

**REPORT**



**SURVEY ON  
INSPECTIONS**

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**JANUARY 2003**

**PREPARED FOR:**

**BY:**

**534S1/HD**

**HEALTH AND SAFETY AUTHORITY**



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## Introduction

This management summary report presents the findings from a survey on Health and Safety Authority Inspections. The survey was conducted by Millward Brown IMS on behalf of the Health and Safety Authority. (A pilot study was undertaken in March 2002 to establish likely response rates for the main survey and to ensure a workable questionnaire). Fieldwork on the main survey was carried out in October/November 2002.

In brief, the survey was designed to measure customer satisfaction with Health and Safety Inspections and in turn to measure their effectiveness. The survey also sought to understand customer interaction with the Health and Safety Authority in non-inspection related matters.

The research was undertaken by means of a self-completion postal survey. 3,600 customers were targeted by the Health and Safety Authority to participate in the survey – all had undergone an inspection at some stage in the previous five months. An initial communication was sent from the Health and Safety Authority to notify customers of the impending survey. The survey packs were in turn distributed to respondents – each pack contained a cover letter from MBIMS explaining the nature of the survey, the self-completion questionnaire and a reply paid envelope. Respondents were encouraged to participate in the research through the promise of a € donation to charity for each questionnaire returned.

## The Sample

650 questionnaires were returned to us representing an 18% response rate (or excluding the 140 returns to sender a 19% response rate). Data from the pilot study (132 customers) was merged with the main survey to yield a total robust sample of 791 respondents. The sample represented a mix of employers, employees and self employed. A breakdown of the sample in terms of their role within the company is set out below:

Senior Manager/Director .....	30%
Manager/Supervisor .....	34%
Safety Officer .....	11%
Worker/employee .....	6%
Safety Representative .....	6%
Self employed .....	10%

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In terms of industries represented there was very strong representation from those in construction and manufacturing sectors. A full breakdown of the industries in which respondents operate is set out below:

Manufacturing Factory/Warehouse .....	26%
Construction Site .....	32%
Shop/Hotel/Restaurant .....	6%
Business Office .....	7%
Mine/quarry .....	3%
Farm/Agriculture .....	10%
Educational Establishment .....	1%
Health Establishment .....	3%
Other.....	12%

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## Key Findings



**A strong majority of business representatives (87%) claim management place high priority on maintaining good health and safety standards at their workplace, with 2 in 5 claiming it is given 'very high priority'.**

- Moral, legal and financial factors, are most important factors impacting on Health and Safety practice.
- Two thirds (66%) of survey respondents have some training/qualifications in Health & Safety, a third have a certificate/diploma in Health & Safety.

**The role of the HSA is, first and foremost perceived to be that of an enforcement body (32%). The perception of the Authority as an organisation that promotes health and safety standards in the workplace is also strong (29%).**

- The Health & Safety Authority is deemed effective in implementing each of its tasks, least so when it comes to prosecuting companies.
- A very high proportion of respondents (69%) believe that the HSA is very approachable when it comes to queries about health and safety procedures at work.
- Half of all respondents feel the Health & Safety has impacted very positively on their workplace, a slightly smaller proportion are more qualified in their view, describing the impact of the HSA as only 'somewhat positive'(39%).

**When contacting the HSA, clients are most likely to be looking for information or advice by telephone (41%).**

- The HSA is prompt in responding to client requests. Four in five requests were responded to within a week (79%), and 87% of clients found the information they were provided with to be helpful.

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### **Overall satisfaction with inspections is high**

- Approaching nine in ten respondents (88%) were either 'very satisfied' (45%) or 'satisfied' (43%) with the visit and the outcome.
- Satisfaction levels were highest among those in the Farming/Agricultural sector (49% very satisfied) or those in Business Offices (56% very satisfied)

### **Reaction to the inspections is largely positive**

- Majority of respondents (89%) agree with the outcome of the inspection, three in five 'agree strongly'. A similar proportion (91%) have implemented the recommendations provided either 'fully' (61%) or 'partially' (30%).
- Inspections most effective in increasing commitment to improving Health and Safety Standards and increasing awareness of hazards at work.
- In terms of specific recommendations, respondents were most likely to mention - a need for 'improved workplace precautions' (49%) 'changes to Safety Statement' (34%) and 'Improved tidiness' (30%) - in each case the majority of respondents have implemented the recommended changes.

### **Aspects of Inspections**

- The areas of inspections considered most important to respondents include: The level of feedback received during inspections
  - The ability of inspectors to explain recommendations clearly
  - Inspector's discussion of the outcome of inspections
- Satisfaction with the level of feedback provided during inspections, discussion of the outcome, and the manner in which follow up procedures are conducted, fall slightly short of the ideal, in each case a gap of 7 points is registered.

### **Inspectors Approach**

- The aspects of an individual inspector's approach most important to respondents are his or her:
  - Level of knowledge
  - Ability to identify key health and safety issues, and
  - Fairness and HelpfulnessIn each case satisfaction levels closely match expectation.

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### **Approaching two thirds of clients (63%) have received some follow-up as a result of inspections.**

- Personal follow-ups feature most (22%) with letter/email ranked second (20%)
- Respondents believe that personal follow ups are the most effective in terms of ensuring recommendations. Given the high level of compliance with Health & Safety recommendations however, there appears to be no need to change existing follow-up procedures.

### **HSA Activities**

- The top five activities in which clients would most like to see increased HSA involvement and believe would best contribute to improved workplace standards are as follows:
  - Inspections (31% ranked first)
  - Simplified legislation information (16% ranked first)
  - Published guidelines on good practice within industries (15% ranked first)
  - Prosecutions (7% ranked first)
  - On-site health and safety sessions or seminars (10% ranked first)
- Customers are least aware of HSA contributions to health and safety in education curriculums (17%), and on-site health and safety sessions or seminars (24%). Safety sessions and seminars in particular are deserving of increased publicity since respondents believe training/seminars should be the key activities of the HSA.

### **Website**

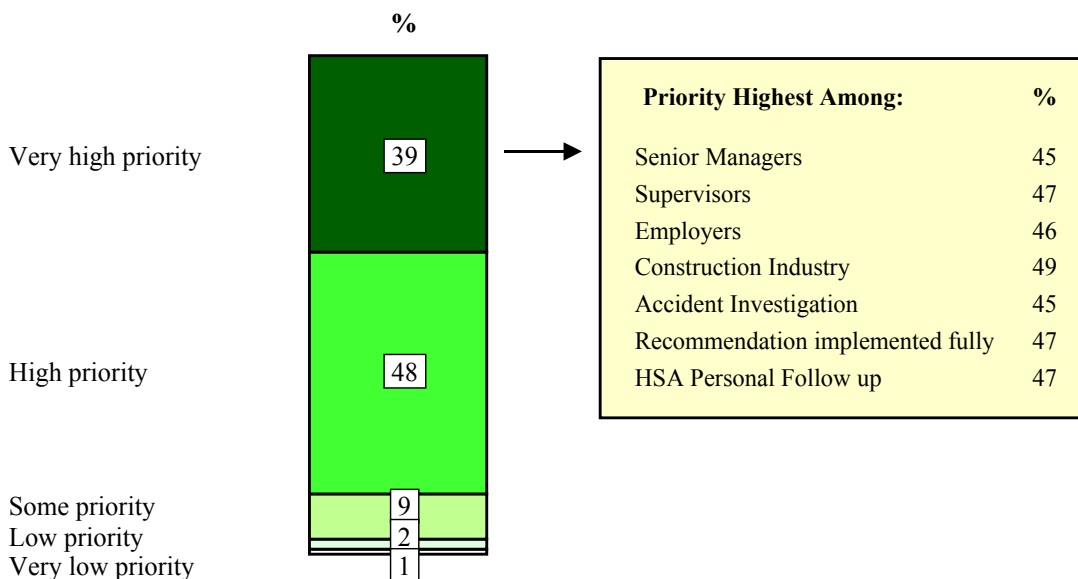
- Seven in ten respondents (69%) are aware that the Health & Safety Authority has a Web site, increasing to 78% among those who have Internet access.
  - Close to seven in ten of those with internet access and who are aware of the site have visited it (69%)
  - Of those who have visited the site, over two in five (45%) have noticed an improvement in the site over the past year, however a slightly higher proportion (48%) have not.

# Management Summary



## 1. Health and Safety Motivations

Approaching nine in ten respondents claim the maintenance of good health and safety standards at work is given “high priority” by management. While two in five claim it is a matter of “very high priority”. It is encouraging that priority is reportedly highest among those in the construction industry (49%).



Q. What level of priority do management give to maintaining good Health and Safety standards at your workplace?

The factors that are considered most important when it comes to improving health and safety standards include – Moral obligation (very important 65%), Laws and codes of practice (very important 60%) and Cost of accidents/insurance (very important 53%). Health and Safety Authority inspection and Fear of prosecution are ranked fourth and fifth. These factors are obviously not mutually exclusive – essentially people are motivated at a number of different levels for a number of different reasons (See Appendix Charts 5/6).

Respondents working in shop/hotel/restaurant/educational /health establishments attach greater importance to each of these factors given the important customer focus of each of their businesses.

There is also higher than average importance attached to these factors by management/employers. Health and Safety Authority inspections are considered “very important” by approaching half of all respondents (47%). These inspections are deemed even more important among “safety reps” (60%), “safety officers” (52%) and those in the construction sector (54%).

#### TOP 6 FACTORS CONSIDERED VERY IMPORTANT X KEY SECTORS

MORAL OBLIGATION	65%	LAWS AND CODES OF PRACTICE	60%	COSTS OF ACCIDENTS /INSURANCE	53%
Manager/Directors/Employers	69%	Manager/Directors/Employers	64%	Senior Manager/Director	56%
Shop/Hotel/Rest /Ed./Health	<u>77%</u>	Safety Officer	64%	Self-employed	58%
Mine/Quarry/Other	71%	Shop/Hotel/Rest /Ed./Health	<u>78%</u>	Manufacturing	<u>59%</u>
Construction	69%	Mine/Quarry/Other	<u>68%</u>	Shop/Hotel/Rest /Ed./Health	<u>59%</u>
Accident Investigation	68%	Accident Investigation	64%		
		Designated Safety Officer	64%		
HSA INSPECTION	47%	FEARS OF PROSECUTION OR SITE CLOSURE	49%	CUSTOMERS/CLIENTS	45%
Safety Rep.	<u>60%</u>	Worker/Employee	59%	Manager/Supervisor	50%
Employee	53%	Manager/Supervisor	53%	Worker/Employee	51%
Safety Officer	52%	Construction	<u>62%</u>	Shop/Hotel/Rest /Ed./Health	<u>70%</u>
Manager/Supervisor	52%	Prohibition notice	57%	Mine/Quarry/Other	55%
Construction	<u>54%</u>				

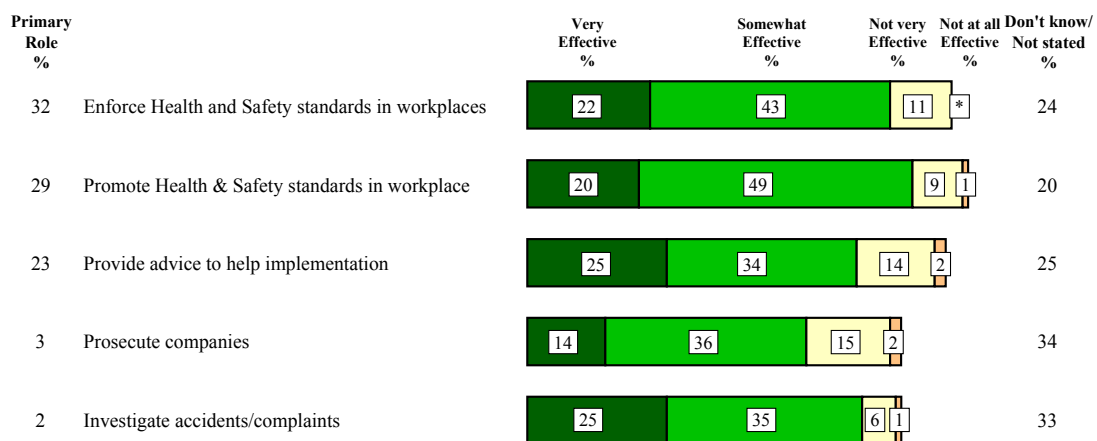
As a testament to the claimed importance attached to maintaining Health and Safety standards two thirds of survey respondents (66%) have some training/qualifications in Health and Safety. Across the total sample, one in three claim to have SafePass, this increases to 73% of respondents who work in Construction. One in five respondents hold a Certificate in Health and Safety, this is predictably higher among Safety Officers (42%) and Safety Reps (49%). One in ten respondents have a Diploma in Health and Safety, this is well above average among Safety Officers (43%) who are obviously given time to attend the course.

## 2. Perceptions of the Health and Safety Authority

The enforcement of Health and Safety Standards in the workplace is perceived to be the primary role of the Authority for one in three respondents. Slightly fewer respondents (29%) see promotion of Health and Safety Standards in the workplace as the key function of the Authority. Just under one in four respondents see the Authority in a more advisory capacity.

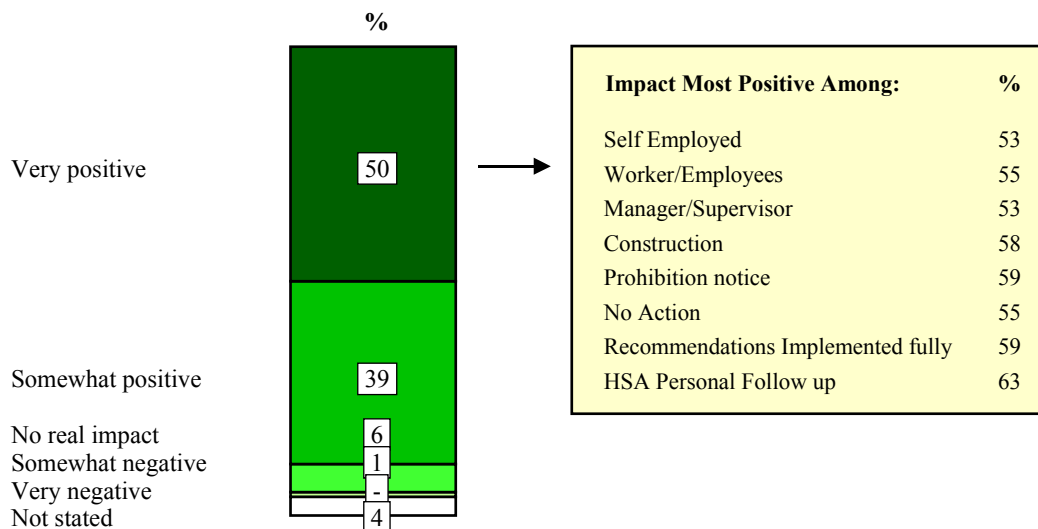
When it comes to implementing each of these tasks the Health and Safety Authority is deemed largely effective. The Authority is seen to be most effective in its promotion of Health and Safety Standards in the workplace and relatively less effective in its role as a prosecutor.

Perceived effectiveness of the Health and Safety Authority is highest among those in the farming/agriculture sector and those working in business offices. While those working in mine/quarry/other and manufacturing are a little less enthusiastic in this regard.



Q. And how effective do you feel the HSA is in implementing these tasks?

Half of all respondents consider the Health and Safety Authority to have impacted very positively on their workplace, a slightly smaller proportion (39%) are more qualified in their view describing the impact as only “somewhat positive”.



Q. In terms of Health and Safety, would you consider the Health and Safety Authority to have impacted on your workplace in a positive or negative manner?

This positive disposition is above average among those in the construction industry with 58% describing the Health and Safety Authority impact as “very positive”, compared to only 39% of respondents in business offices feeling this way. It is encouraging to see a good spread of positive feedback among managers/supervisors and workers/employees alike.

As one would expect there is also a positive correlation among respondents who have implemented their recommendations fully.

The majority of survey respondents are very comfortable when it comes to approaching the Health and Safety Authority with a query – seven in ten (69%) describe the authority as “very approachable” while a further one in five (22%) deem it “somewhat approachable”. Those most likely to consider the Health and Safety Authority as “very approachable” include respondents from the manufacturing (74%) and mine/quarry/other (75%) industry sectors. Safety Officers are also more comfortable in this regard with 78% describing the Authority as “very approachable” (See Appendix Chart 13).

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### 3. Feedback on Recent Inspection

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their most recent inspection by the Health and Safety Authority.

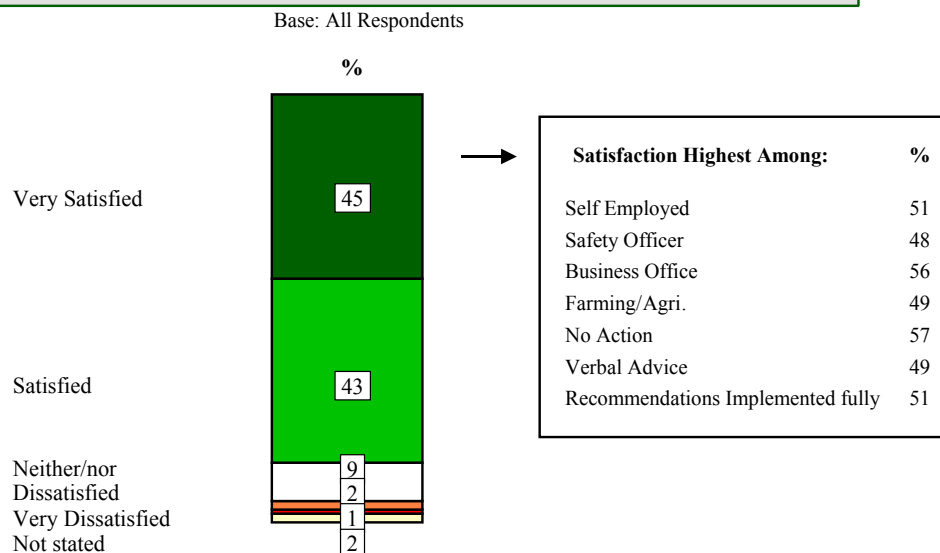
A breakdown of the visit type (as per the database) is as follows:

Inspection for Compliance .....	55%
Complaint Investigation .....	17%
Accident Investigation .....	11%
Follow-up visit .....	11%
Other.....	7%

Nine in ten survey respondents had dealt personally with the Health and Safety Authority inspector, over half had done so along with other work colleagues.

In overall terms, when it comes to respondent satisfaction with the visit itself and the outcome, approaching nine in ten respondents (88%) were either “very satisfied” (45%) or “satisfied” (43%). The result compares very favourably with other customer satisfaction research that we have undertaken. For example, a recent Customer Satisfaction Measure for a Government Department sees one in three of its users as “very satisfied”, another survey undertaken for a public service sees just over one in four users as “very satisfied”.

## OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH INSPECTION



Q. In terms of health and safety how satisfied were you overall with this inspection i.e. your satisfaction with the visit itself and the outcome?

Satisfaction with the Health and Safety Authority was highest among those in the farming/agri sector (49% very satisfied) and those in business offices (56% very satisfied). Satisfaction among respondents in the construction industry was very much in line with the average (44% very satisfied).

Safety Officers registered a higher than average satisfaction score (48% very satisfied) while Safety Reps were slightly less enthusiastic than average (42% very satisfied).

## 4. Assessment of Recent Inspections

### Gap Analysis

A battery of service attributes formed the core of the measurement exercise. Respondents were presented with a list of descriptions of ways in which an ideal inspection might be carried out and were asked to rate how essential each service aspect was, in their estimation. Scores were then applied to each dimension, ranging from a maximum of 4 (very important) to a minimum of 1 (not at all important).

Using the same scoring approach, customers then rated the applicability of each service element to the Health and Safety Authority on a scale again ranging from 4 (very satisfied) to 1 (very dissatisfied). The performance of the Health and Safety Authority on aspects of the inspection was then compared on an index basis with customer expectations for an ideal inspection. The gap identified between performance and expectation shows where the Health and Safety Authority either exceeds, matches or falls short of customer expectations.

	<b>IMPORTANCE</b>		<b>SATISFACTION</b>
<i>Example:</i> “Level of feedback during inspection”	3.69 (Mean Score)	vs.	3.41 (Mean Score)
Gap shown on Index basis (Index = 100)	$\frac{3.69 \times 100}{4.00}$ 92.2	vs.	$\frac{3.41 \times 100}{4.00}$ 85.3 = 6.9
Gap	92.2	vs.	85.3 = 6.9

A gap significance exercise was then conducted to take account of the relationship between the gap vis-à-vis the customers’ ideal, in order to provide a relative priority ranking for each of the service elements.

This exercise was repeated in an assessment of the inspectors personal approach.

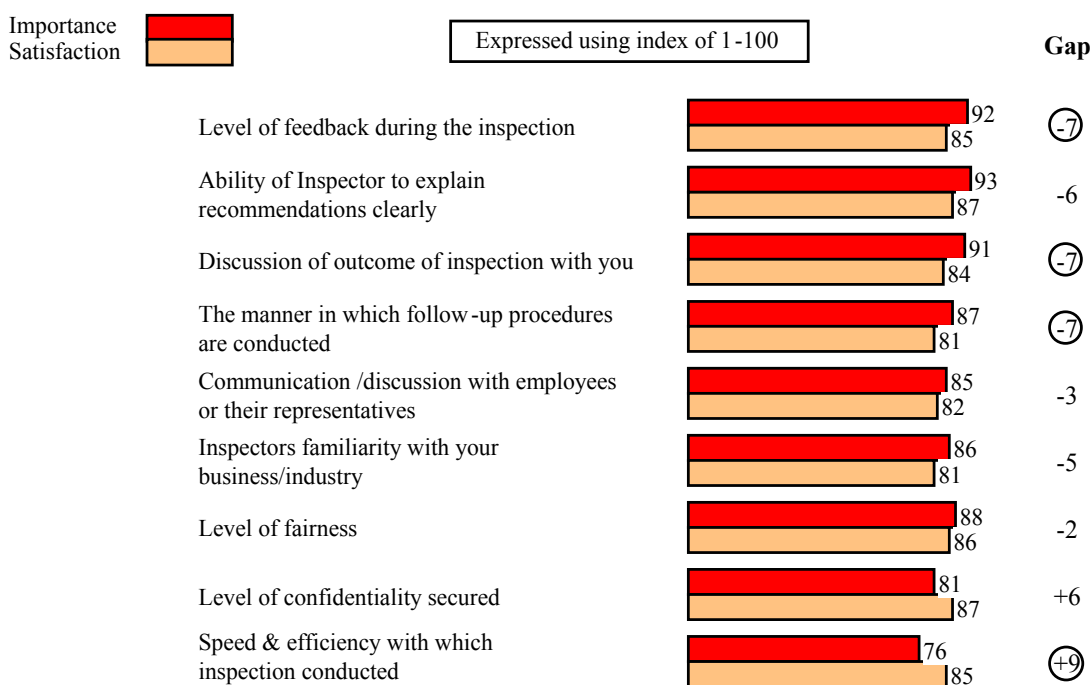
## Health and Safety Authority Inspections

The areas of inspections considered most important to respondents include:

- The ability of inspector to explain recommendations clearly
- Level of feedback during the inspection
- Discussion of outcome of inspection with you.

This importance ranking was consistent across all industry sectors with those in Construction, and in Shop/Hotel/Health/Education Establishments attaching even greater levels of importance to each of these factors.

The underlying theme here is a need for good communication. Satisfaction with the Health and Safety Authority in each of these areas is very high, falling only slightly short of the ideal. Relative to other Gap Analyses we have under taken where gaps of up to 30 or 40 have been registered, this is an excellent performance.



*Q. When it comes to Health & Safety inspections I would like you to consider **how important** or otherwise different aspects of an inspection are to you. For each of the following please indicate how important or unimportant you feel it is to the success of the inspection*

*Q. I'd now like you to think about specific aspects of the inspection. For each of the following please indicate **how satisfied** you were with the inspection?*



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“Familiarity with your business” ranked sixth overall is given higher priority by those in Construction (ranked 4<sup>th</sup>) and Farming (ranked 5<sup>th</sup>).

“Speed and efficiency” is ranked least important across all sectors.

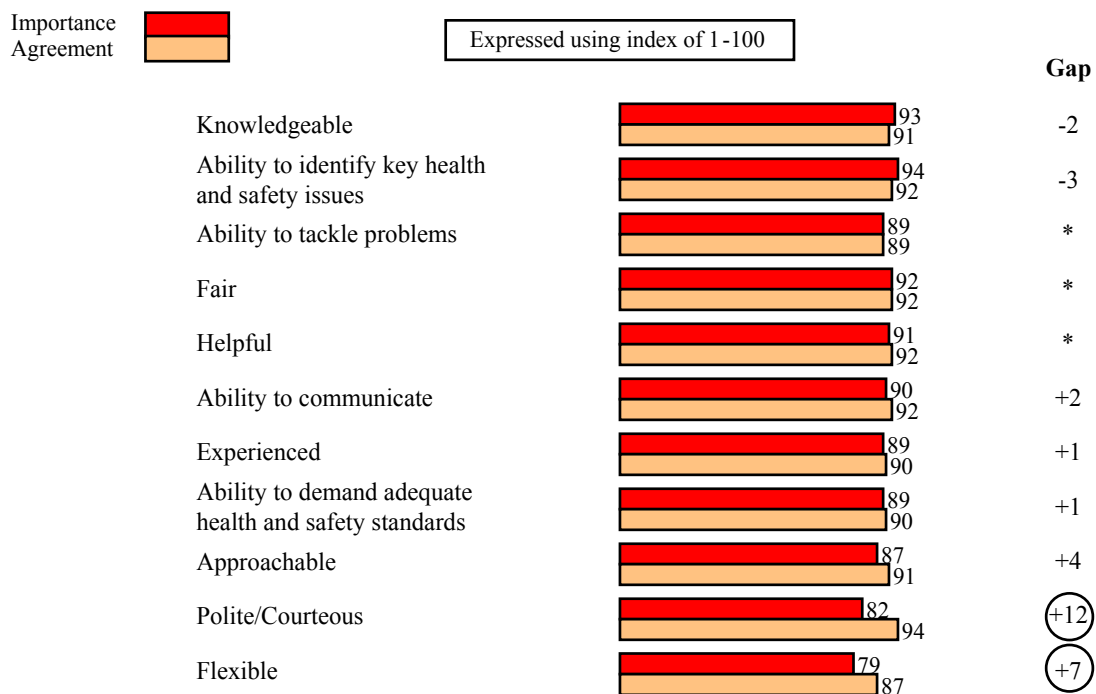
## Inspectors Approach

The aspects of an individual Health and Safety Authority inspectors approach which are most important to respondents include:

- Ability to identify key health and safety issues
- Level of knowledge
- Fairness and
- Helpfulness

Level of knowledge is given higher priority (ranked first) among those in Construction, Mine/Quarry/Other and Shop/Hotel etc Establishments. In each case satisfaction levels with Health and Safety Authority inspectors closely match expectations.

The aspects considered least important include flexibility and politeness – the inspectors outperform expectation on each of these attributes.



*Q. When it comes to Health and Safety Authority inspectors, I would like you to consider **how important** or otherwise different aspects of his or her approach are to you.*

*Q. And thinking of the inspector you dealt with to what extent do you **agree/disagree** any of the following descriptions applies to his/her approach or not?*

## Regression Analysis

In order to better understand which of these service attributes were driving customers' overall satisfaction with the Health and Safety Authority a regression analysis was undertaken using respondents overall satisfaction with the inspection provided by the Health and Safety Authority as the dependent variable, and the different aspects of the inspection and the inspectors approach as the independent variables.

The most significant predictors of satisfaction with the inspection were largely related to open communication and fairness. The key drivers are ranked below.

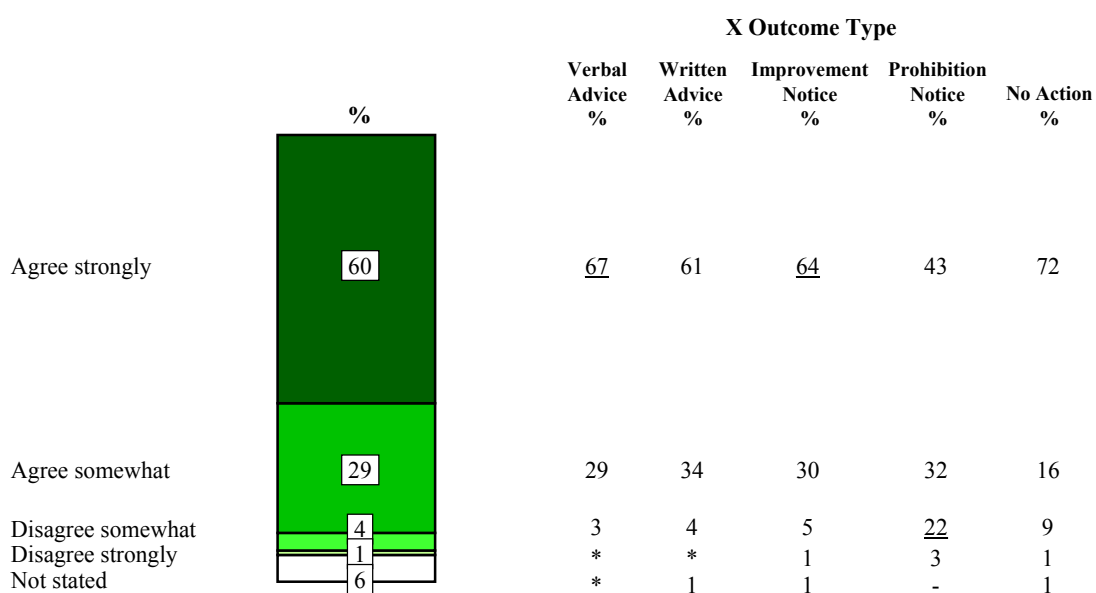
### SIGNIFICANT DRIVERS OF OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH INSPECTION

	<b>Index</b>
Discussion of outcome of inspection with you	100
Level of feedback during the inspection	79
Level of fairness	72
Ability of Inspector to explain recommendations clearly	65
Speed & efficiency with which inspection conducted	61
Flexible (Approach)	57
Ability to identify key health and safety issues (Approach)	55
Fair (Approach)	51

## 5. Outcome of Inspection

When asked about the outcome of the inspection over half of respondents, (58%) claimed to have received” verbal advice”, a similar proportion had received “written advice” (53%), while one in five mentioned an “improvement notice” (22%). One in ten were happy to report that no action followed their inspection.

It is very encouraging that nine in ten respondents agreed with this outcome; with high levels of “buy in” to the process demonstrated by the three in five who “agreed strongly” (60%) with the outcome. Agreement was strongest in relation to “verbal advice” (67%) and improvement notices (64%) and needless to say, amongst those who’d received “no action” (72%).



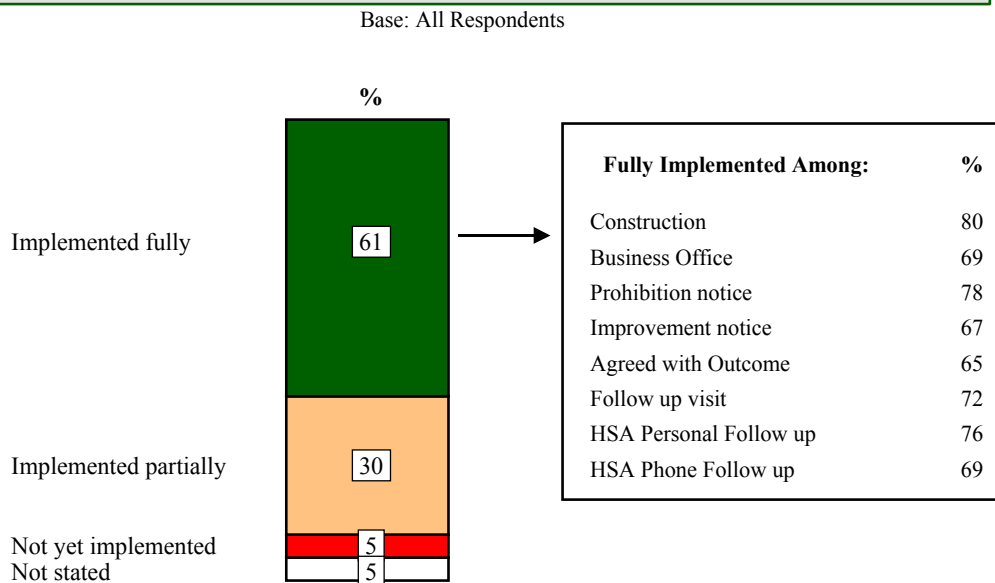
Q. And to what extent did you agree with this outcome?

Some negative reaction was registered among those who had received “prohibition notices”, with one in four disagreeing somewhat/strongly with the outcome.

The effectiveness of the Health and Safety Authority inspections can be gauged by the extent to which recommendations are implemented. The Health and Safety Authority can be deemed successful on this index with nine in ten respondents claiming to have implemented the recommendations provided either fully or partially, three in five have implemented fully.

Full implementation is very high in the Construction sector (80%) and above average in Business offices (69%). As one would expect a higher level of full implementation is registered among those who agreed with the outcome (65%), but it is also encouraging that those who had received a prohibition notice (who in turn were stronger in their disagreement of this outcome) were more likely to have implemented recommendations fully (78%).

### DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

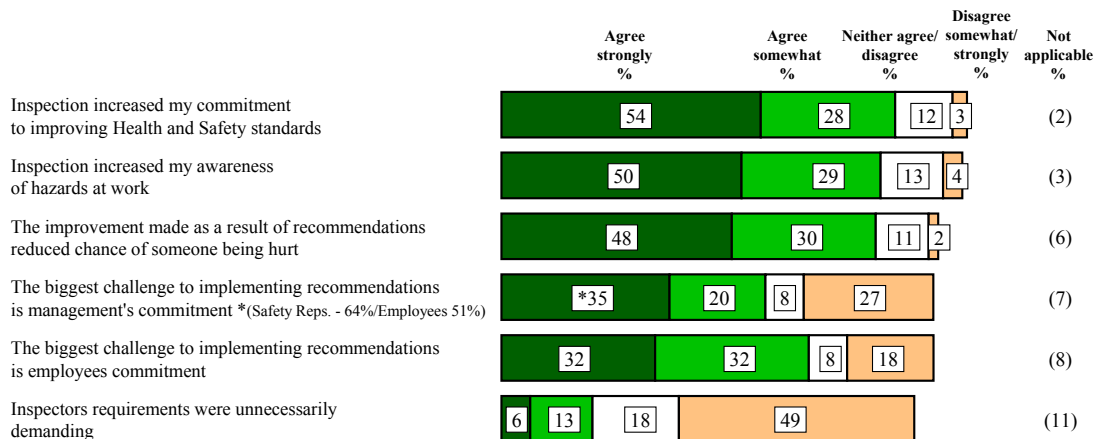


Q. And since the inspections to what extent has your workplace implemented the recommendations provided?

Approaching two thirds of respondents had received some follow-up further to their last inspection. Personal follow-up (22%) and letter/email (20%) were mentioned most. Respondents believe that personal follow ups are the most effective in terms of ensuring recommendations are implemented in the future, mentioned by 39% versus letter/email mentioned by only 26% (See Appendix Chart 23).

The inspections were deemed most effective in terms of increasing respondent commitment to improving Health and Safety Standards and in turn increasing awareness of hazards at work, in each case this was most relevant in the sector of shop/hotel/restaurant/educational/health establishments.

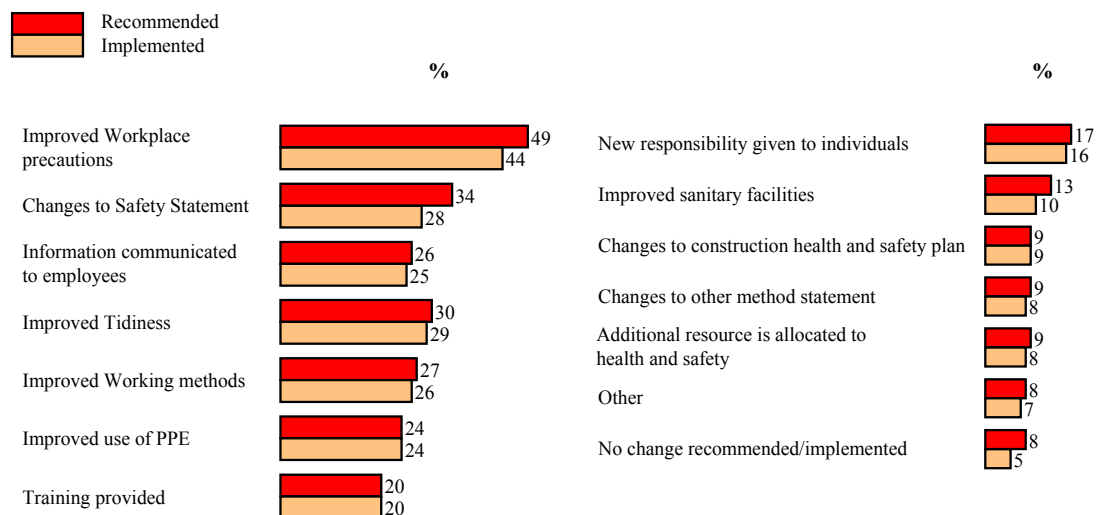
Management commitment is seen as a threat by just over half of the survey respondents – there is strong agreement with this view among Safety Reps (69%) and workers/employees (67%).



Q. Thinking of the outcome of this inspection to what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?

It is encouraging for inspectors that few respondents felt their requirements were overly demanding.

In terms of specific recommendations for change in the workplace, respondents were most likely to mention a need for “improved workplace precautions” (49%), “changes to safety statement” (34%) and “improved tidiness” (30%). In the case of all the changes recommended the majority of respondents have implemented the relevant change.



- Q. Which, if any, of the following changes were recommended in your workplace as a result of the inspection?  
 Q. And which, if any, of these changes were implemented in your workplace as a result of the inspection?

There is evidence of strong commitment among respondents to ensure that these changes last; with seven in ten suggesting the improvements in their workplace are likely to last up to two years. This aspiration of enduring change is higher among those who agreed with the inspection outcome.

## 6. Non Inspection Related Interaction

Apart from inspections, contact with the Health and Safety Authority is most likely to be a phone request for advice/information (41%) or a request for publications (32%). Interaction of this sort is more common among Safety Officer and Safety Reps.

	%	Safety Officer	Safety Rep.
Request for advice/information by phone	41	<u>77</u>	51
Request for Publications	32	<u>58</u>	31
Written correspondence with Authority	20	<u>35</u>	18
Request for advice/information by e-mail	11	<u>38</u>	4
Seeking Training	14	10	16
Health & Safety complaint	8	10	<u>18</u>

Q. Apart from inspections, have you been in contact with the Health and Safety Authority in any of the following ways:

The Authority is very prompt in responding to such client requests – four in five were responded to within a week (79%), with under a third (29%) receiving a response on the same day.

Almost nine in ten of those who received advice/information found it to be helpful – 59% found it to be “very helpful”.

Awareness of the Health and Safety Authority website is high across the total sample (69% aware) with awareness increasing further among those who have internet access (78% aware). Of the 78% aware with access, seven in ten have visited the site. Visitors to the site are divided in their opinion as to whether the site has improved or not – approaching half (45%) have noticed an improvement in the site over the past year while a similar proportion (48%) have noticed no change (See Appendix Chart 32).



In terms of the approach and effectiveness of the Health and Safety Authority two thirds of respondents have noticed some improvement in the past three years, with two in five (40%) claiming the Health and Safety Authority has improved a lot. This perceived improvement is highest among those in the Construction industry. Safety officers are a little more qualified in their views in this regard with only 31% saying the Health and Safety Authority approach has “improved a lot” but 40% indicating “a little improvement”.

	%	<u>X Sector</u>					
		Construction %	Mine/Quarry %	Manufac-turing %	Farming/Agri. %	Shop/Hotel/Rest %.	Buisness Office %
Improved a lot	40	57	39	31	33	24	22
Improved a little	27	25	30	33	21	24	26
No improvement noticed	21	12	24	26	16	32	35
Disimproved	*	1	-	-	-	-	-
Not stated	11	5	7	10	30	20	17

Q. Over the past 3 years, have you noticed any improvements in the approach and effectiveness of the Health and Safety Authority in your industry?

## 7. Health and Safety Authority Activities









Awareness of Health and Safety Authority activities is particularly high for Inspections and Prosecutions, mentioned by nine and eight in ten respondents respectively. While respondents are least aware of On -site Health and Safety Authority sessions/seminars (24% aware) and Development of health and safety in education curriculum (17% aware).

The activities which clients would like to see more of in order to help improve health and safety standards at work include:

- Inspections
- Simplified legislation
- Published guidelines on good practice
- Prosecutions and
- Onsite Health and Safety Authority sessions/seminars

	%	% Ranked first	Mean score %
Inspections	93	31	3.82
Prosecutions	80	7	3.29
Publish guidelines on good practice for your industry	68	15	3.34
Leaflets advising on prevention/guidelines on good practice in your industry	66	8	3.07
Accident investigation*(77%)	64	5	2.87
Complaints investigation	59	3	2.64
Health and Safety information on Website	58	3	2.82
Promote Health & Safety through media	52	6	2.77
Health and safety videos drawing attention to hazards of your particular business	40	7	3.14

\*Main survey only

	%	Ranked first %	Mean score %
Off-site Health and Safety sessions/seminars	 36	4	2.94
Impose on the spot fines	 32	3	3.01
Operate a telephone advice line	 32	4	2.78
A newsletter with updates	 30	5	2.88
Simplify legislation	 29	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">16</span>	<u>3.37</u>
Health & Safety Authority Annual Conference	 28	2	2.76
On-site Health and Safety sessions/seminars	 24	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">10</span>	<u>3.28</u>
Develop Health and Safety in Education Curriculum	 17	8	3.03

*Q. Which, if any, of the following Health & safety Authority activities are you aware of?*

*Q. Please rank the top five activities that you would like to see more of in order to help improve health and safety standards at your workplace, from 1 to 5, where 1 is the activity you would most like to see increased.*

With such a comprehensive list of activities most respondents found it difficult to suggest any other activities that the Health and Safety Authority should undertake (See Appendix Chart 36).

Additional comments by respondents suggested widespread satisfaction with the service provided by the Health and Safety Authority. Any negative feedback focussed on a need for more inspections, more advice/feedback and more industry specific inspections – albeit at a minimal level (see Appendix Charts 37/38).

# Appendices