

London, 10 June 2014

**Statement from Chris Davies, CEO,
in response to press articles concerning the Minimum Wage**

The minimum wage is one of the most important workplace rights. It is a fundamental that we value, respect and adhere to and we are outraged at the accusation that we have not complied with this legislation. We have contacted the government minister responsible, Jenny Willott, MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Employment Relations and Consumer Affairs, to request a robust apology.

The facts are as follows:

- In October 2013, an error in upload to our computer system meant the pay of 15 colleagues was not updated with the changes to the minimum wage in that month by between 47p and £25 each – a total of £150.
- This was an administrative error that we immediately noticed and set about correcting; the underpayments were rectified within a month.
- We received an acknowledgement from HMRC confirming that they were satisfied with our response and were issued a Notice of Underpayment some three months after we first noticed the error and two months after it was corrected.

We feel strongly that the action of “naming and shaming” for a genuine administrative error that was quickly and proactively notified and rectified is disproportionate and unfair. Having sought legal advice, we also believe that HMRC has not followed its own process.

HSS Group currently employs over 2,800 colleagues across the UK and Ireland and only 20 of these are currently paid the minimum wage whilst all others are above it. Over the last 12 months we have welcomed 655 new colleagues to the business and trained 36 apprentices. We are committed to paying all colleagues fairly and legally and we also go a long way over and above that with a strong track record of investing in our people. In May 2013, we opened a dedicated training facility for all new sales colleagues to receive residential training, representing a first in the UK hire industry. We also provide all colleagues with life assurance and health care benefits and of course, we contribute to their pensions. There are many factors which substantially contribute to a company’s success but, for us, our core belief in people and our distinct workplace culture is the most important and we work hard to support our people.

Given these facts, it is ludicrous that HSS should have been listed alongside companies which have allegedly contravened employment law. We consider this to be deeply damaging to our hard won reputation as a meticulously fair, inclusive and strongly progressive employer and resent the accusation.

Chris Davies,
Chief Executive Officer
HSS Hire Group

For any media enquiries relating to this subject please contact:
Fiona McFadden on +44 7786 736 706