

Next-Level Safety: SIMPL Strategy 2026–2030

Introduction

SIMPL is an initiative to help to improve the health and safety performance of the polymer manufacturing industries through a partnership of trade associations, employers, trade unions, equipment manufacturers, training organisations and HSE.

The partners involved are:

- British Plastics Federation
- Composites UK (Committee Chair)
- Polymer Machinery Manufacturers and Distributors Association
- Glass and Glazing Federation
- British Safety Industry Federation
- Health and Safety Executive
- GMB
- Unite

The SIMPL partners work together to:

- Identify, develop, provide and share ideas, decisions, initiatives, advice, information, guidance and support that will help prevent death, ill health and injury to those that work - and those that are affected by work activities - in the plastics and composites industries.
- Identify and raise concerns; and consult on and tackle issues as they arise, including new health and safety challenges.

More information about SIMPL and health and safety in plastics and composites manufacture can be found at [Health and safety in the polymer industries](#).

SIMPL Strategy 2026-2030

This strategy recognises and builds upon the work of previous SIMPL strategies and supports the commitment of the polymer manufacturing industries to the principles set out in conjunction with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

As before, SIMPL aims to help the polymer manufacturing industries translate current and previous SIMPL strategic objectives into relevant, realistic and achievable health and safety action plans:

- reduction in ill health and accidents
- health and safety basics
- health and safety management and leadership
- competence

This 5-year strategy will focus on three key themes in an effort to support these aims and deliver better workplace conditions, healthier/happier employees, and improved productivity.

Competence

Competence in health and safety requires a range of skills, knowledge, experience, and other qualities to perform work-related tasks safely and effectively, minimizing risks and preventing harm.

- Knowledge:

Understanding relevant health and safety legislation, procedures, hazards, and risks associated with the specific work environment and tasks.

- **Skills:**
Having the practical abilities to carry out tasks safely, including using equipment, implementing control measures, and responding to emergencies.
- **Experience:**
Gaining practical experience through on-the-job training and exposure to different situations, which helps in recognizing hazards and making informed decisions.
- **Attitude:**
Having a positive attitude towards health and safety, demonstrating a commitment to following procedures and taking responsibility for one's own safety and the safety of others.
- **Other qualities:**
This can include factors like physical and mental aptitude, communication skills, and the ability to work effectively with others.

Accident and Incident Investigation

Health and safety investigations are important tools in developing and refining your risk management system. An effective investigation requires a methodical, structured approach to information gathering, collation, and analysis. The findings of the investigation will form the basis of an action plan to prevent the accident or incident from happening again, and for improving your overall management of risk.

Accident and incident investigation relies on competence and means companies/sites can better determine why accidents/incidents have occurred and will provide a deeper understanding of the risks associated with workplace activities.

- All sites should undertake a review of existing accident/incident investigation procedures by comparing these against the HSE guidance HSG245 'Investigating accidents and incidents' and have a system in place for demonstrating that all identified corrective actions as part of the investigation are prioritised, allocated, acted upon, and monitored to ensure they are not delayed or forgotten.
- All sites should have in place an accident/incident investigation team. Depending on the level of the investigation (and the size of the business), supervisors, line managers, health and safety professionals, union safety representatives, employee representatives, and senior management/directors may all be involved.
- All sites should demonstrate an understanding of what should be investigated in terms of legal requirements and organisational needs, the investigation team must undertake training in accident/incident investigation.

Proactive and reactive mental health and wellbeing measures

The estimated working days lost due to work-related ill health and non-fatal workplace injuries in 2023/24 was 33.7 million (Labour Force Survey).

At some point, one in four people in the UK will have a mental health problem. Most mental health problems are mild, and can be short-term and usually successfully treated, with prescribed medication.

Work can aggravate pre-existing conditions and induce symptoms or make their effects worse. Whether work is the cause of a health issue or aggravating it, employers have a legal duty to help their employees.

- All sites should have a nominated person for developing or maintaining a management system and implementing effective controls to manage stress and other psychosocial hazards in the workplace.
- Managing mental health hazards and evaluating the sources and effects of stress and other work-related health hazards is no different to managing safety. All sites should have in place proactive and reactive measures to reduce the number of hours lost through work-related ill health.

A trained mental health first-aider can play an important role in providing a safe, non-judgemental role in supporting colleagues. While training is essential to this task, it is not a professional role, and it is not part of their function to provide therapy. However, they are trained to recognise symptoms of common mental health conditions, communicate effectively while offering support, signpost to professional help, and maintain confidentiality.

Delivering the Objectives

This strategy:

- Will only be effective through strong leadership, commitment, and accountability, from top management and at all other levels within the organisations, coupled with effective workforce involvement and engagement.
- Recognises the key in achieving the objectives is for everyone to work together through the SIMPL initiative.
- Supports and promotes worker involvement to cultivate the development of a genuine management/workforce partnership based on trust, respect, and co-operation.
- Focuses action on key health, safety, and wellbeing issues identified for improvement by industry.

SIMPL: stakeholders will deliver a range of resources to support this strategy, including bulletins, events, and training. Additional resources for the initiative can be found at:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/plastics/simpl-focus-on.htm>

SIMPL support

Acting together Promoting broader ownership of health and safety in Great Britain **Tackling ill health** Highlighting and tackling the costs of work-related ill health **Sharing our success** Promoting the benefits of Great Britain's world-class health and safety system **Managing risk well** Simplifying risk management and helping business to grow **Keeping pace with change** Anticipating and tackling new health and safety challenges **Supporting small employers** Giving SMEs simple advice so that they know what they have to do