

# FINAL YEAR OF HSA PROGRAMME OF WORK (2019-2021)

The Health and Safety Authority's Programme for Work 2021 sets out the Authority's range of strategic objectives, such as the pandemic response, provision of advice on the requirements of Brexit, and supporting the Government's Remote Working Strategy, by promoting the HSA's range of advice, e-tools and supports available.

This year sees the start of the new trading and engagement model for Europe and Ireland with the UK. In this regard, we will continue our activities in market surveillance of products coming into Ireland to ensure full compliance with all EU regulations within our mandate, according to Dr Sharon McGuinness, HAS's Chief Executive Officer.

Dr McGuinness outlined the main priorities for the Authority over the coming year, in her foreword in the Programme of Work for 2021. "We will actively engage in EU decision making to ensure that Ireland and Irish interests continue to be met. We will continue to promote and advance the benefits of accreditation to companies, enterprises and regulators alike. We will publish our national accreditation strategy, taking into account the outcomes from the review of the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) completed in 2020."

At the start of the HSA's strategy in 2019, three priority sectors were identified – agriculture, construction and health and social care. "While COVID-19 has meant the focus and nature of our priorities and engagement in these sectors has changed, they still remain central to our programme of work," she added.

## REMOTE WORKING STRATEGY

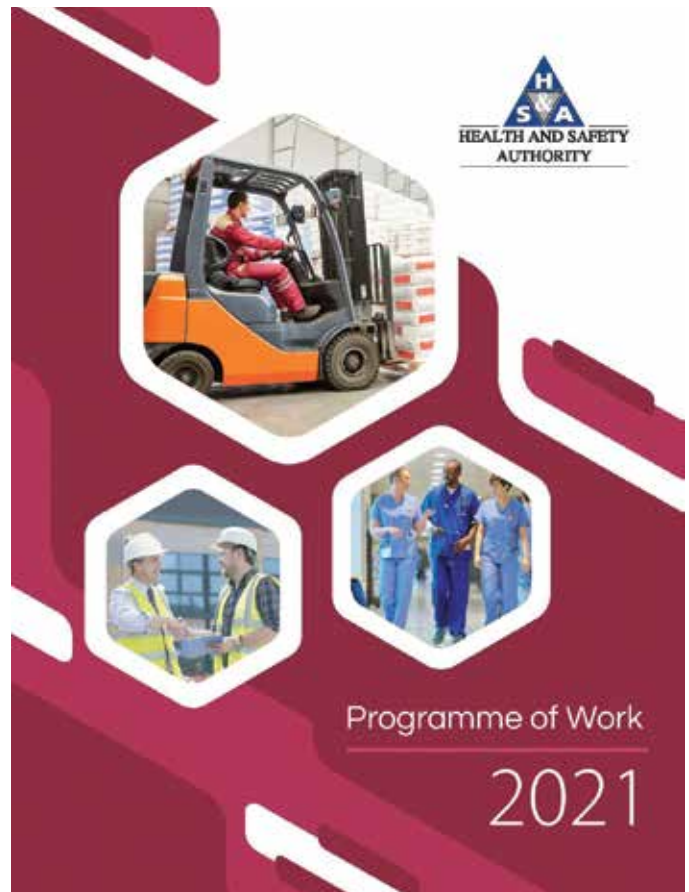
The HSA Chief Executive said that there will also be a focus on other sectors, such as meat and food processing as well as docks, transport and storage, arising from concerns related to COVID-19 and/or high numbers of fatalities and injuries.

The significant changes in the workplace in 2020 also brought a range of both opportunities and potential occupational health and safety hazards and concerns to the fore, she pointed out.

"In this regard, we will continue to support the Government's Remote Working Strategy and promote the full range of advice, e-tools and supports that we have produced which workplaces can deploy to ensure their employees are supported physically and mentally to meet these changes."

On foot of the additional resources allocated by the government, she said that the Authority will implement a comprehensive recruitment process, as well as reviewing their operating model to determine the best use of these additional resources.

"This review, together with the transformation of our



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business systems that commenced in 2020, will ensure that the Authority is ready and able to meet the demands and expectations placed on us. We look forward to concluding deliverables for this year's strategy and, together with the Board, we will present our next Strategy Statement for 2022-2024."

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Authority will continue to support the Government in its efforts to ensure measures are put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, and will provide occupational health and safety (OSH) advice and COVID-19 supports to employers and workers through its Workplace Contact Unit and online advice along with inspections of workplaces.

Public health will also be supported in all investigations and controls of COVID-19 outbreaks in the workplace. In addition, the HSA will support the development and implementation of any legislation that is published to address requirements on COVID, including the Biological Agents Regulation and associated Code of Practice.

### BREXIT REQUIREMENTS

In 2021, the Authority will continue to support and advise businesses as they work to meet EU regulatory requirements and product standards in the new trading regime between Europe and the UK.

In relation to market surveillance of products coming into Ireland, the Authority will address compliance with all EU regulations within its mandate through inspections and product checks.

### PRIORITY SECTORS

The Authority will continue to focus on the three priority sectors identified under the strategy – agriculture, construction, and health and social care. Prior to the pandemic, the Authority had identified the key hazards associated with each sector and drafted plans to address these through specific actions under the regulate, promote and influence strategic objectives. In 2021 all promotion, prevention and enforcement activities will be targeted towards sectors which have the highest public health and occupational health and safety risks.

### BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE SUPPORT

HSA will continue to provide supports and advice to employers and workers through its Workplace Contact Unit, Chemicals Helpdesk, website, publications and e-tools such as HSALearning, BeSMART and Work PositiveCI to enable them to meet their workplace occupational health and safety obligations.

### LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE DEVELOPMENT

The development of any COVID-19 required changes to OSH legislation will be supported by the Authority, to ensure they are implemented as appropriate. The HSA recently issued technical guidance (Technical Land Use Planning Advice) for planning authorities and operators of COMAH establishments on the control of new planning developments at, and within the vicinity of, qualifying COMAH establishments.

### REMOTE WORKING STRATEGY

The HSA will continue to support the Government's Remote Working Strategy and other initiatives to ensure OSH standards are maintained, as the world of work has changed due to COVID-19. We will fulfil the Authority's Competent Authority (CA) functions across a range of areas including machinery, lifts, PPE, ATEX, ADR road transport, Transportable Pressure Equipment (TPE), chemicals (REACH, COMAH, CLP, Detergents, Export-Import, Market Surveillance, Dangerous Substances) through

engagement with other CAs and the provision of technical advice, approvals and inspections.

### EU POLICY INPUT

Authority aims to make the most effective use of its resources in contributing to EU committees and working groups in the development of policies relating to OSH, Chemicals, Market Surveillance and Accreditation. It will continue to seek opportunities to assume a lead role in specific committees and working groups prioritised in line with our national and strategic interests.

### NEW ACCREDITATION AREAS

The programme of work for accreditation in 2021 will continue to focus on awarding new accreditations and monitoring conformance of the existing accreditations of the 231 clients in the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) programme. It is intended to develop a further three new areas of accreditation, which will result in eight new areas of accreditation available by the end of the current strategy cycle.

The national accreditation strategy will conclude with a focus on commencing implementation in 2021. INAB will continue to provide support and expert advice across Government on conformity assessment and the impact of the UK exit and will also support Irish business to trade in the new European and UK trading model.

In 2021, INAB will extend its international recognition for personnel certification and prepare for a full onsite evaluation in 2022, further extending the Authority's recognition for the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme.

The Minister and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) will also be supported by the HSA in the development of policy and legislative proposals relating to COVID-19, OSH, chemicals and market surveillance at national, European and international levels.

### CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

This year the HSA Strategy Statement for 2022-24 will be submitted to the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, following consultation with the Board, stakeholders and staff.

The Authority will continue to prioritise Project IRIS, the technology and business transformation programme and implement the Risk Management Framework, which was finalised in 2020. And it anticipates a high level of recruitment and staff training and development due to additional resources sanctioned.



*While COVID-19 has meant the focus and nature of our priorities and engagement in agriculture, construction and health and social care has changed, they remain central to our programme of work” – Dr Sharon McGuinness, HSA Chief Executive*