materials, lending support to this small business workplace health initiative. This training was delivered in November 2006. It is envisaged that participating councils will adopt the initiative and make it available to local businesses.

Smoke-free workplaces

In December 2004 the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, (DHSSPS) consulted on proposals to introduce smoke-free legislation into Northern Ireland. At this time representatives from NIHSLG worked alongside HSENI and Health Promotion Agency (HPA) to produce smoking packs in support of a public information campaign (including television advertising) focusing on the subject of passive smoking in the workplace. The packs, which contained guidance to help workplaces implement a no smoking policy, were primarily distributed to businesses by HSENI and Environmental Health Officers at local councils.

The NIHSLG further assisted CEHOG by preparing a submission to DHSSPS on the costs associated with the different legislative options – comprehensive, partial and voluntary controls. Upon the announcement by Minister Shaun Woodward in October 2005 of the introduction of comprehensive controls in workplaces and enclosed public places by April 2007, CEHOG established a Tobacco Task Group. Sean Martin represented NIHSLG on this group.

The Tobacco Task Group focussed on the following key areas:

- Ensuring workable legislation with clear duties and offences, backed up by comprehensive enforcement guidelines;



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- Developing and implementing a comprehensive communication strategy to ensure that businesses and the general public were fully aware of the requirements of the legislation;
- Lobbying and obtaining funding from DHSSPS for the establishment of a team of smoke-free environment officers whose role was to assist businesses develop policies that effectively protected employees and others from the risks of passive smoking; and
- Identifying and working with key partners such as DHSSPS, Health Boards and HPA to ensure the delivery of clear and consistent messages on the health risks of passive smoking and to promote compliance with the new legislation.

The Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 is due to come into operation on 30th April 2007. It has been viewed as the most significant piece of public health legislation of our time, not just because of the reduction it will achieve in smoking-related ill health for the general population, but also because it will effectively tackle the issue of passive smoking in the workplace setting.



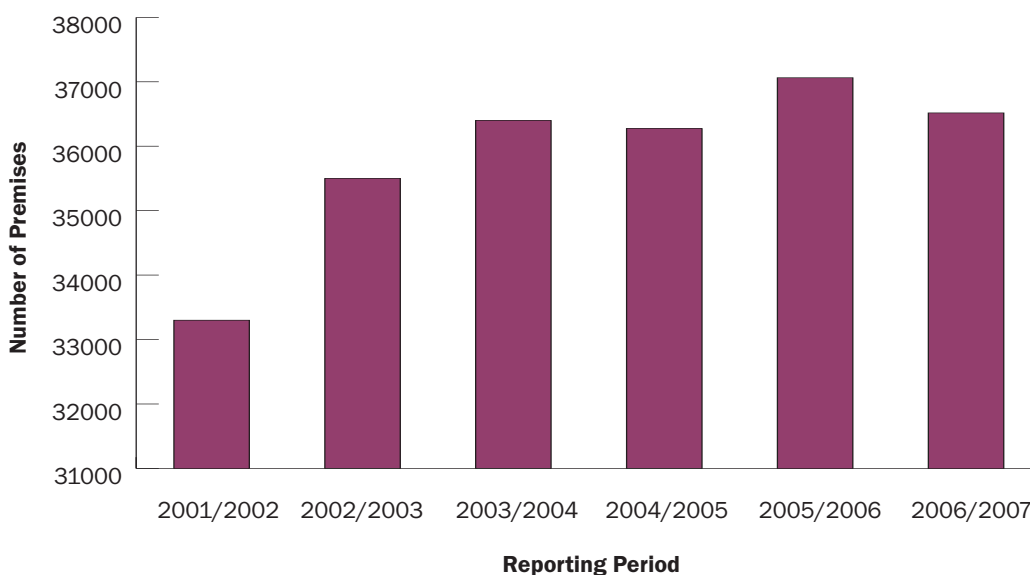
Number of premises registered

The number of premises registered for inspection by District Councils for the most recent accounting period 2006/2007 is reported as 36,517. This figure is subject to constant variation as businesses open, close and premises change use. The overall increase in premises numbers since the 33,300 recorded in 2001 can be attributed not only to the continuing growth of the District Council enforced business sectors in Northern Ireland, but also to the continuing efforts made by District Councils to maintain contemporary data bases.

Table 1: Number of premises registered for inspection

Reporting period	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
Numbered of premises registered	36,275	37,063	36,517

Figure 1: Number of premises registered for inspection 2001/02 – 2006/07





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Number of inspections and visits

District Council Inspectors may visit workplaces for many different reasons. All visits where an Inspector has offered advice; sought information on health and safety at work; or used one or more of their enforcement powers to secure compliance with health and safety law are recorded.

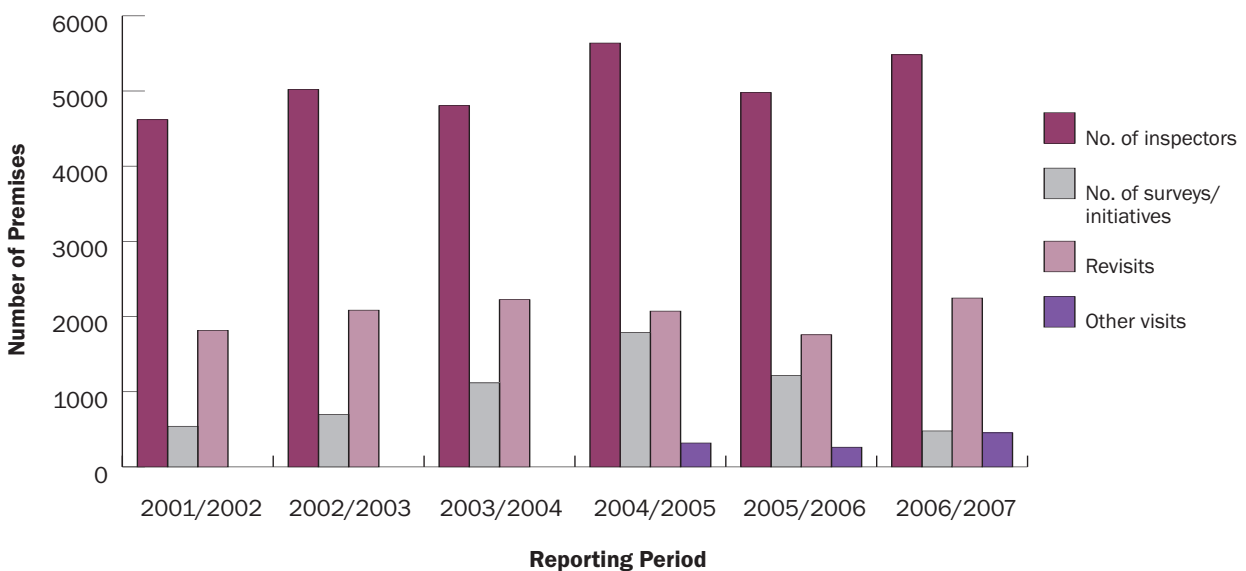
Revisits are visits made with the main purpose to confirm that action previously suggested or required has been completed, e.g. compliance with an Improvement Notice. Special surveys may be initiated by local or regionally identified priorities.

The number of inspections and visits undertaken in District Councils since 2004 is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of inspections and visits

Reporting period	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
No. of inspections	5638	4980	5482
No. of visits re. surveys/initiatives	1788	1216	478
Revisits	2072	1757	2246
Other visits	318	262	453
Total inspections/visits	9816	8215	8659

Figure 2: Number of inspections and visits 2001/02 – 2006/07



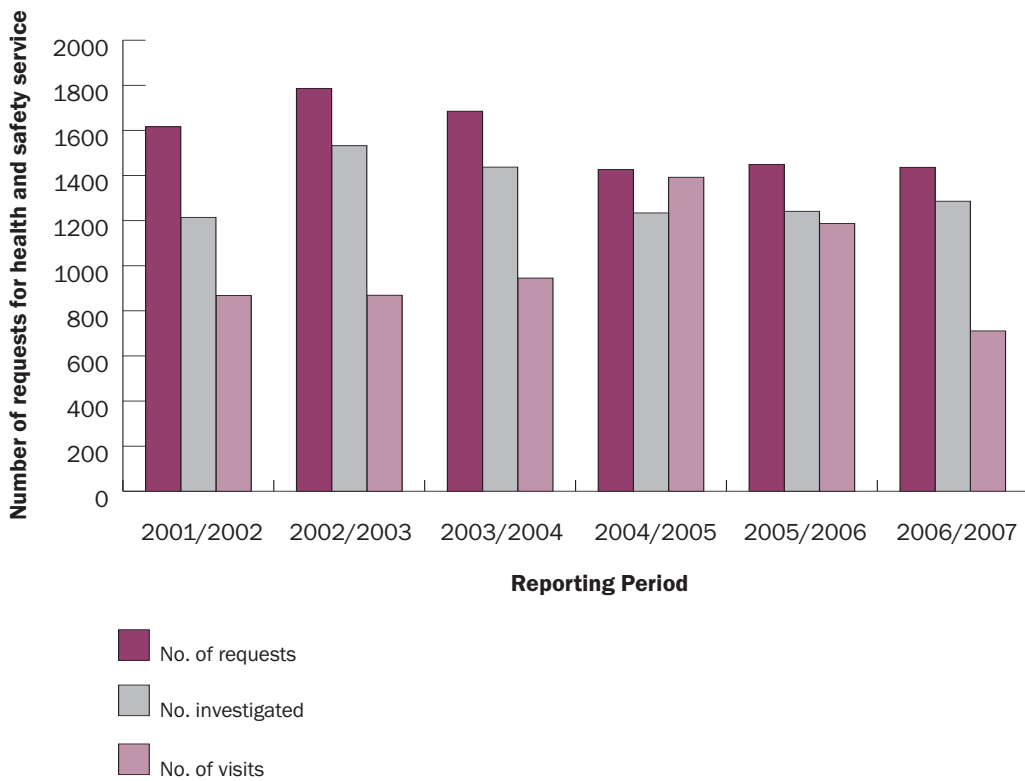
Requests for health and safety service

A complaint regarding the health and safety standards within a workplace would be an example of a request for health and safety service and may come from a Councillor, an employee or a member of the public, etc. In 2006/2007, the District Councils received 1,436 of these requests. A total of 1,286 of were investigated, with 711 visits arising.

Table 3: Number of requests for health and safety service

Reporting period	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
No. of requests	1427	1449	1436
No. investigated	1234	1241	1286
Investigation rate	86.5%	85.6%	89.5%
No. of visits	1392	1187	711

Figure 3: Number of requests for health and safety service 2001/02 – 2006/07



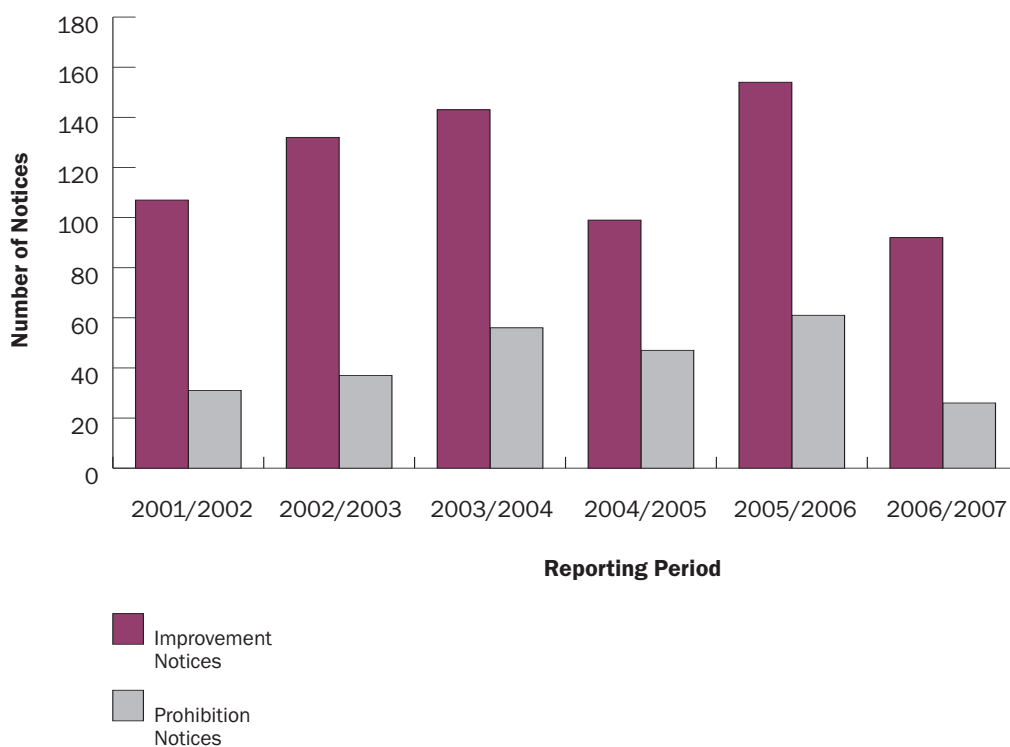
Enforcement action

For the period 2006/2007 District Councils issued a total of 44,260 informal notices. An informal notice is any form of written communication with an occupier advising or warning about health and safety failures but which stops short of formal enforcement action. During the same period, 92 improvement notices and 28 prohibition notices were served. There was also 1 formal caution issued and 3 legal proceedings concluded resulting in 3 convictions.

Table 4: Number of Notices, Cautions and Prosecutions

Reporting period	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
Informal Notices	4032	4204	4426
Improvement Notices	99	154	92
Prohibition Notices	47	61	28
Formal Cautions	1	9	1
Prosecutions	2	8	3

Figure 4: Number of Improvement and Prohibition Notices served 2001/02 – 2006/07



Reportable Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences

A total of 740 workplace injuries were reported to District Councils in 2006/2007, representing an approximately 8% decrease on the 2004/2005 figure.

Of the incidents reported, 76% were investigated either via telephone or during the 569 related visits made by officers.

Table 5: Number of Reportable Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences

Reporting year		2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
Employees	Fatal	1	0	1
	Major	61	66	61
	Dangerous Occurrence	6	6	2
	Over 3 day	541	566	516
Public	Fatal	0	1	0
	Taken to hospital	195	146	160
Total number of accidents		805	786	740
Total number of visits to investigate		623	561	569
Investigation rate		80.8%	72.3%	76.0%

Staff resources

For the period 2006/2007 there were 99 officers authorised by the District Councils under Article 21 of the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978. Environmental Health is a multi disciplinary field therefore not all of these officers will spend all of their time working in the health and safety function. When amalgamated together the full time officer equivalent of these 99 people equates to 36.2 Inspectors.

Table 6: Staff resources

Reporting Period	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
No of Inspectors	91	103	99
Full time equivalent	38.3	36.5	36.2

Glossary of Terms

CEHOG	Chief Environmental Health Officers' Group
CITB	Construction Industry Training Board
CORGI	Council for Registered Gas Installers
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
EMAS	Employment Medical Advisory Service
HELA	Health and Safety Executive/Local Authority Enforcement Liaison Committee
HELANI	Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland/Local Authority Enforcement Liaison Committee
HSENI	Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland
HSWNI	Health and Safety Works Northern Ireland
LAC	Local Authority Circular
LAE1	Local Authority Annual Statistical Return
LAU	Local Authority Unit
MAC	Manual Handling Assessment Chart
MSD	Musculoskeletal Disorder
MSER	Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations
NIFRS	Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service
NIHSLG	Northern Ireland Local Authority Health and Safety Liaison Group
NIMSIG	Northern Ireland Melanoma Strategy Implementation Group
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations
SME	Small to Medium Enterprise
WHET	Workplace Health Enforcement Team

