



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Ospidéal Dr. Steevens'  
Baile Átha Cliath 8

Office of the National Director of Human Resources  
Health Service Executive  
Dr. Steevens' Hospital  
Dublin 8

**HSE HR Circular 015/2015**

**1<sup>st</sup> July 2015**

**To: Each Member of the Leadership Team HSE  
Each Assistant National Director  
Each Chief Executive Officer of Hospital Groups  
Each Chief Officer of Community Healthcare Organisations**

**From: Mr Ian Tegerdine, Interim National Director of Human Resources**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015**

**Re: National Health and Safety Support Function**

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Dear Colleagues,

Further to the Director General's Memo of 6 January 2014 (copy attached), I write to advise you of changes taking place in the area of HR health and safety support in the HSE for your information.

As you may be aware, a specialist review of health and safety within the HSE in 2013 identified geographical disparities in terms of the provision of support and access to competent persons/ health and safety specialists. Following the release of the report, a number of key steps were taken by the Director General to address such deficiencies, i.e.:

- The appointment of the National Director of HR as the corporate-level nominee for Health and Safety support. This formally placed health and safety support within the remit of the HR Directorate and day-to-day responsibility for support functions passed to the AND HR, Employee Relations Advisory Services (ERAS). Support in the area of Fire Safety and Infrastructural Risk remains within the remit of HBS Estates.
- Appointment of a Health and Safety Manager.
- Establishment of a Health and Safety Management Advisory Committee.
- The re-organisation of existing HR health and safety support services into a single, unified, national Function.

With regard to the National Health and Safety Function, the new arrangements are based on a detailed examination of the available resources, the key priority and delivery areas and the recommendations of the external specialist review referred to above. In line with the Director

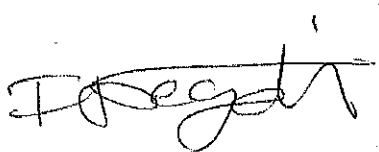
General's commitments in the Corporate Safety Statement, the restructuring is intended to address issues of compliance in relation to access to competent persons across the HSE. Details of health and safety support for managers are set out in the attached paper.

Responsibility and accountability for maintaining a safe working environment and systems of work rests with relevant managers, as detailed in Section 80 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. Hence, the National Health and Safety Function will act as a support service for managers/duty-holders (those who have statutory duties to ensure that health and safety is managed through the HSE's day-to-day activities). Though the function cannot manage health and safety on behalf of duty-holders, it sets out to provide duty-holders with the necessary assistance through specialist technical information, advice, policies, statutory training and inspection and audit. For example, managers will be able to access advice from a qualified specialist through the national Helpdesk (which is due to "go-live" on 1 July 2015, [hs.helpdesk@hse.ie](mailto:hs.helpdesk@hse.ie)). This will ensure that queries are addressed in a more structured and consistent manner. The central handling of queries will also enable a greater level of organisational learning and the ongoing development of information and support resources.

I would appreciate if you bring this document to the attention of all relevant staff in your Division.

If you require any further information or have queries in relation to this Circular, please contact Mr Nick Parkinson, National Head of Health and Safety, [nicholasj.parkinson@hse.ie](mailto:nicholasj.parkinson@hse.ie).

Yours sincerely



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**Ian Tegerdine**  
**Interim National Director of Human Resources**



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Health Service Executive

## Organisational Update on Changes to Safety and Health Support

<b>Document reference number</b>	15 06 15 OSH Support Structure Changes	<b>Document developed by</b>	NH&SF Management Team
<b>Revision number</b>	0	<b>Document approved by</b>	AND HR ERAS & Head of NH&S Function
<b>Distribution</b>	General		
<b>Date</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> of June 2015	<b>Review</b>	

### Background

Following a review of the provision of health and safety services nationally in 2013, and the recommendations made in the review findings, a number of key actions have now been implemented to ensure there is a standardised approach to the provision of health & safety support across the HSE. We should like to take this opportunity to advise you of the progress made to date and the changes that will take place over the coming months.

The abovementioned review identified geographical disparities in terms of the provision of support and access to health and safety specialists/competent persons. Consequently, a number of key steps were initiated by the Director General to address such deficiencies, including:

- The appointment of the Director of HR as the corporate-level nominee for Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) support. This places health and safety support within the remit of the HR Directorate (support in the area of Fire Safety and Infrastructural Risk is to remain the responsibility of HBS Estates)
- The establishment of a National Health and Safety Management Advisory Committee, which brings together the key stakeholders involved in the provision of OSH support
- The appointment of a national lead for OSH support
- The re-organisation of existing HR health and safety support services into a single, unified, National Function (the National Health and Safety Function), headed-up by the national lead for OSH support

## **National Health and Safety Function**

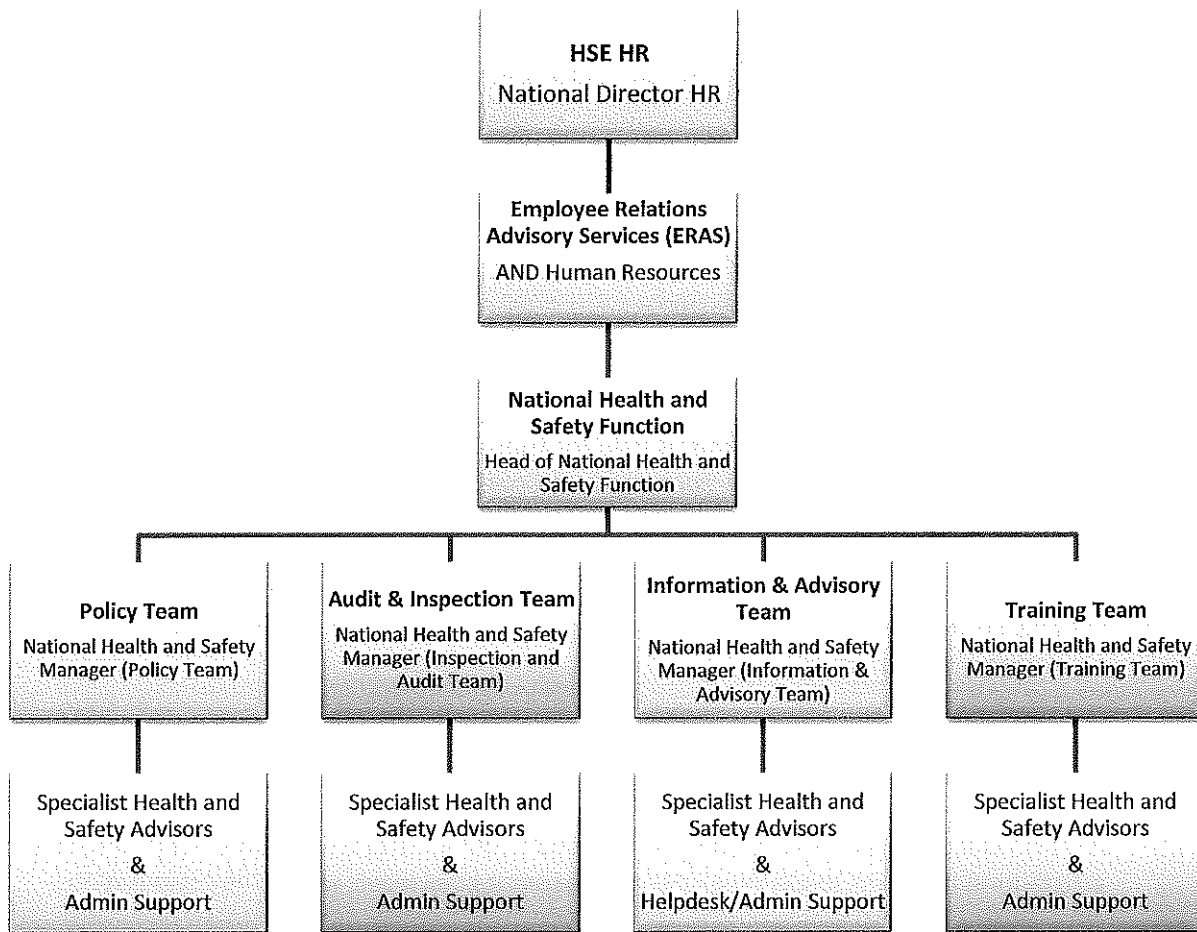
The new Health & Safety Function sits within HR as part of ERAS. The Head of Function is supported by four National Health and Safety Managers. Each of these Managers is responsible for a key delivery area and is supported by a team of National Health & Safety Advisors. Diagram 1 overleaf outlines the organisational structure for the Function.

## **Implementation of the Function**

The implementation process for the Function commenced on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015. In terms of transition timelines, the four National Health and Safety Managers are now in post, existing HR Health and Safety Staff have been transferred into the Function and work is underway to prepare for the helpdesk go-live on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015.

**Diagram 1**

**Structure of the National Health and Safety Function**



**Supports offered**

The Function will maintain support in the key delivery areas, i.e. policy, procedure and guideline development, statutory OSH training, audit/ inspection and the provision of specialist information and advice.

There will also be a change of emphasis, improving the nature of support and accessibility. For example:

- As responsibility and accountability for maintaining a safe working environment and systems of work rests with relevant managers, as detailed in Section 80 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the Function will act as a support service to better enable Responsible Persons to discharge their duties
- The Health & Safety Function has a national brief

- The focus will be national, rather than local and all services will be accessed through a single point of contact - the Health & Safety Helpdesk via the email : [hs.helpdesk@hse.ie](mailto:hs.helpdesk@hse.ie)
- The Health & Safety Function will make greater use of the intranet for the provision of information and a blended learning approach will be taken to training
- Finally, there will be a greater emphasis on planned audits and inspections

## **Key benefits**

The benefits to these changes will include:

- The ability to track emerging issues and key risk areas through the establishment of the Helpdesk
- The promotion of the concept of self-help for front-line duty-holders and the development of a tool-kit of reliable and consistent information, alerts, templates and guidance documents
- A reduced emphasis on classroom-based face-to-face training in favour of a national blended learning strategy (greater use of e-learning and web-based training), supporting a new policy on statutory OSH training
- The introduction of best practice based OSH policy development and approval processes
- An increased emphasis on assurance, benchmarking and quality improvement, through Key Performance Indicators and the introduction of a structured audit and inspection programme that aims to examine OSH management at all levels within the organisation

Overall the intention of this reorganisation is to combine existing expertise and best-practice around the country and provide a high-quality, centralised support resource that motivates, enables and empowers managers and staff to discharge their legal and moral duties with regard to OSH management.

In return we welcome your continued co-operation and support so that together we may achieve the goal of a healthier and safer workplace.



Feldhneannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

**MEMO**

**Date:** 6<sup>th</sup> January 2014  
**To:** HSE Leadership Team  
**Cc:** Tom Beegan, Chair Risk Committee  
**From:** Tony O'Brien, Director General  
**Re:** Health & Safety Management - DG Ref: 274768

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Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to update you on the implementation arrangements for the Beegan Report '*Review of Health and Safety Performance within the HSE*'.

Following discussions with Mr. Barry O'Brien, National Director HR and Dr. Philip Crowley, National Director Quality & Patient Safety the following arrangements have been agreed:

- A General Manager is to be assigned through an Expression of Interest (to issue on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2014) to provide leadership and support to the HSE for the development, implementation and ongoing review of the HSE's Safety and Health Management System, ensuring continuous improvement based on systematic organisational learning (job description attached).
- The initial reporting relationship for the General Manager will be within the HR Division to Ms. Norah Mason, Assistant National Director Employee Relations Advisory & Assurance Services.
- An advisory group to address cross cutting issues will be established comprising National Directors for HR, Quality & Patient Safety and Shared Services all of whom have responsibility for Health and Safety management.
- A key task for this National Lead role will be to devise a Strategy and Action Plan to promote a positive occupational safety and health culture in the HSE and establish and maintain procedures to ensure that the Leadership Team and Directorate (Risk Committee) are accurately appraised on the management and performance indicators of health and safety in the HSE.

Yours sincerely,

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**Tony O'Brien**  
Director General

