

### SEEDA SOCIAL DIALOGUE FORUM

18 July 2005

1. The membership of the Social Dialogue Forum (SDF) includes representatives from employer and employee organisations. Its activities cover a range of work-based issues, built around delivering a high value added economy through partnership in the workplace.
2. Work has now started on a pilot to develop ideas on how people can be helped to return to work after absence and how absence can be managed. The pilot will be based on employers in close geographical area and will give an opportunity to monitor a variety of interventions to assess their effectiveness. The DTI has also agreed to make funding available to run a pilot project to demonstrate the feasibility, and build awareness, of workforce pooling arrangements to address skills and productivity issues. The project, which will be managed by Engineering Employers Federation South (EEF South), builds on a feasibility study undertaken during 2003/04. The pilot will focus on the marine sector (primarily in the Cowes cluster) where companies experience peaks and troughs in their order books that are difficult to manage in terms of labour resources, but the approach could be transferable to other sectors. Finally, a joint conference with the Health and Safety Executive and EEF South is expected to take place at the TUC conference and will examine the impact of changing health and safety requirements on the workplace.
3. The SDF plans to hold another event at the TUC conference to highlight the region's manufacturing strategy, and has invited the Rt Hon Alun Michael MP to speak as Minister of State for Industry and the Regions. The aim is to look towards the development of manufacturing skills in the region and other key issues, including competitiveness, innovation and the image of industry. EEF South has also now been contracted to continue their delivery of the Manufacturing Advisory Service in the region and lead in its development.
4. Finally, the SDF discussed their business plan for 2005/06, which is based around three core areas of business - channelling stakeholders views into SEEDA, as a catalyst for workplace good practice and disseminating best practice. Three events are planned for the year covering health and safety, the gender pay gap and productivity through the workplace.

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