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HSE, POLICE SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

HSE launches a statement reflecting a common sense approach to health and safety duties applied to policing

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) today launched a policy statement entitled *Striking the balance between operational and health and safety duties in the Police Service*. The statement, a result of collaborative work with the Police Service, sets out how that balance can be achieved.

HSE Chair Judith Hackitt CBE, Peter Fahy, Chief Constable, Greater Manchester Police (Head of the ACPO Workforce Development Group) and Sir Hugh Orde, President, Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) launched the statement today with the support of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS).

In addition to ACPO and ACPOS, the Police Superintendents' Association, the Association of Police Authorities and the Police Federation have agreed to endorse the statement.

HSE, ACPO and ACPOS will now work together, with other stakeholders including the National Policing Improvement Agency, to ensure that police operational guidance reflects the agreement outlined in the *Striking the Balance* statement.

For some time, HSE has been working with ACPO and other stakeholders to develop a better understanding of how police services can balance operational needs with health and safety duties effectively. The statement launched today does just that.

Judith Hackitt CBE, Chair, HSE said today:

“HSE and senior police officers want to stamp out the myth that health and safety duties prevent the police from doing their duty. Police work is unique in that it involves decision making and risk taking in fast moving situations. This statement will assist senior police officers in balancing the risks involved in their duties to fight crime and protect the public, with meeting their health and safety obligations to their own employees and the public.”

ACPO lead for workforce development, Peter Fahy, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police said:

“Policing is a very specialised profession and good health and safety practices are vital to the welfare of our staff and the public. Our officers

find themselves in situations every day that require them to make tough decisions in often volatile and fast moving situations. They often perform many acts of bravery and heroism. And that will not change. We cannot foresee every situation or ensure every officer is trained for everything. We are pleased therefore that HSE has recognised this unique aspect of the job and the complex nature of the challenges our officers face. Our officers need the best information, equipment, and training to ensure they make the best possible decisions to protect not just the public, but themselves.

“In many other frontline occupations staff are told they should not put themselves at risk to protect others or prevent crime. The difference with the police is that they are under a duty to intervene and to put themselves at risk. This document recognises this reality but also expects forces to work to minimise risk. Officers are not expected to take an unreasonable risk where there is little chance of saving life or protecting property.

“Some measures already in place have improved safety for officers. We certainly have seen a reduction in the number of injuries to officers since the introduction of body armour and CS spray and we look forward to that continuing.”

Chief Constable Patrick Shearer, President of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland said:

“We are pleased to endorse this agreement which takes a common sense approach to an important issue. It is not easy to strike the correct balance between the operational needs of the police and the requirements of health and safety legislation. While we do not ignore our responsibilities to staff and public we need a degree of flexibility to do the job.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. This press notice is issued jointly by HSE, ACPO and ACPOS. For further information please contact:
 - HSE Press Office: 0151 951 5897 (office hours) or via 0151 922 1221 (out of office hours)
 - ACPO Press Office: 020 7084 8946/47/48 (office hours) or via 07803 903686 (out of office hours)
 - ACPOS Communications: 0141 435 1241 or via 07771 842 881 (out of office hours)
2. The full text of the statement is available on request