



# Inquiry into Employment and Training Opportunities for Low-Skilled Young People

IOSH written evidence to the  
House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee

Written  
Evidence  
08.01.07

## About IOSH

Founded in 1945, the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) is Europe's largest OSH professional body with ~ 30,000 members in over 50 countries, including around 8,000 Chartered Safety and Health Practitioners. Incorporated by Royal Charter, a registered charity, and an ILO international NGO, IOSH is the guardian of standards of competence and provides professional development and awareness training.

The Institution regulates and steers the profession, providing impartial, authoritative, free guidance. Regularly consulted by government and other bodies, IOSH is a founding member of UK, European and International professional body networks and secretariat to the last two. The Institution also has a research and development fund, which is developing the evidence-base for OSH policy and practice.

IOSH has 27 Branches in the UK and worldwide including the Caribbean, Hong Kong, Middle East and the Republic of Ireland, 16 special interest groups covering communications and media; construction; consultancy; education; environment; fire risk management; food, drink and hospitality; healthcare; international; hazardous industries; offshore; public services; railways; retail and distribution; rural industries; and safety sciences. IOSH members work at both strategic and operational levels across all employment sectors and our vision is:

**“A world of work which is safe, healthy and sustainable”**

We welcome this important invitation to provide evidence to the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee's *Inquiry into Employment and Training Opportunities for Low-Skilled Young People*, recognising that any strategy to upskill the 14 – 19 age group offers an ideal opportunity to incorporate the appropriate level of occupational safety and health (OSH) in all skills training and education.

For further information about IOSH, its members and its work, please visit our website at [www.iosh.co.uk](http://www.iosh.co.uk)

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## Introduction

1. IOSH believes that working safely is an integral part of being a skilled worker and that training all young people in hazard awareness <sup>1</sup> will help prevent accidents / ill health; reduce business interruption and absence; and improve young people's employability. In the under-19 age group, HSE statistics show that each year over the last ten years (1996 – 2006) there was an average of 6 work-related deaths, 1,510 major injuries and 5,135 over-3-day injuries (not adjusted for under reporting <sup>2</sup>). In addition to the human tragedy and suffering associated with this toll, there is also a significant economic cost to employers and society. We believe most, if not all, of this can be prevented.

2. Evidence indicates that people new to the workplace are at a greater relative risk of work-related injury <sup>3</sup>. We strongly believe appropriate training and adequate supervision can help reduce this risk, helping ensure the health, safety, well-being and productivity of tomorrow's workforce. The Learning and Skills Council found that inadequate supervision and/or monitoring of the workplace was the single largest cause (26%) of work-related accidents to learners for 2005-06 <sup>4</sup>. IOSH advocates that an understanding of risk concepts and OSH awareness should begin at school and be developed throughout a life-long learning process. We believe education and training in this area can:

- i. Assist individuals to develop risk management skills that will be valuable in all aspects of life, informing their decision-making and thereby potentially improving the quality of their lives.
- ii. Help organisations, because having a 'risk literate' workforce will help to increase and protect an organisation's skill-base, encouraging sensible and safe decisions and behaviours, preventing accidents and ill health, and reducing absences and loss.
- iii. Benefit society, as better risk management by employers will help reduce the massive costs, both human and financial, associated with work-related deaths, injuries and ill health.

## OSH in national and vocational curricula

3. In addition to inclusion in the national education curricula, we support the government's *Revitalising Health and Safety Strategy Statement, 2000* (Action Point 34) aim that risk management skills should be an integral part of professional curricula for 'safety-critical professions'. However, IOSH also believes this requirement has much wider application and that risk and OSH issues should be included in

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<sup>1</sup> Burke MJ, Sarpy SA, Smith-Crowe K, Chan-Serafin S, Salvador RO, and Islam G: *Relative Effectiveness of Worker Safety and Health Training Methods*, American Journal of Public Health. 2006; Vol 96, No.2: pp 315 - 324

<sup>2</sup> See annex 1

<sup>3</sup> See annex 2

<sup>4</sup> LSC Learner Incident Management System (LIMS) report "Incidents by underlying cause" 1 April 2005 – 31 March 2006

training for other professions, such as medicine, teaching and management and the range of Foundation Degree courses, apprenticeships and forthcoming Specialised Diploma' for 14 – 19 year olds. It is also important that those involved in advising business start-ups and in arranging modern apprenticeships and work placements for young people have adequate knowledge of OSH issues.

4. IOSH is keen to work with others to improve the health, safety and welfare of young people in working environments and so has launched a 'young people' campaign to help raise awareness and initiate change. Sponsored by Learning and Skills Council and supported by the British Chambers of Commerce and the National Youth Agency, we have created a free on-line resource centre at [www.wiseup2work.co.uk](http://www.wiseup2work.co.uk) (WU2W) to help teachers, employers and placement officers prepare young people for work. It's been produced with the help of teachers, OSH practitioners and teenagers themselves and also provides interactive games and a forum for young people to learn and discuss health and safety issues. Since going live in May 2006 there have been over 20,000 visits to the site, with the 'UK's Worst Workplace' teaching notes downloaded over 17,000 times.

5. We have also jointly developed with HSE a 'Workplace Hazard Awareness Course' (WHAC), based on the national occupation standard, which can lead to a new qualification for year-10 pupils. The course materials will be free for schools to download from WU2W at the end of January 2007. This training gives pupils basic knowledge on hazards, risks, and solutions and provides progression to vocationally-related qualifications at Level 1 in the National Qualifications Framework. Candidates who take the course and successfully complete the assessments will qualify for the Entry Level Award in Workplace Hazard Awareness (Entry 3), currently offered by British Safety Council Awards. The course is useful to anyone, but it's specifically designed to help young people improve their ability to spot and understand hazards in preparation for work experience and formal employment.

6. The 'Workplace Hazard Awareness Course' helps to deliver the National Curriculum requirement (in subjects such as science, design and technology, information communication technology, art and design, and physical education) that pupils should be taught about hazards, risks and risk control and helps teachers to deliver the National Curriculum Key Stage 4 requirement for work-related learning. Element 8 in the non-statutory framework suggests that students should be able to "describe the main hazards associated with particular types of workplace". IOSH believes WHAC will also help the government's aim in *Every child matters* and the Children Act 2004, that all children should be given the support they need to be healthy and stay safe. Additionally, WHAC can help students to develop Key Skills in a number of areas, including Communication, Working with Others, Performing, Problem-Solving and Improving Own Learning. There are no formal entry requirements for the course or qualification, but generally students will need to have the right level of literacy and numeracy skills; however, the material can be differentiated by special needs teachers in order to cater for a spectrum of abilities. It can be taught on-line or face-to-face.

## OSH awareness: basic skill for employability

7. In the drive to address our national skills gap, we need to address the OSH requirements of more potentially at-risk people in the workplace e.g. school children and young people (undertaking vocational qualifications and work experience <sup>5</sup>) and migrant workers. This presents new challenges and opportunities in terms of OSH training for employers, employees, learners and others involved. The drivers for managing this are clear. In addition to reducing human suffering resulting from accidents and ill health, there are also strong economic reasons for employers to manage health and safety risks. Employers need to ensure that they maintain their reputation (important for customers, investors, employees, regulators, insurers, etc.) and their employee morale and productivity. They also need to minimise their uninsured losses. The HSE <sup>6</sup> estimate (using 2003 prices) that the typical uninsured cost to employers for a serious or major injury is between £17,000 and £19,000 and cite average uninsured costs for an accident causing absence from work for more than 3 days at £2,234. Applying these figures, and not adjusting for inflation, to the average annual injury figures for the under 19-year olds, we can estimate that the annual cost to employers is in the region of **£38,759,590**, based on the calculations below:

1,516 major accidents and fatalities x £18,000	£27,288,000
5,135 over-3-day injuries x £2,234	£11,471,590
Total uninsured cost to employers	£38,759,590 per annum

Note: these figures do not reflect the greater costs to society, which HSE estimate including ‘Value of a Prevented Fatality’ <sup>7</sup>. For the 6 under-19s killed at work each year, this equates to £7,500,000 per annum.

8. The number <sup>8</sup> of school children in schools aged 15 = 777,300 (2005-2006) 397,500 male and 379,800 female. If ~700,000 year-10 school children all did the Workplace Hazard Awareness Course (WHAC) in school prior to any form of work experience or entering work-based learning, we believe this could lead to reduction in accidents and therefore potential savings for business. Additionally, if we also assume that the completion of WHAC led to less health and safety training being needed in the workplace, for example, one hour less induction required (at a nominal cost of £25 per hour), then this would yield a saving to employers nationwide of £17,500,000.

9. In his recently published final report “*Prosperity for all in the Global Economy: World Class Skills*”, Lord Leitch recommends that the UK commits to a compelling new vision – to become a world leader in skills by 2020. The increased emphasis on vocational qualifications and the government’s drive to increase the uptake of vocational training must also address the OSH aspects of all the vocations

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<sup>5</sup> See annex 2

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.hse.gov.uk/costs/costs\\_of\\_injury/costs\\_of\\_injury.asp](http://www.hse.gov.uk/costs/costs_of_injury/costs_of_injury.asp)

<sup>7</sup> ‘Value of a statistical life’ (VOSL) used by the DfT of £1.25m, based on 2002 road traffic data. Also used by Home Office, HSE, EA, FSA and other Govt bodies and not insurance-based [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/8AB/54/Managing\\_risks\\_to\\_the\\_public.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/8AB/54/Managing_risks_to_the_public.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> See Table 1.2 at: [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000696/Chapter\\_1V1.xls](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000696/Chapter_1V1.xls)

concerned. We believe consideration should be given to utilisation of the WHAC material as a potential unit in many vocational qualifications, as well as the new Specialised Diplomas, either as part of the qualifications or, if taken separately, as a credit toward the qualifications.

10. We believe that training all young people in hazard awareness will help prevent accidents / ill health; reduce business interruption and absence; improve young people's employability; and also reduce the time employers need to spend on induction training. At a recent Prime Minister's question time, Tony Blair replied to a question from Michael Clapham about WHAC, by saying: "The HSE and IOSH are absolutely right to bring forward a plan that will help to make young people more aware of the potential hazards in the workplace"

## **Conclusion**

11. In addition to the legal and moral case for good OSH management, IOSH believes most employers acknowledge that "people are the organisation's most valuable asset" and that consequently, employee protection is vital to their interests. By ensuring the health and safety competence of themselves and their workers, employers help maintain their organisation's reliability and their skill and experience base – crucial in today's competitive environment. We therefore argue that adequate OSH skills are essential for sustainable, productive and healthy employment and would welcome further opportunity to contribute to their development nationwide.

## **Key recommendations**

12. In support of training for young people before and during their working lives and to help ensure their safe supervision in working environments, IOSH would make the following recommendations:

- i. Pupils: WHAC becomes a mandatory part of the national curriculum
- ii. Trainees, apprentices and students: training adequately covers OSH and WHAC becomes part of vocational qualifications, as appropriate
- iii. Teachers: to be trained to deliver work-related OSH awareness in schools
- iv. Placement Officers: those responsible for placing young people in work environments to be OSH trained to ENTO standards
- v. Other professions: OSH becomes a core element of professional training and professional development for 'safety critical' professions (e.g. architects, chemists, designers, engineers) and other professions (e.g. GPs, managers, HR professionals)

## Deaths, major and over 3-day injuries to young workers under-19 from 1996 to 2006

<b>Fatalities to young workers under 19 from 1996 - 2006</b>	
<b>(Figures supplied by HSE Statistics branch)</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of fatalities</b>
Male	62
Female	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Average 1996 - 2006</b>	<b>6.4</b>

<b>Major injuries to workers under 19 - 1996 to 2006</b>	
<b>(Figures supplied by HSE Statistics branch)</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of major accidents</b>
Male	10898
Female	4211
<b>Total</b>	<b>15109</b>
<b>Average 1996 - 2006</b>	<b>1510.9</b>

<b>Over three day Injuries to workers under 19 1996 - 2006</b>	
<b>(Figures supplied by HSE Statistics branch)</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of over 3 day accidents</b>
Male	36920
Female	14437
<b>Total</b>	<b>51357</b>
<b>Average 1996 - 2006</b>	<b>5135.7</b>

### Job tenure and relative risk of workplace injury

In their 2005 Research Report <sup>9</sup> Davies and Jones estimate that: “After correcting for exposure, those with current employment tenure of less than 1 month are almost 400% more likely to have a workplace injury than those with 20 years or more experience in their current job .The increased risks associated with tenure are particularly apparent during the first 4 months within a new job.”

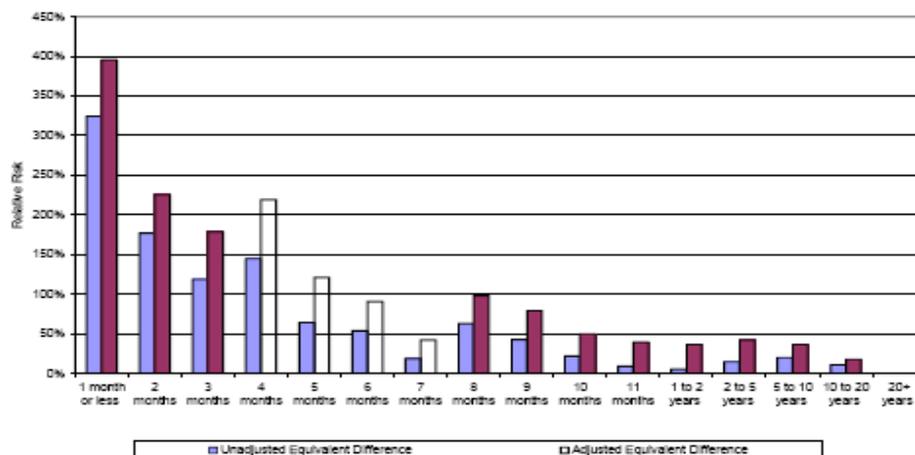
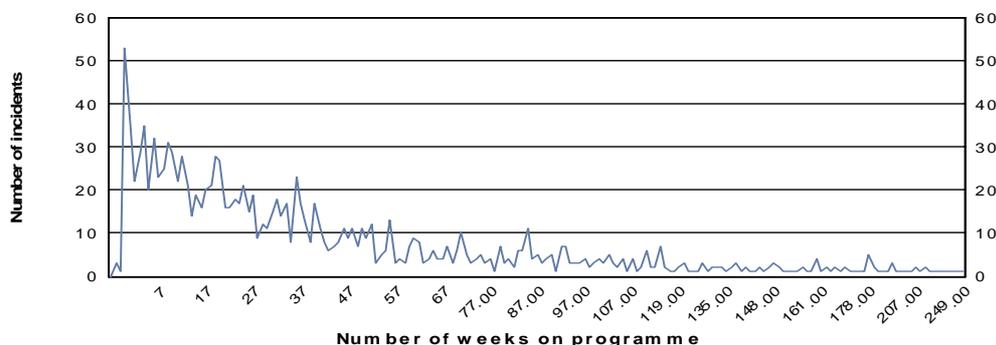


Figure 5.4 Relative risk of workplace Injury by tenure

The report explains that in the above chart “...the ‘adjusted’ differentials in relative risks, derived from the coefficients in the logistic regressions, are represented as red bars. These represent the separate risk factors associated with particular characteristics having taken account of all other risk factors in our statistical model. These adjusted risk factors presented in the following charts are therefore derived from the same statistical model which incorporates controls for a range of personal, job and establishment characteristics. We present the results on separate charts purely for ease of exposition. Where ‘adjusted’ differentials were found to be statistically insignificant the bars are clear. The unadjusted relative risks are shown as blue bars.”

Figures from the Learning and Skills Council for apprentices in England <sup>10</sup> also support this finding.

### Number of Incidents by Weeks on Programme



<sup>9</sup> Source: Davies R, Jones P (2005) Trends and context to rates of workplace injury Warwick Institute for Employment Research HSE Research Report 386 74-104

<sup>10</sup> LSC Learner Incident Management System (LIMS) Report – “Incidents by length of time on programme” 1.4.05 – 31.3.06

Both of these studies support the HSE's conclusions, using data from 1996-7, in *Key messages from the LFS for injury risks : Gender and age, job tenure and part time working* in which they identify a link between inexperience (or newness) and accidents, see: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/keyart.pdf>

The document explains under 'Job tenure' that "The LFS can provide the rate of injury for workers who are new to their employer or been less than 12 months, or even 6 months with the employer. We have to allow for such short time with the employer when deriving the standard incidence rate which is expressed per year. Table 2 <sup>11</sup> presents annualised rates of all workplace injury for workers whose job tenure with the employer ranges from less than 6 months to more than 5 years.

i) Workers in the first few months with their employer have the highest rate of injury once expressed per 12 months.

ii) On a yearly basis, the rate of injury to workers in the first 6 months is over twice that in workers who have been with their employers for at least a year, whether all workplace injury or reportable injury.

iii) The relatively high risk for new workers remains after allowing for occupations and hours of work. Other factors cannot explain the higher risk in workers new to their employers

A review of literature in 1972 <sup>12</sup> provides some support in a conclusion about studies on "length of service" which "are all compatible with the idea that there is an initial learning effect of some sort which lasts a certain time after which the accident rate evens out".

**Table 2 Rate of All workplace injury by Job Tenure with Employer (1)**

<b>Job Tenure</b>	<b>Rate of All Workplace Injury per 100 workers per 12 months</b>
Less than 6 months	11.4
6-11 months	5.6
12 months to less 5 years	4.2
5 years or more	3.5

(1) Rate of injury from the report by IER, July 1999.

<sup>11</sup> "Workplace Injuries and Workforce Trends" Report by the Institute of Employment Research (IER), July 1999

<sup>12</sup> "A Review of the Industrial Accident Research Literature" by the National Institute of Industrial Psychology, 1972, for the Committee on Safety and Health at Work.