

## People and performance

The HIE network aims to achieve the highest quality standards in everything it does. As an accredited Investor in People, we believe in helping staff develop their skills and motivation to deliver the best possible service to customers.



Skye: Participants and tutors from the Network's leadership and management training programme, ACHIEVE.



Inverness: An occupational health service is part of HIE's commitment to wellbeing at work.

### Innovation rewarded

Notable achievements for the Network in 2005-06 included the introduction of an innovative leadership development programme for senior managers; a new staff induction programme; the achievement of the Scotland's Health at Work bronze, silver and gold awards for a number of local enterprise companies and success in the Sunday Times 100 Best Companies awards for the second year running. We were also short listed in the prestigious Personnel Today awards' 'Managing Health at Work' category

Health and wellbeing are an important part of Network culture. We launched an occupational health service, continued to support a confidential employee assistance programme and ran a range of workshops to help staff manage pressure.

### Improving leadership

Our new leadership development programme, ACHIEVE, aims to provide leaders with the insight, knowledge and ability to lead individual, team, and organisational performance to meet the challenges of 'A Smart, Successful Highlands and Islands'.

Since June 2005, 40 Network managers have embarked on the programme and their feedback has been extremely positive. A further 60 are due to participate over the next two years.

### Health and wellbeing

We believe in promoting work-life balance, healthy working practices and helping staff manage pressure. A happier and more productive workforce will have a positive impact on client satisfaction levels.

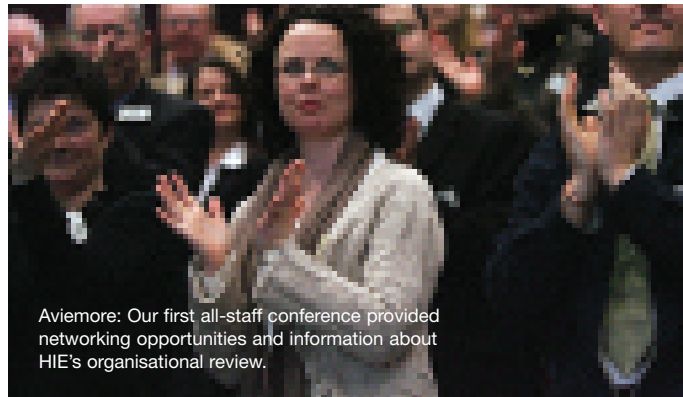
We provide a 24-hour telephone helpline and face-to-face counselling to address both work and non-work related issues.

More than 80 managers have taken part in workshops on managing pressure, designed to make sustainable improvements. These have now been extended to all staff.

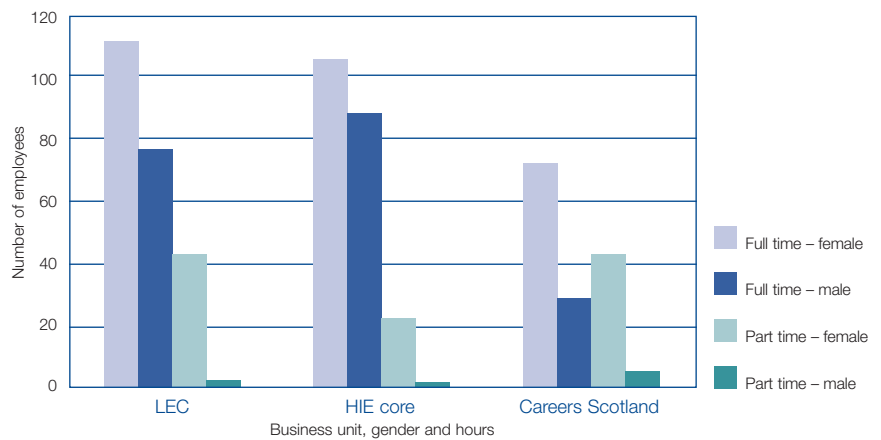
In June 2005 we introduced a new occupational health service, delivered by RS Occupational Health. A qualified occupational health nurse has been able to advise managers and staff, provide health awareness sessions, health checks and lifestyle assessments and screening.

Health and wellbeing are now a key component of any new initiative that is introduced, from induction to leadership and management development, subsidised gym membership and the provision of our internal catering contract.

Long-term success factors of the wellbeing project will include reduced stress levels, lower absenteeism, more creativity, reduced staff turnover and better communication.



Employees by business unit, gender and working hours at February 2006



### Investors in People (IiP)

As part of the Network's rolling programme of IiP re-recognition assessments, four LEC areas and a selection of Careers Scotland staff were assessed at the beginning of July 2005.

Many examples of good practice were identified and the IiP assessor was extremely impressed with HIE's approach to business and operational planning and people management and development.

The assessor noted: "Staff are very positive and proud of their achievements... [there is a] genuine open door at senior levels and a real interest in individuals, their contribution and development... [and] there is a very positive approach to recognition and feedback".

All future re-assessments will be against the new IiP standard and a number of development points have been identified to ensure we continue to meet the standard.

### Equality in employment

Awareness of our workforce demographics allows us to take an integrated approach to equality and diversity in employment. We are committed to developing and regularly monitoring employment policies to meet the needs of the Network, its employees and legislative and best practice requirements. We do this by working closely with the recognised trade unions through the Joint Negotiating Committee.

### Induction

Since the launch of the Network's two-day induction programme in March 2005, a total of 100 staff from all corners of the Network have taken part. The programme provides an overview of the Network and an introduction to key individuals, policies and procedures as well as giving a flavour of the way the organisation operates.

Over 90 per cent of respondents found the programme to be of significant benefit, with 35 per cent rating it invaluable.

Our IiP assessment noted: "A significant benefit highlighted by a number of interviewees was the opportunity to network with other colleagues on the induction programme and develop lasting and supportive relationships as a result."

### Together towards tomorrow

The Network's first all-staff event in its 15-year history, Together towards tomorrow, took place in Aviemore in March 2006. As well as bringing staff together to communicate the outcome of our organisational review, the event provided an opportunity for each part of the Network to showcase its own area of work in a fun and engaging way. Over 40 interactive displays created a carnival atmosphere while providing important information about the full range of Network activities.

The overwhelming response was positive with strong evidence that the objectives were met.

# HIE network key standards of service performance 2005-06

Standard	Performance 2005-06
Reply to all letters, faxes and emails that call for a response, within seven working days of receiving them.	61%
Reception staff should answer all telephone calls within five rings.	100%
Members of staff should identify themselves by name when answering telephone calls.	67%
Process applications for assistance up to £25,000 within an average of 12 working days.	9.29 days
Process applications for network assistance for £25,001-£100,000 within an average of 30 working days.	12.25 days
In line with government policy, aim to pay all invoices not in dispute within 30 days (or the agreed terms if different).	99%

We are pleased to report continued progress on speeding up approvals since streamlining our business processes. In particular, we have made a great improvement in the time taken to process applications for assistance up to £25,000. Our target for this is 12 working days and last year the average number of days was 16 compared to an average this year of 9.29.

We have also reduced the time taken to process applications for assistance for £25,001 - £100,000. Our target for this is 30 working days and last year the average number of days was 26 compared with 12.25 days this year.



## Better customer service

We hold the Charter Mark, a UK-wide, government standard for excellence in customer service in public organisations.

The Charter Mark assessor body carried out an annual health check in December 2005. It found that we continued to be enthusiastically committed to the Charter Mark ethos and that we had made progress on an action plan developed after the previous assessment.

The assessors identified two areas for improvement and will assess us again in 2007.

## Customer feedback

We are committed to continually improving our service. We welcome comments and suggestions, take all complaints seriously, and have an effective, easy to use internal complaints procedure.

Up to the end of March 2006, 41 complaints were made under the internal complaints procedure. These fell into five categories:

Financial assistance:	10
Training assistance:	8
Procurement issues:	5
Property issues:	4
Miscellaneous:	14

Of these, six proceeded to stage two of the internal procedure.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) also reports that there is one ongoing complaint.

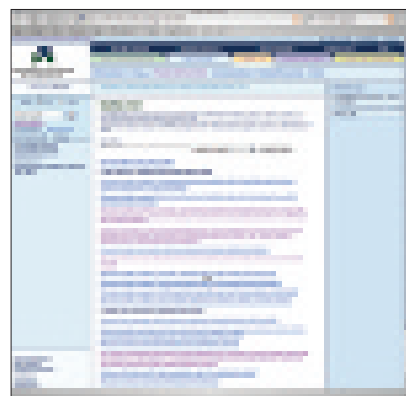
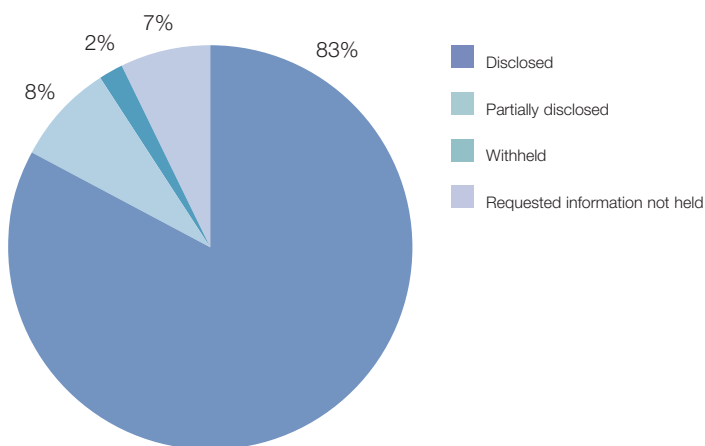
Complaints are often opportunities for us to improve our service and can provide very useful management information.

As a result of complaints, we reviewed how property sales are handled, and revised the information we give people who submit tenders electronically.

# Freedom of Information (FOI): how we performed

Number of requests received:	164
Average time to fully respond and close a request for information:	11 days
Number of charges applied to requests:	0
Number of requests for reviews:	6
Number of appeals to the Scottish Information Commissioner	0
Number of times we extended the time limit to reply:	0

The following chart shows the percentage of FOI enquiries to which we responded by disclosing, partially disclosing or withholding information. It also shows enquiries for which we did not hold the information requested.



## Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act came into force in Scotland on 1 January 2005, giving people a legal right to information held by public bodies.

In response, the HIE network implemented policies and procedures to deal with enquiries, in line with the requirements of the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC).

The Act requires us to report how we performed; the table above shows this.

Anyone who is dissatisfied by the way we deal with a request for information has the right to request a review. In 2005-06, we dealt with six reviews, none of which was referred to the OSIC for appeal.

Although the number of enquiries appears to be reducing, the complexity of many of the cases we handle is increasing. Many enquiries cross over other areas of network business, such as complaints and media enquiries.

There was a lot of interest in Network information published on our website either proactively or in response to a freedom of information request. There were approximately 27,000 visits to the website reading room, where we publish FOI-related questions and answers.

We also responded to the Scottish Executive consultation on FOI. A copy of the response is available at [www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2006/05/11085226/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2006/05/11085226/0).

The main points we made were that charging for FOI requests is ineffective; the cost of meeting our obligations under the act is high and affects our core business; and guidance is needed on handling requests for providing information that is part of our everyday services.

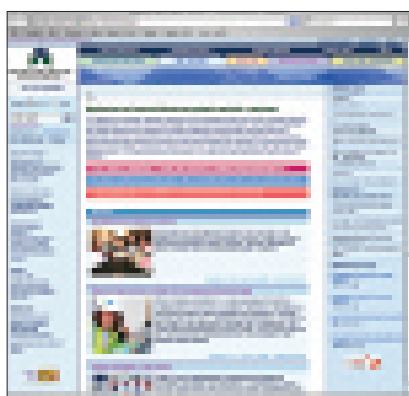
In their first full year, our FOI web pages attracted much attention, drawing more than 10,500 visits to the top-level page alone. In the interactive online reading room, where we publish FOI-related questions and answers, the 263 files published this year were downloaded 25,469 times. Most-read documents included monthly approvals of assistance to individuals and organisations and weekly HIE management group minutes. [www.hie.co.uk/freedom-of-information.htm](http://www.hie.co.uk/freedom-of-information.htm)

# HIE network websites - statistics 2005-2006

## Year-by-year performance 2002-2006

Key measures	2002-3	2003-4	2004-5	2005-6
Page visits	4.3 million	8.3 million	11.3 million	19 million
Document downloads	–	315,000	444,000	1,100,000
Referrals to online business directory	22,000	54,000	590,000	2,500,000
In-site searches undertaken	–	63,000	69,000	91,000
LEC sites average monthly page visits.	17,000	22,000	26,000	33,000
Site availability (uptime)	–	97.6%	99.7%	99.9%
Referrals made to the site from Google	–	206,000	363,000	587,000
Referrals made to key services area	–	–	174,000	449,000*

\* Adjusted for key services area being present for only part of 2004-05



The top 20 most popular online services were:

HIE network key service	Position	Number of visits / indicative popularity
Business start-up	1	20,427
Innovation advice	2	19,819
Financial assistance for community projects	3	18,578
Financial assistance for skills development	4	18,466
Investment readiness programme	5	16,800
Community land team	6	15,808
Modern Apprenticeships	7	15,632
HIE network property provision	8	15,352
Financial assistance for business	9	14,760
New Deal	10	14,541
Information technology advice	11	14,452
Farm business advice / Whole farm review	12	14,418
Training for Work	13	14,340
Croft Entrants scheme	14	13,828
Advice and information	15	12,524
The Opportunity Fund	16	12,274
Business efficiency model	17	12,063
Employment loan fund	18	11,775
Employee ownership	19	11,707
Graduate and student placement	20	11,672

## HIE network websites – [www.hie.co.uk](http://www.hie.co.uk)

The popularity of HIE network websites, which were redesigned and restructured in July 2004, exceeded expectations. More than 19 million page visits were made in 2005-06, a 68 percent increase on the previous year. Document downloads more than doubled to 1.1 million and referrals to our online business directory quadrupled to 2.5 million.

## Clear favourites

Interest across the HIE site's main navigational areas is fairly evenly distributed, but the searchable events and business directories were the most popular tools. Other areas of particular interest were job vacancies, freedom of information, opportunities to tender, key service details and contact information pages.