

Announcements 2011

Powering Improvement mentioned in Safety and Health Practitioner (May 2011)

There is praise for the industry's Powering Improvement strategy at a Parliamentary Reception held by ENA on the 26th May and covered in Safety & Health Practitioner.

Powering Improvement Article Featured in British Safety Council Magazine (November 2011)

An article on the Background of Powering Improvement is published in the November edition of the BritSafe Magazine with quotes from Peter McCormick (Powering Improvement Coordinator at ENA)

CALL FOR ALL COMPANIES TO PICK UP THE SAFETY BATON

CONFERENCE WELCOMED the Powering Improvement programme, but two successful motions raised the need to press managers at workplace level to match the commitment to health and safety shown at a senior level.

Moving the first motion for the sector executive, Ray Arrowsmith (National Grid) said the new Powering Improvement programme (see speech by Doug Wilson) was being well received at top level, including from government.

However, he added: "We have concerns that the message has not reached down to all levels and that some workplaces do not take the Powering Initiative ethos into account when reorganisations take place. We are looking for your support to continually make our work on safety a key issue and regularly report back to workplaces on relevant activities and outcomes."

Delegates also carried a motion moved by Neil Thomson (Scottish and Southern Energy), instructing the sector executive to monitor companies to ensure they meet their commitments. This should include making the industry's national health, safety and environment committee aware of those failing to do so.

He said: "Everyone agrees that this is an excellent initiative covering employers, unions and HSE. From SSE's viewpoint it has reflected the stated aims of the company on safety.

"In fact our director of networks Mark Mathieson presented a keynote speech at the launch.

"However, as we enter the second year, there is been a total lack of promotion of it among the workforce." If members in other companies were experiencing something similar, the motion aimed to rectify that.



■ **Arrowsmith and Thomson (above): promote safety at workplace level**



OTHER DEBATES

– Debates on energy policy, pensions, and deputy general secretary Mike Clancy's report were published in *Profile* 3/11 (June-Jul). Turn to page 8 of *Energy Lines* for a photo of the newly elected presidential team



You cannot leave it to chance

DOUG WILSON, UK health and safety director at Scottish Power, said the Powering Improvement initiative has brought together companies, the unions and Health and Safety Executive to promote health and safety across the industry.

Each of the five years leading up to 2015 has its own theme: leadership in 2010; occupational health and wellbeing in 2011; asset management and maintenance in 2012; behavioural safety and personal responsibility in 2013; and in 2014, next steps.

He said that the 2011 delivery plan on occupational health and wellbeing was committed to:

- discuss and clarify at board level successfully managing occupational health risks
- identify the top three health risks and address them
- ensure health surveillance and fitness work assessments are delivered to national and legisla-

tive standards

- improve the management of stress, examining how to take away the stigma around mental health issues and recognising that no one is bullet proof
- get people back to work by developing policies to rehabilitate them back into the workplace.
- consider a fast-track physiotherapy approach to the management of musculo-skeletal disorders
- raise awareness of the importance of workforce involvement, specifically health and safety and other workers' representatives.

On the last point, Wilson said:

"We could do better. We do lots of joint training but don't do enough on health. We don't need people to be doctors or counsellors or therapists, but we do need to be aware of support routes."

Everyone had a role to play – "you cannot leave safety to chance."



Press Ofgem on workforce renewal

THE ENERGY sector represents one of the few environments where young people can still establish a structured, long-term career with diverse opportunities, pointed out a motion from the sector executive.

It called on Prospect to press the government, the regulator and companies to make this positive vision a reality. Mover Neil Freeman (UK Power Networks) referred to the importance of the decision by Ofgem in its distribution price control review 5 to provide allowances to companies for workforce renewal.

The motion contained five actions for the SEC:

- find out and highlight how each network operator had used its Ofgem allowances
- lobby Ofgem for a similar approach to workforce renewal in the transmission price control review
- work with the National Skills Academies for Power and Nuclear, Energy and Utility Skills and Cogent to ensure maximum co-ordination and delivery on skills
- host a Prospect energy skills seminar in 2012
- continue to press the skills issue at every opportunity with companies and in submissions to stakeholders.

COMMENT: PETER MCCORMICK

SINCE PRIVATISATION of the electricity industry in 1990 accident statistics show that the sector is five times safer. However, despite this marked improvement there have been a number of high profile incidents that have led to workers being seriously or fatally injured. Although safety risks are largely being well managed there remains a challenge.

From 2000 to the end of 2009, the industry initiative SAFELEC 2010 was the vehicle used to improve standards. Our new programme, *Powering Improvement*, is its successor. It aims to build on SAFELEC successes and also address areas where we did not perform as well as we might have hoped.

To meet the challenges member companies of Energy Networks Association (ENA) and the Association of Energy Producers (AEP) are working alongside the four trade unions operating in the sector (Prospect, Unison, Unite and GMB) and with HSE. In my 40-plus years of working in the industry I have seen how important it is to address these issues as a partnership involving all stakeholders working collaboratively to achieve a positive outcome.

The strategy being taken through this initiative will build on the work HSE is doing and the key themes of leadership, worker involvement and improvement. In line with this, across the five years we will maintain these three over-arching themes as well as ensuring the industry proactively manages the risks that cause real harm.

Work will evolve over the period taking into account new information and experience gained in delivering the early objectives. To maintain momentum each year the strategy will focus on a specific topic which has been identified as a priority area for our sector and each topic will be led by a senior industry champion.

Last year for the theme of leadership we gained support of the chief executives of all the member companies as well as Brendan Barber of the TUC and secured great engagement with these issues from senior figures. During 2011 we have been focusing on successfully managing the risks of occupational health and in particular mental health risks such as stress. The next three years will look at asset management and maintenance, behavioural safety and personal responsibility, and finally looking ahead to ensure the lessons learnt can be used to deliver long-term improvements.

The delivery plan for 2012 is asset management and maintenance. It will be based on a number of deliverables to develop an industry competency framework: guidance highlighting the link between asset management and safety; case studies to aid best practice; and engagement with employees to communicate the best way to manage health and safety risks through asset maintenance.

I believe that without this joint approach we would not improve on our accident or ill health record.

“ We have been focusing on managing the risks of occupational health and mental health risks such as stress ”



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energynetworks
association

PETER MCCORMICK, POWERING IMPROVEMENT COORDINATOR AT ENA