

# A Scottish Plan for Action on Safety and Health 2016 and beyond





“ A great opportunity for all those in the Scottish health and safety system to work together to improve workplace health and safety.”

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## Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the Scottish Plan for Action on Safety and Health (SPIASH) which provides a great opportunity for all those in the Scottish health and safety system to work together to improve workplace health and safety. It is a living plan that will evolve over time based on the latest evidence and practical experience.

Work-related fatal accidents, injury and ill-health have a devastating impact on individuals whose health and livelihoods are permanently damaged, as well as the loss experienced by bereaved families and those left to cope. In addition the cost to the Scottish economy is estimated to be £1.04 billion a year in health and care costs, loss of income and productivity.

The Scottish health and safety system has been working well for over 10 years through the Partnership on Health and Safety in Scotland (PHASS<sup>1</sup>) – the voluntary collaboration of interested parties that I currently chair. SPIASH provides a clear focus for PHASS’s work and invites other partners to help us deliver it. It forms part of Scottish partners’ commitment to the Health and Safety Executive’s strategy for the whole of the health and safety system, Helping GB Work Well.

PHASS is delighted that the Scottish Government supports this initiative whilst recognising that regulation of workplace health and safety remains a reserved function. By acting together, Scottish organisations can achieve improved health and safety in the context of the Scottish Government’s economic strategy for inclusive growth. The Scottish Government’s Labour Market Strategy makes the point that fair work, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of the Scottish workforce, is also important in tackling poverty and inequality.

PHASS believes that our collective development and delivery of this Plan represents a model that aligns well with the findings and values of the Fair Work Convention and it can be a significant health and safety contribution to delivering on Scotland’s Fair Work Framework.

You can contact us at [splash@hse.gov.uk](mailto:splash@hse.gov.uk) or through the Health Working Lives Advice Line Advice line – 0800 0192211.

George Brechin  
Chair, PHASS

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<sup>1</sup> PHASS permanent membership comprises: Scottish Government, Healthy Working Lives (NHS Health Scotland), Health & Safety Executive, Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland and REHIS, SCDI, CBI, STUC, Scottish Hazards campaign, FSB, professional OHS organisations, Scottish Chamber of Safety and the voluntary sector. Site Safe Scotland (the Scottish construction group), Step Change in Safety (the tripartite group in offshore oil and gas sector) and the Scottish Farm Safety Partnership are also affiliated.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/scotland/pdf/scottish-health-and-safety-community.pdf>



## Introduction

1. Work-related ill-health and injury in Scotland has a devastating impact on affected individuals and their families but it also has much wider effects:
  - /// It damages and can destroy businesses and the employment that they sustain.
  - /// It makes huge demands of the NHS and other public services.
  - /// It costs the Scottish economy £1,039 million annually.
2. The number of people in Scotland injured or made ill by their work – including analysis of trends and comparison with other regions and nations – can be found on HSE’s website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/regions/index.htm>
3. PHASS works to ensure everyone with an interest in workplace health and safety is working towards common aims.
4. PHASS was established over 10 years ago to bring together the key players in Scotland’s health and safety system to co-ordinate action between them and across reserved and devolved administrations. Its aim has always been to get more value from ‘the system’ by acting together to improve workplace health and safety. Examples of its work include:
  - /// Promoting competent advice available to Scottish businesses and workers.
  - /// Producing tools to support employers in managing key risks.
  - /// Encouraging worker involvement.
  - /// Facilitating business-to-business support.
  - /// Raising awareness of the link between health and fair work practices.
  - /// Sharing information about regulatory developments and outcomes.





In 2007 PHASS, supported by the Scottish Government, took the lead in delivering specific projects on these themes as part of the first plan for action on health and safety in Scotland. This was welcomed by partners as a way of improving coherence and bringing more resources into partnership work on health and safety in Scotland. The time has come to review and revise that first plan in the face of a number of significant developments:

- Following the report of the Smith Commission for further devolution of powers to the Scottish Parliament a review of the health and safety system in Scotland was initiated – in the first phase, analysis of work-related ill-health and injury in Scotland and its limitations was undertaken, existing arrangements for tackling poorer-performing sectors were mapped and the regulatory and partnership approach analysed.
- The Scottish Government has appointed a Fair Work Convention to provide independent advice on developing a blueprint for fair work practices in Scotland to support the Government’s objective of sustainable economic growth and reducing inequality. It has produced a Fair Work Framework which recognises that protecting people’s health and safety is a fundamental condition for fair work.
- New and influential players within specific industrial sectors or with greater reach and expertise have arrived on the scene such as Scottish Waste Industry Competence and Health and Safety Forum (SWITCH) (for the waste industry) and the Scottish Farm Safety Partnership.
- NHS Health Scotland’s 2015 Annual Review action plan from Scottish Ministers places a specific outcome on the organisation to develop a refreshed approach to health and safety for Scotland aligned with the Fair Work Framework.
- A growing understanding that: the working environment, including working relationships, as well as the work a person does are important factors in their overall wellbeing as well as for physical and mental health; the benefits of fair work extend beyond the individual to families, communities to inclusive economic growth; conversely, poor and precarious working practices contribute to health inequality and loss of economic opportunity. Action on health and safety can therefore help prevent widening inequality.
- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the GB-wide regulator, has published Helping Great Britain Work Well – a new strategy for the health and safety system. Themes include acting together to promote broader ownership of health and safety and doing more to tackle work-related ill-health (and highlighting the cost of not doing so).
- Regulators’ Codes are in place that require HSE and Scottish Local Authority Environmental Health Services to promote sustainable economic growth alongside compliance.



5. Taken together, these developments create an auspicious climate for PHASS to re-focus its future through a new plan for action focused on:
    - ✓ Strengthening stakeholder engagement and partnership action in poorer-performing sectors in the Scottish context.
    - ✓ Integrating workplace health and safety with the Scottish Government's agenda for economic growth, improving health and fair work.
    - ✓ Improving the management of health and safety, with a particular emphasis on occupational health management.
    - ✓ Ensuring that action to improve occupational health and safety is based on the best available evidence and that future actions contribute to the development of this evidence base.
  6. The new plan for action – and the supportive context in which it will be delivered – provides an effective vehicle for a second phase of work on health and safety in Scotland following the Smith Report.
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## The role of the Scottish Government

7. While health and safety legislation is reserved to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Government recognises its important role in promoting good occupational health and safety practice in Scotland. The creation of a new Scottish Plan for Action on Health and Safety contributes to the Scottish Government's five strategic objectives of a Wealthier and Fairer, Smarter, Healthier, Safer and Stronger and Greener Scotland. These objectives encompass work to increase inclusive economic growth and reduce inequality arising from poor working practices and precarious employment.
  8. The Scottish Government recognises that standards of workplace occupational health, safety and welfare are not the responsibility of one body or agency alone. Improvement requires collaboration, mutual understanding and a co-ordinated approach to continuous development and implementation of good practice across all sectors in our communities.
  9. The Scottish Government is represented on PHASS which is committed to working with private, public and third sectors to ensure that Scottish workplaces are safe and healthy environments, in which employees can achieve their full potential, and the burden of work-related ill-health and injury on Scottish society and the economy is continually reduced.
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“ The Scottish Government recognises its important role in promoting good occupational health and safety practice in Scotland. ”







## Wider aims of a Scottish Plan for Action on Safety and Health

10. The long-term goal is to achieve an effective, integrated occupational health and safety system emphasising prevention in which all partners support and add value to their respective roles: on the one hand in prevention – providing advice, education and support; and on the other, to ensure effective and proportionate enforcement of legal duties.
11. To achieve this PHASS and organisations who contribute to implementing the Plan for Action will foster effective partnerships, encourage engagement of employers, employees and professionals and strive to build competence across the Scottish workforce.
12. The desire to create safer and healthier workplaces because they are more sustainable is not unique to Scotland. The themes of strengthening stakeholder engagement and partnership action in poorer-performing sectors; integrating workplace health and safety with economic growth and health and fair work; and improving the management of occupational health and safety are key features of the health and safety strategy for Great Britain and the [European framework for health and safety to 2020](#).
13. Strengthening and broadening the partnership approach across the health and safety system in Scotland is in itself an important for improving sustainability to deliver improvement not only in workplace health and safety but also in other aspects of employment practice where work is a setting for improving population health.
14. The Plan for Action is therefore being developed with a view to cross-cutting work in other workstreams including the [Framework for Fair Work in Scotland](#) and the [2015 Review of Public Health in Scotland](#).



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15. Each of the initial set of actions is informed by evidence, consultation and pragmatism (the capacity for implementation). Together with some medium and longer-term proposals for action, they are summarised against the themes in the Plan for Action as follows:

**Strengthening stakeholder engagement and partnership action in poorer performing sectors in the Scottish context.**

- ✓ New or continuing engagement with specific sectors in the Scottish economy and their representatives to determine the best model for self-support and an effective voice for workers to improve health and safety performance. In the first instance, this will include the following sectors:
  - ✓ Waste (resource management)
  - ✓ Social care
  - ✓ Agriculture
  - ✓ Offshore oil and gas
  - ✓ Parts of manufacturing.
- ✓ Working with the care sector to establish a Scottish Social Care Partners Forum.
- ✓ Mapping existing provision of occupational health and safety services across Scotland to co-ordinate a support network and services especially for SMEs.
- ✓ Helping sectors to build suitable training and development opportunities for workers at all levels to improve understanding and implementation of health and safety in the workplace.

**Integrating workplace health and safety with the Scottish Government’s agendas for economic growth and health and work.**

- ✓ Promoting workplace health, safety and wellbeing at work as an important dimension of fair work.
- ✓ Supporting the Scottish Parliament periodically to review performance across all partners who contribute to the Scottish health and safety system.
- ✓ Working with the Scottish Government and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service to publish better information on prosecution for health and safety offences.
- ✓ Working with schools and colleges to better prepare students and workplaces to support those entering the workplace.
- ✓ Engaging colleges and others in identifying occupational health and safety as a career opportunity in Scotland.





### Improving management of occupational health and safety.

- Development of the worker safety adviser model as a support network across Scotland drawn from union and non-union workplaces.
- Piloting the HSE Stress Management Standards in the public sector.
- Encouraging health professionals to ask about working practices during consultations as an indicator of health impacts on patients and to consider factors in their return to work.

### Developing the evidence base for action.

- Gathering and reviewing softer data and intelligence.
- Identifying more detailed costs to Scottish society and the economy from poor occupational health and safety to build the business case for a return on investment in preventative measures – as part of the wider public health economics debate.

- The Plan for Action is intended to be a long-term programme which aims to improve Scotland's health and safety performance while broadening and strengthening partnerships, with knowledge and learning from each project applied to successive initiatives to spread resulting good practice.
- PHASS will continue to consider evidence from a range of sources to inform consideration of future priorities and areas for action enabling a long-term, rolling programme of action and activity.

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## Governance and accountability for delivery of the Plan for Action

18. PHASS is a voluntary collaboration. It has no budget of its own and cannot direct resources. Implementation of the Plan for Action therefore relies on facilitating agreement with those people and organisations who best know the landscape for delivering each action, who can contribute expertise and resources and who understand the starting point from which to define success. In many cases the key players will be employers working in partnership with their workforces supported by PHASS members and their constituencies.
19. Due to its nature, PHASS is not accountable to Government but represents the views collectively of its membership. However, Ministers will be kept informed of the development and delivery of the Plan for Action, particularly as successful delivery will contribute to Government strategies, notably the Scottish Government's Fair Work programme and the UK Government's Helping Great Britain Work Well. PHASS will continue to engage with these (and other relevant) initiatives in order to find synergies and opportunities for collaboration to mutual benefit.
20. Detailed 'Action Templates' have been produced as part of the Plan for Action. These are mapped against Scottish and UK Government strategies; they represent work that will need to be agreed, refined and delivered with appropriate partners. Some actions may need to be recast and new ones will be developed over time.
21. Each Action Template includes milestones and success measures, but the voluntary nature of action notwithstanding, it will be important that the Plan for Action has a sponsor within the Scottish Government; and that a reporting process is in place to monitor achievement. This may be a cross-cutting function as the Plan for Action contributes to more than one Directorate's work but a suitable home would seem to be the Fair Work Division.
22. PHASS members have collectively agreed to oversee progress against each action and to facilitate consultation and access to delivery resources within relevant sectors. PHASS members may also be required to use their influence and knowledge to support for applications for funding and personnel.
23. Specific roles and commitments of key individual partners to deliver including PHASS members and their wider constituencies e.g. Scottish local authorities will be more clearly articulated in the Plan for Action and individual Action Templates as they are developed and delivered.
24. NHS Health Scotland has agreed to provide resources for proportionate evaluation (as well as delivering some aspects of individual actions).

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