

# **Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) & "Better Backs" - a HSE perspective**

**amicus the union,  
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## Revitalising - Targets

What issues do we need to tackle if they are to be achieved?

	Total cases - caused or made worse by work (000's)
<b>MSD</b>	<b>1020</b>
<b>Stress Related Illness</b>	<b>420</b>
<b>Breathing or lung problem</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>Hearing problems</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1958</b> (also including, eg, heart disease and skin problems)

\*Self-reported work related illness survey 2005/06 Estimated Prevalence, GB

# Scale and cost of MSD



- 1 million cases of work-related MSD in GB in 2005/06
- 9.45 million working days were lost
- On average each affected worker took 17.3 days off work
- This costs the economy £5.7 billion per year (1995 prices)

# MSDs: the 2005/06 'breakdown'



- Prevalence: 1,020,000 (=437k backs; 374k ULDs; 209k LLDs)
- Incidence: 190,000 (= 70k backs; 86k ULDs; 34k LLDs)
- Working days lost: 9.5M (= 3.8M backs; 3.7M ULDs; 2.0M LLDs)

(In 2004/05, over 40% of over 3 day injuries were caused by handling, lifting and carrying)

# MSDs – what's the answer ?



Under the Manual Handling Regulations, employers must ...

- avoid the need for hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable
- assess the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling that cannot be avoided
- reduce the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable
- provide employees undertaking hazardous manual handling with information about the weights of loads

**But** compliance alone is not enough ...

# Six core elements of a successful MSD workplace management programme ...



- Senior management commitment
- Employee involvement
- Identification of problem jobs
- Development of solutions ( control measures)
- Training and education
- Appropriate medical management

\*(USA General Accounting Office report – HEHS -97-163)

# HSE's "Better Backs" campaign



- aims to reduce the incidence and impact of back pain + manual handling injuries
- actively promotes: the use of sensible workplace precautions/the "stay active with back pain" message/joint employer-employee action to get people with back pain back into normal activities
- delivers the above through: inspection/publicity campaigns/+ stakeholder activities (incl. support for safety rep. interventions + ongoing Welsh Backs campaign)

# “Better Backs” – the Unite Amicus project 2006/07...



## Project found that:

- promoting BB –type initiatives via UA training courses is effective in enabling safety reps to take action in the workplace
- in workplaces where back-related risks are already well controlled, safety rep training is still of benefit (by exposing reps to new ideas on how to manage such risks)
- a range of variables influence the extent/impact of the action taken by the rep



# Better Backs 2006 involved ...

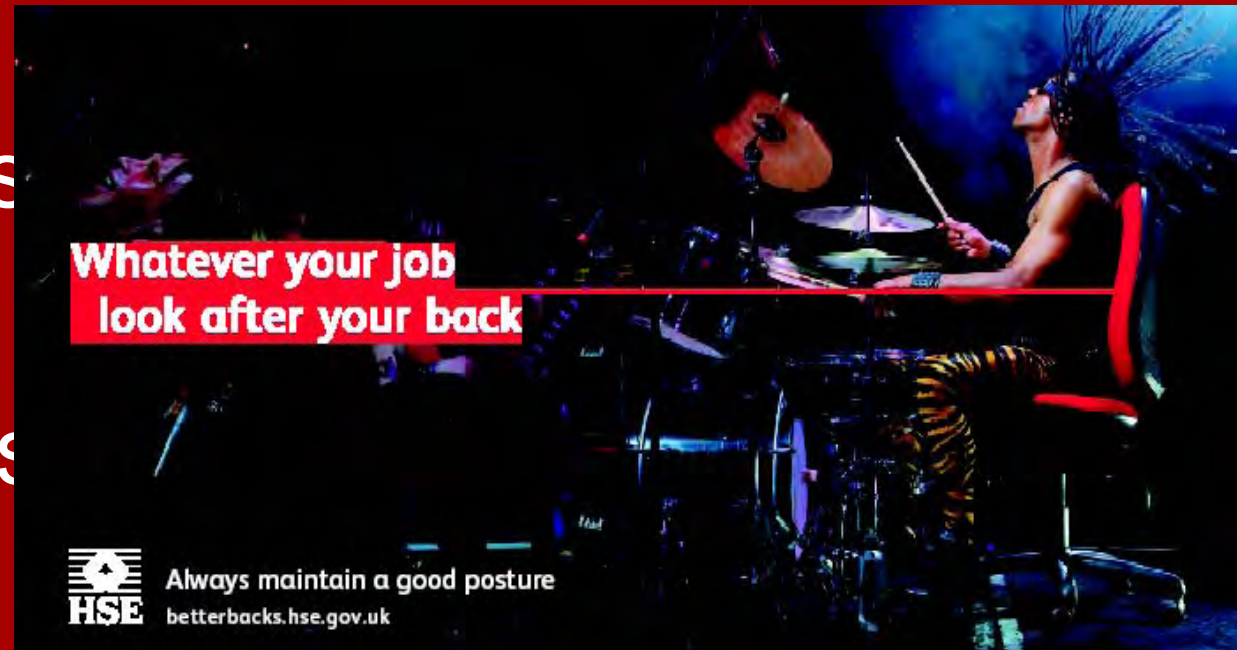
- radio and press advertising - around 15 million listeners to the radio adverts with 150 articles generated in the press
- over 800 targeted inspections and 80 enforcement notices
- over 50 funded stakeholder events
- 'signing up' 180 stakeholders – who pledged activity to prevent workplace back pain
- distributing 50,000 stakeholder packs
- extensive website activity

... centred on a 6 week period starting October 2006

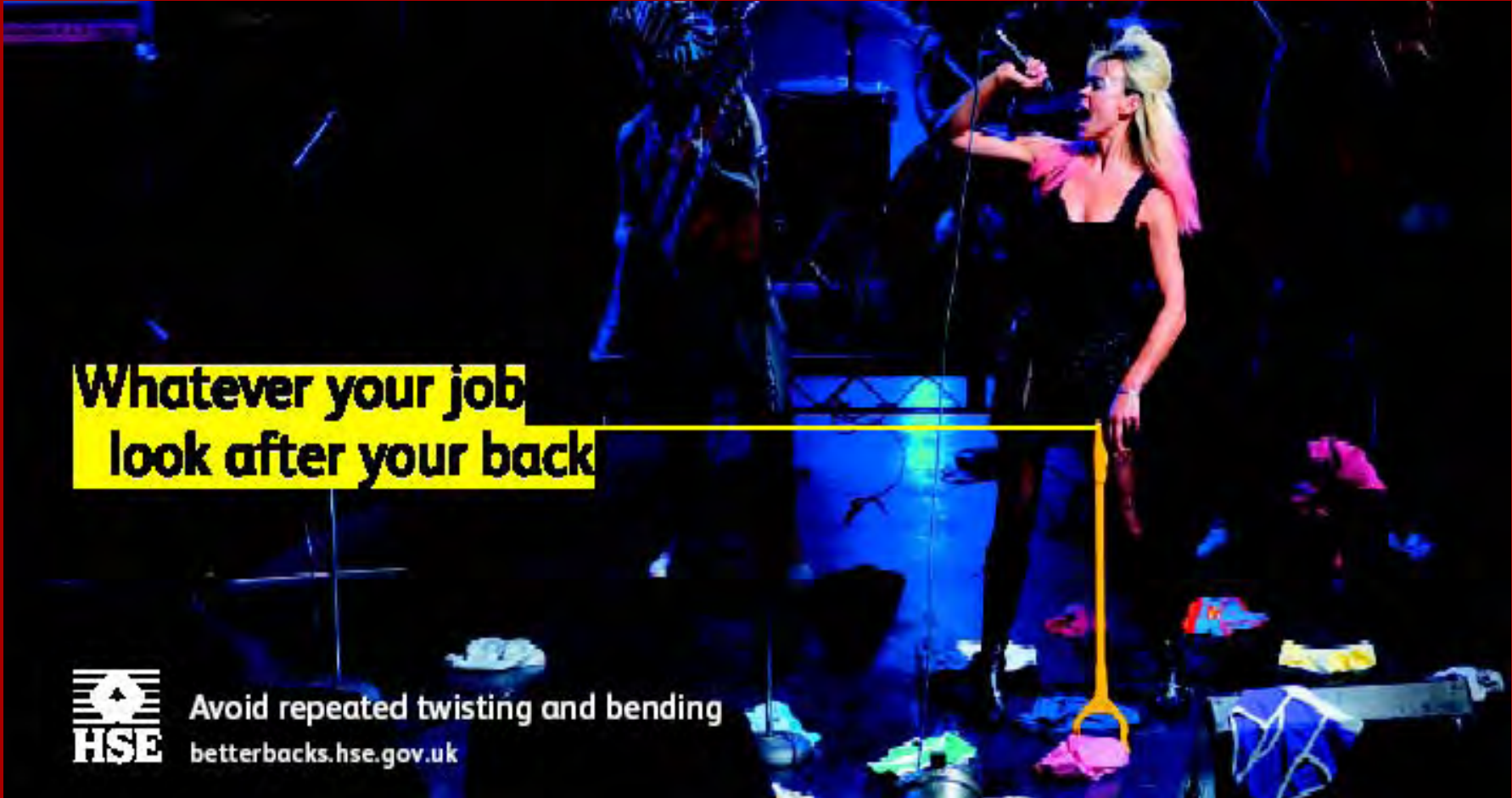
# Better Backs

National publicity campaign

- National billboards and press
- Radio
- Local Press
- Journals
- Trade press
- Website



# Better Backs

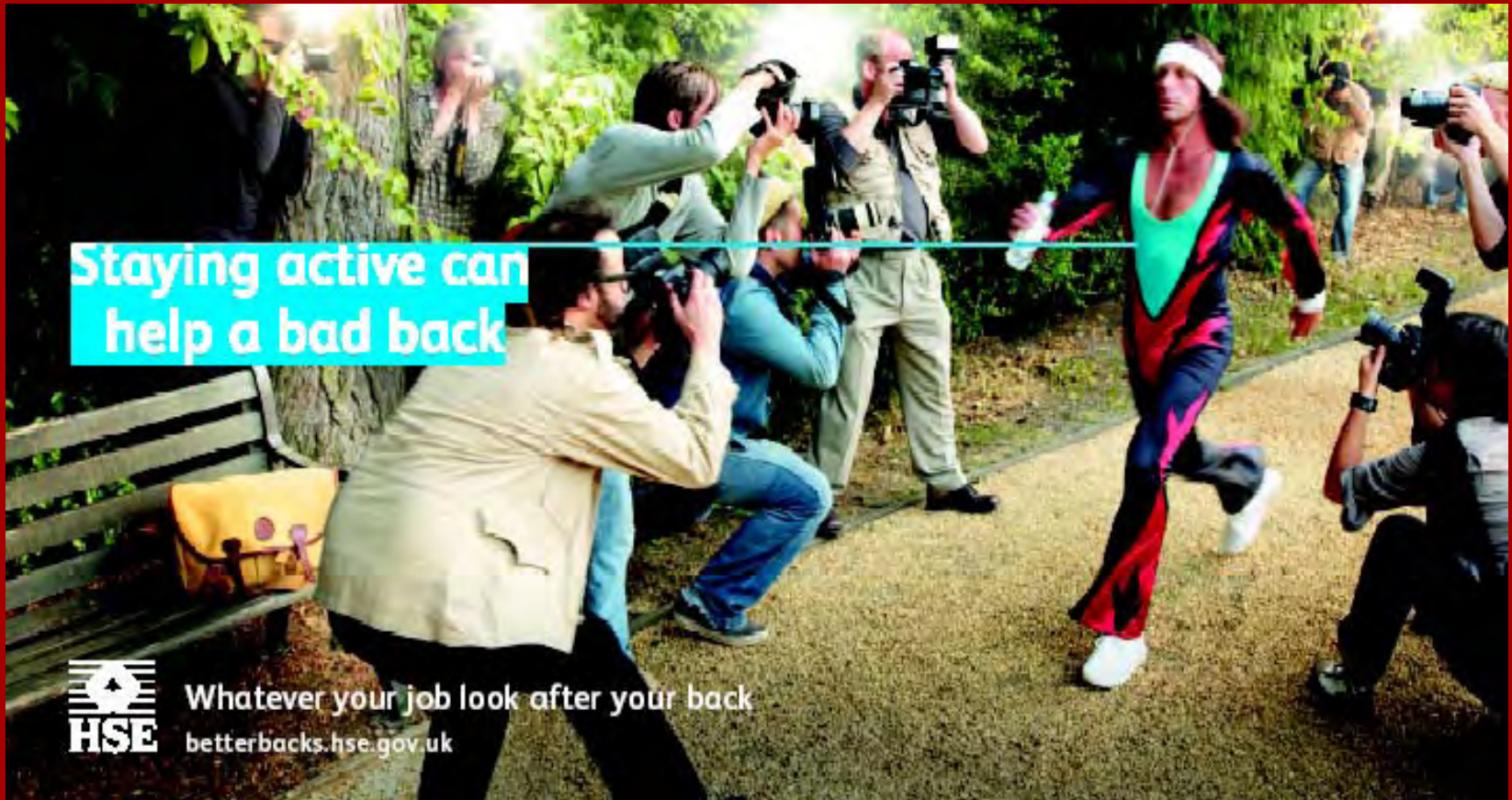


**Whatever your job  
look after your back**



Avoid repeated twisting and bending  
[betterbacks.hse.gov.uk](http://betterbacks.hse.gov.uk)

# Better Backs



Staying active can help a bad back



Whatever your job look after your back  
[betterbacks.hse.gov.uk](http://betterbacks.hse.gov.uk)

# Better Backs – Evaluation findings



- Employees: high awareness of campaign messages pre- and post –
- Employers: Lower baseline awareness of messages; associated back pain with risk assessment/lifting more than with ‘staying active’/R2W
- Public sector employers most likely to say that back pain is a widespread problem

# .. and the statistics show ?

Between 2001/02 and 2005/06,  
estimated numbers of:

- new MSD cases fell from 231k to 190k
- MSD-related working days lost fell from 11.8M to 9.45M

# Better Backs 2007/08 – key elements ...



- Stakeholder events – including:
  - MSD training events for safety representatives (to be delivered by the TUC – and HSE/HSL ergonomists – as part of MSD Euroweek 2007)
  - health sector events promoting the benefits of EPBs (Electric Profiling Beds)
- Piloting of a new ULD risk assessment tool
- A new-look stakeholder pack (available Autumn 2007 onwards)
- Reworked MSD pages on the HSE website

# Better Backs 2007/08 – how can you get involved ?



- Think about organising your own ‘stakeholder events’
- Access HSE’s new-look MSD website
- Use our new MSD stakeholder pack -  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/campaigns/orderpack.htm>
- Involve your safety/employee representatives

Please participate – **together we can make a difference**

## Information

- Contact HSE's Infoline on 0845 345 0055
- Website [www.hse.gov.uk/msd](http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd) or [www.betterbacks.hse.gov.uk](http://www.betterbacks.hse.gov.uk)
- Order copies of HSE publications [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk) /tel. 01787 881165