

ENA Occupational Health Committee



Business Plan 2013-2015



DEVELOPING IMPROVEMENTS IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

1. Objectives 2013 - 2015

Powering Improvement

The primary focus of the **ENA Occupational Health Committee** is to support and promote the industry's **Powering Improvement** health and safety strategy, and specifically the application of its principles to the management of occupational health and wellbeing within the electricity network businesses. This is achieved through the sharing and promotion of individual company good practices and by developing collective solutions to issues where appropriate.

Powering Improvement commits the industry to build on its partnership approach to bring about continuous improvements in the management of safety and occupational health in the electricity sector for the five years leading up to 2015.

The three overarching themes of the strategy reflect those of the HSE strategy and emphasize the importance of **Leadership, Improving Competence and Worker Involvement**. The Committee will encourage all Member Companies to raise the awareness and application of these themes to occupational health issues.

The strategy recognises that ill health remains a major challenge for the industry and occupational health issues are a high priority throughout the course of the initiative. Powering Improvement has provided the opportunity to specifically raise the profile and importance of occupational health within the workplace, and this was the priority topic of focus during 2011. The continued implementation of initiatives and sector guidance developed in support of the strategy will help maintain momentum in raising awareness of occupational health issues within the companies. Opportunities will also be pursued to promote health aspects within other priority topics including asset management and maintenance activities and human and organisational factors, for which health surveillance, fatigue and mental wellbeing issues can remain important factors to be addressed. Going forward the Committee will review progress and achievements in support of Powering Improvement and address any new occupational health issues as they arise.

The Committee will continue to promote the benefits of Occupational Health Risk Management via the following routes:

- **Occupational Health Business Plan** (this plan)
- Communication of key messages via **ENA and Powering Improvement web sites**
- Maintain awareness of priority topics, including **MSDs, Stress and Mental Wellbeing and Public Health issues**
- Engage and support **Health and Safety Representatives** via company HESACs to promote worker engagement in occupational health and wellbeing
- Articles for journals and external publications
- Contributing to and maintaining professional knowledge levels via attendance at conferences and workshops

In all cases an integrated approach to the management of occupational health within the companies will be implemented through the use of awareness programmes, employee engagement, specialist OH healthcare provision and ongoing support at all levels of the organisation. This will be achieved through the use of suitable health surveillance systems and fitness to work programmes that not only maintain the health, wellbeing and welfare of employees, but also provide business cost benefits.

HSE Strategy

Aligning company aims with the goals set out in the **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** strategy, "**The Health and Safety of Great Britain: Be Part of the Solution**", is a priority and an integral part of companies' business plans. The industry has aligned itself with the principles outlined in the strategy, and the companies are working towards implementing its aims through Powering Improvement.

Health & Wellbeing

Dame Carol Black's review of the health of Britain's working age population, **Working for a healthier tomorrow** (March 2008), outlined a new vision for health and work in Britain. It estimated the economic costs of sickness absence and worklessness associated with working age ill-health as being over £100 billion a year.

In 2011/12 of 27 million working days lost, 22.7 million were due to ill health compared to 4.3 million to injury (HSE). In addition 1.1 million people who worked during the last year were suffering from an illness (long-standing as well as new cases) they believed was caused or made worse by their current or past work; 0.5 million of these were new conditions which started during the year. A further 0.7 million former workers (who last worked over 12 months ago) were suffering from an illness which was caused or made worse by their past work.

The vision therefore is to engender a culture of health and wellbeing, and design fit for purpose models for work in the 21st century. It is accepted that healthy, engaged workforces will lead to increased efficiency, productivity and performance for businesses. This is to be achieved through focusing on prevention over cure via early and coordinated intervention strategies in occupational health.

Government policy

Companies will continue to implement Government policy on occupational health and public health matters. Companies are working to integrate the new Medical Fit Note within their procedures, and more recently the introduction of the Responsibility Deal Health at Work Pledges on chronic conditions, occupational health services, employee health and wellbeing and healthy eating.

The report from the Government's Sickness Absence Review was published in November 2011, which includes recommendations on routes to keeping employees in work and their rehabilitation following illness.

The review was jointly chaired by David Frost, former Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, and Dame Carol Black, then National Director for Health and Work.

The review outcomes are aimed at improving support to employers, individuals and the State in the assistance given to those either in or in danger of entering long term unemployment. Recommendations included the Government funding of a new Independent Assessment Service which would provide an in-depth assessment of an individual's physical and/or mental function after four weeks absence. It would also provide advice about how an individual on sickness absence could be supported to return to work. Government was also encouraged to revise fit note guidance and do more to improve knowledge and awareness among healthcare professionals of the importance of work for health and introduce a new job-brokering service to help long-term sick employees find new work before they fall onto the benefits system.

Measurement Indicators

The Committee has identified the need to review indicators of success that are applied to occupational health initiatives. There is also a need for leading indicators of performance and additional reporting metrics to those already in place to be employed.

The Committee has agreed to look at developing high level monitoring protocols based on existing indicators that could be utilised by all companies. This would enable a sector wide review of progress to be monitored through the collation of suitable data (quantitative and qualitative). A combination of health data (lagging) and proactive initiatives (leading) are proposed as suitable indicators of performance, which once developed will enable progress to be measured throughout the lifetime of the Powering Improvement strategy and beyond. These indicators are likely to be based on sickness absence data, health surveillance programmes, occupational health KPIs and achievements of initiatives on specific topics.

This framework (Reporting Protocol) would also provide the opportunity for liaison and benchmarking between companies on progress and the impact of occupational health policies and specific programmes or initiatives.

Continuous development

The work of the Occupational Health Committee is reviewed on an annual basis and achievements secured during the year will be added to this document, to ensure it is revised and updated on a regular basis.

2. Outputs 2011/12

In support of Powering Improvement a set of six **Commitments** were agreed at senior level and cascaded throughout the companies during 2011, to both encourage the uptake of occupational health activities and help reduce the incidence of work-related ill health. This was supported by training and the provision of information, particularly to health practitioners and safety representatives, to ensure that the importance of occupational health was reinforced within the businesses throughout the year. An HSE Champion at Director level provided further assistance in maintaining the profile of the initiative.

A number of events, including workshops, conferences and training days were held to help promote the aims and benefits of good occupational health management.

Guidance was developed and published in support of the six Commitments to assist companies in both raising the awareness of and tackling the key issues within the sector. Links to useful professional organisations and recommended sources of advice were also promoted.

A **Health Needs Assessment Tool** was developed to help provide companies with an initial means of identifying the key health risks to the organisation and suitable control measures in place to manage those risks.

Existing and new **Case Study material** was published on specific occupational health issues including health surveillance, stress and mental health and wellbeing, and MSDs.

The above were planned outputs in support of the 2011 Powering Improvement Delivery Plan and all were successfully delivered and implemented within the companies. Achievements within the sector as a whole were also outlined in the **Powering Improvement Annual Report for 2011**.

All of the above information is freely available via the Powering Improvement web site (www.poweringimprovement.org)

3. Existing Framework

Achievements to date need to be set within the context of the programme of work undertaken by the Occupational Health Committee over the last few years. This will also shape the future direction of the group and the key priorities to be addressed.

Health & Wellbeing Framework

The Committee developed a strategic approach based on best practice for the effective management of health and wellbeing by ENA member companies. A Health and Wellbeing Framework was produced in 2009 based on the principles of a sound management system. This was developed to help assess and monitor company performance in health and wellbeing issues, and is composed of a number of individual protocols that set out requirements for the effective management of health risks and the promotion of wellbeing issues in the workplace.

Case Studies

Member companies have published their approach to the management of health surveillance and fitness to work programmes within the business. The systems and procedures in place are summarised in the form of case studies that provide examples of good practice to be shared both within the industry and externally, to help promote the further development and improvement of health surveillance processes. Topics covered include health surveillance, stress, MSDs and hand-arm vibration.

Occupational Health Advisory Group (OHAG)

The Occupational Health Committee draws as required on the medical expertise of the OHAG, which is an independent body of senior occupational health physicians from ENA member companies.

OHAG provides advice to the companies and promotes good practice in occupational health across the electricity industry. This includes the preparation of Guidance Notes on topics of interest covering all aspects of the industry from generation, through transmission and distribution, to retail and supply. They give medical advice in key areas affecting the health of employees within the utility sectors and are published on the ENA web site.

OHAG have a seat on the Occupational Health Committee allowing for regular representation, and the Occupational Health Committee and OHAG formally meet at least once a year to discuss and coordinate respective work plans and priorities.

Energy UK OH Forum

The Occupational Health Committee similarly liaises with the Energy UK Occupational Health Forum which is comprised of representatives from the generation sector to share information and learning on common health issues affecting the sector as a whole. Energy UK is also a joint partner of the Powering Improvement strategy and contributed to the 2011 programme on occupational health.

Occupational Health Committee

Structure and Membership

The **ENA Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Committee** established a standalone committee to focus on health and wellbeing issues. The Occupational Health Committee provides the opportunity to identify and share good practice, and drive forward improvements in the critical area of health and wellbeing. Membership of the committee is achieved via a balance of safety, occupational health and HR professionals from ENA member companies.

Committee Objectives

The work of the Committee is defined by its Terms of Reference and Objectives. The main purpose and role of the Committee is to collectively address current occupational health and wellbeing issues, share, learn and promote good practice, and develop an overall strategic view with regard to the management of occupational health and wellbeing within ENA member companies.

The Objectives are implemented via this Business Plan, which enables the Committee to focus its attention on specific initiatives with clear outputs, and seeks to help ENA member companies to:

- Prevent and reduce ill health and injury in our workplaces
- Prioritise activities to meet legal requirements
- Promote health and wellbeing in our workplaces
- Adopt a strategic approach to sector health and wellbeing issues
- Promote our industry as socially responsible
- Promote ENA member companies as exemplar employers
- Promote good health practices at work and at home

The Committee aims to supplement the work of the individual ENA Member Companies in these respects through support of their programmes and the promotion of effective manager/employee relationships, access to competent persons, financial investment, training, and auditing.

There is both a need and an appetite for the sharing of resource, knowledge, best practice and experience among ENA members for the benefit of all concerned. This represents the core of the work of the ENA Occupational Health Committee.

Stakeholder engagement will also be maintained through open relationships with key regulatory bodies such as HSE, and other utility sectors and providers where appropriate. This includes the energy generation, gas distribution and water industries.