

Health and Safety Executive Senior Management Team Paper SMT/11/40			
Meeting Date:	4 th May 2011	FOI Status:	Open
Type of Paper:	Above the line	Trim Ref:	2011/25012
Fol Exemptions:	N/A		

An Effective Specialist Workforce – Meeting Future Business Challenges

A Paper by Pauline Hughes and John Hampton

Advisors: Directors and SCS Members From Across HSE

Cleared by Dave Bench on 26th April 2011

Issue

1. SMT endorsement of a vision and agreement to a way forward to shape and progress the review of how HSE deploys and manages specialists.

Timing

2. Urgent. The critical state of some disciplines is the main driver for action. We need to make progress with the review and any changes it recommends as soon as possible

Recommendation

3. SMT are invited to agree:
 - the proposed vision statement needed to underpin this review (annex 1);
 - the principle that to help achieve the vision we look to brigade specialist teams into the largest possible functional groupings to enable their efficient and effective oversight, management and deployment in line with business priorities; and
 - to resource the detailed work needed to complete the review

Background

4. HSE faces many challenges to ensure it has the specialist competencies required to meet current and future business needs, and to make best use of scarce specialist skills. The 2010 discipline health check report (annex 2) highlights key challenges HSE faces, and a need to confirm what HSE requires from its specialist workforce so we can align specialist work transparently with business priorities. Some disciplines are already experiencing critical resource shortages affecting front line specialist inspector work. This is also impacting on delivery of important strategic work.
5. In recognition of these issues and in response to paper SMT/10/119, SMT commissioned a review in November 2010 with the aim of securing an

effective, flexible and sustainable specialist workforce that can adapt to changing needs to deliver HSE's business now and in future.

6. Much work has already been done to ensure HSE best organises and manages its specialist resources. Whilst we always anticipated evolutionary change and continuous improvement, recent organisational changes along with SR2010 have increased the impetus for this.

Argument

7. The backdrop of ongoing difficulties in recruiting and retaining specialists exposes weaknesses in our current arrangements for managing with finite resources. In particular, there is a lack of corporate oversight to manage deployment of specialists so that priority work is resourced. It is essential that a robust process for bidding for work from discipline teams and for managing conflicting priorities is established to ensure that these weaknesses are addressed.
8. The review will address three key issues:
 - What does HSE need from specialists now and in future:
 - confirm the continuing need for specialists in all areas
 - how specialists will be deployed and managed to make best use of scarce resources;
 - What infrastructure do we need to sustain an effective specialist workforce:
 - career paths, training & development, knowledge management, etc;
 - Do existing specialist roles fully meet business needs:
 - e.g. exploring potential for technical support officer roles and making better use of HSL capability & capacity and external resources, to free up resources.
9. We aim to build on previous work and in consultation with divisions/directorates seek SMT endorsement to move forward based on a proposition which aims to deliver:
 - i. Clearly defined/understood business needs for specialist support across HSE:
 - Agreed current and expected future needs for specialist resource
 - A clear understanding of the size and composition of the specialist workforce needed going forward, the skills and competencies required and any gaps
 - ii. Improved organisation of the specialist workforce by grouping topic specialist teams where possible to form single discipline groups managed within the most appropriate division(s)/directorate(s). This will help secure and sustain the flexible and responsive specialist workforce HSE needs with the following features:
 - Fewer line managers with clearer delivery responsibilities and accountability for deployment and development of staff in line with corporate business needs

- Simple agreed criteria against which conflicting business needs and priorities are judged, which ensure important strategic priority work, cost recoverable and urgent reactive work are all resourced appropriately.
 - Close links maintained between front line specialist inspection work and technical policy development work
 - Groups have the ability and flexibility to work across organisational boundaries
 - A robust corporate challenge function that ensures resources are targeted to deliver priority work pan HSE for each discipline
 - An effective supporting infrastructure including arrangements such as:
 - a collective, corporate approach to specialist recruitment activity
 - specialist career paths underpinned by clear ongoing business needs
 - continuing professional development aligned with business needs,
 - Specialist roles aligned with business needs - designed to deliver the right work at the right level, and including (potentially):
 - New supporting technical roles to assist specialist inspectors
 - Greater use of existing visiting technical officer roles
 - Purchasing specialist support from alternative sources where appropriate
10. Although essentially separate issues, how HSE organises its specialist workforce and how easily it can sustain that workforce are interdependent. The proposition to brigade teams where possible will lead to more clearly defined corporate responsibilities within the management chain. We propose this will make it more likely HSE can successfully address the difficult capacity and capability issues we have been facing over a prolonged period.
11. Annex 3 broadly outlines the range of specialists employed. The review plans to cover all HSE staff deemed specialists. A full taxonomy of specialists will be presented to the steering group for endorsement. The deployment review workstream will tackle priority areas quickly, starting with those disciplines deemed critical or vulnerable in the 2010 health checks.
12. The review will also consider the potential for greater collaboration with HSL e.g. to support recruitment and training activity; making greater use of HSL specialists; exploring the extent to which HSE can enable HSL to plan its own recruitment needs with a greater degree of certainty based on future expected HSE requirements.
13. The review plans to exclude specialists within ONR, but close links will be maintained with ONR's transformation programme and Kevin Allars will continue on the specialist workforce programme board.
14. Informed by the outcome of previous similar initiatives, the steering group recognises that this review faces many barriers and issues that could impact on delivery. Annex 4 outlines various threats to a successful outcome from this review. Key threats include:

- Inability to resource the review itself. Although CEB recently cleared the creation of a temporary B1 post to help deliver this review we anticipate substantial additional effort will be needed. Work has already run into difficulty as HID is unable to resource the feasibility study for the new technical support role due to pressing priority work in the offshore sector.
- Specialist pay barriers and lack of transparency regarding the extent to which skills and competencies are transferable across domain boundaries may limit the extent to which HSE is able to exploit potential flexibilities.
- Reluctance of Divisions/directorates to relinquish direct control of the specialist resources that they currently manage

Consultation

15. This paper is the product of workshop and a follow up session involving senior representatives from HID (Gordon MacDonald, David Snowball, Peter Baker), FOD (David Ashton, Terry Rose), CCID (Jane Willis, Karen Clayton), CRD (Dave Bench), CSEAD (Dave Bench, John Osman), HR (Gaynor Coldrick, Dave Hockey) and HSL (Eddie Morland). The paper was also circulated in draft form to enable divisions and directorates to consult and inform the developing paper before it was finalised.
16. Trade unions have been made aware this review is planned but have not yet been consulted. We expect to make contact with them once SMT agree the way forward.
17. Following SMT discussions, the paper and annexes will become “open” documents so specialists can be informed and involved in the review process.

Presentation

18. No parliamentary or ministerial interest and no need for publicity is anticipated.

Costs and benefits

19. This review will increase levels of assurance that HSE employs the right number and type of specialists, doing the right work, at the right band, aligned with clear business needs and priorities that contribute to delivery of the HSE strategy.
20. The review also aims to ensure that HSE can deploy scarce specialist skills flexibly to meet business needs and priorities effectively, maximising the impact of expensive specialist resource in supporting delivery of the HSE strategy. It will also ensure the workforce is sustainable so HSE has ongoing access to scarce specialist skills and competencies needed to deliver its future business.

Financial/Resource implications for HSE

21. The review will seek to ensure that HSE recovers costs for specialist work where appropriate.

Action

22. The review steering group will resource the workstreams and initiate next steps to progress the review once SMT have endorsed an agreed vision and a way forward.

ANNEX 1

Deployment and Management of Specialists

SMT VISION STATEMENT

HSE has an effective, flexible and sustainable specialist workforce positioned to manage and deliver current and future business priorities, underpinned by an infrastructure that ensures ongoing access to the skills and competencies needed.

What will this look like?

Business Model for Delivery

- ✓ Specialists are deployed on priority work aligned with clearly defined business needs covering all relevant aspects of operational work and policy development, implementation and delivery.
- ✓ Appropriate management arrangements are adopted to suit differing needs including:
 - Specialists sharing transferable skills and competencies across organisational boundaries are managed in the largest possible functional groupings.
 - Small teams of deep topic specialists with skills unique to a particular sector adopt local management arrangements that meet business needs
- ✓ Competing priorities are managed through clear mechanisms that support managers making difficult judgements to deploy scarce resources and manage business risks.
 - Managers are responsible for a full portfolio of reactive, proactive and strategic work underpinned by clear business needs, enabling conflicting priorities to be balanced and managed in an informed and self-correcting manner.
 - Deployment of specialists takes account of the need to maintain sufficient understanding of technology development and futures thinking.
- ✓ HSE makes best use of skills/knowledge, by ensuring work is done by people with appropriate levels of skills, including. greater use of technical support officer type roles, effective use of HSL capability and capacity and effective use of external specialist resources

Infrastructure

- ✓ A collective, coordinated approach to the recruitment of specialists underpins business cases for specialist recruitment submitted to CEB and the Minister

- ✓ Strong cross-HSE leadership of professional issues within disciplines e.g. knowledge management, peer review, CPD, etc,
- ✓ Varied and sustainable specialist career path options are clearly defined alongside existing management career paths.
- ✓ A collaborative approach supports specialist training and development activity so we have the right skills and experience to meet current and future business needs
- ✓ Individual and team competence is managed effectively e.g. using the SRDNA tool

Communication

- ✓ Specialists are involved in and fully informed about the work to develop and sustain HSE's specialist workforce
- ✓ There is a transparent link between business needs and the work of specialists
- ✓ Specialist work is joined up with relevant cross-HSE interests including related policy work etc.

ANNEX 2

Discipline Health Checks

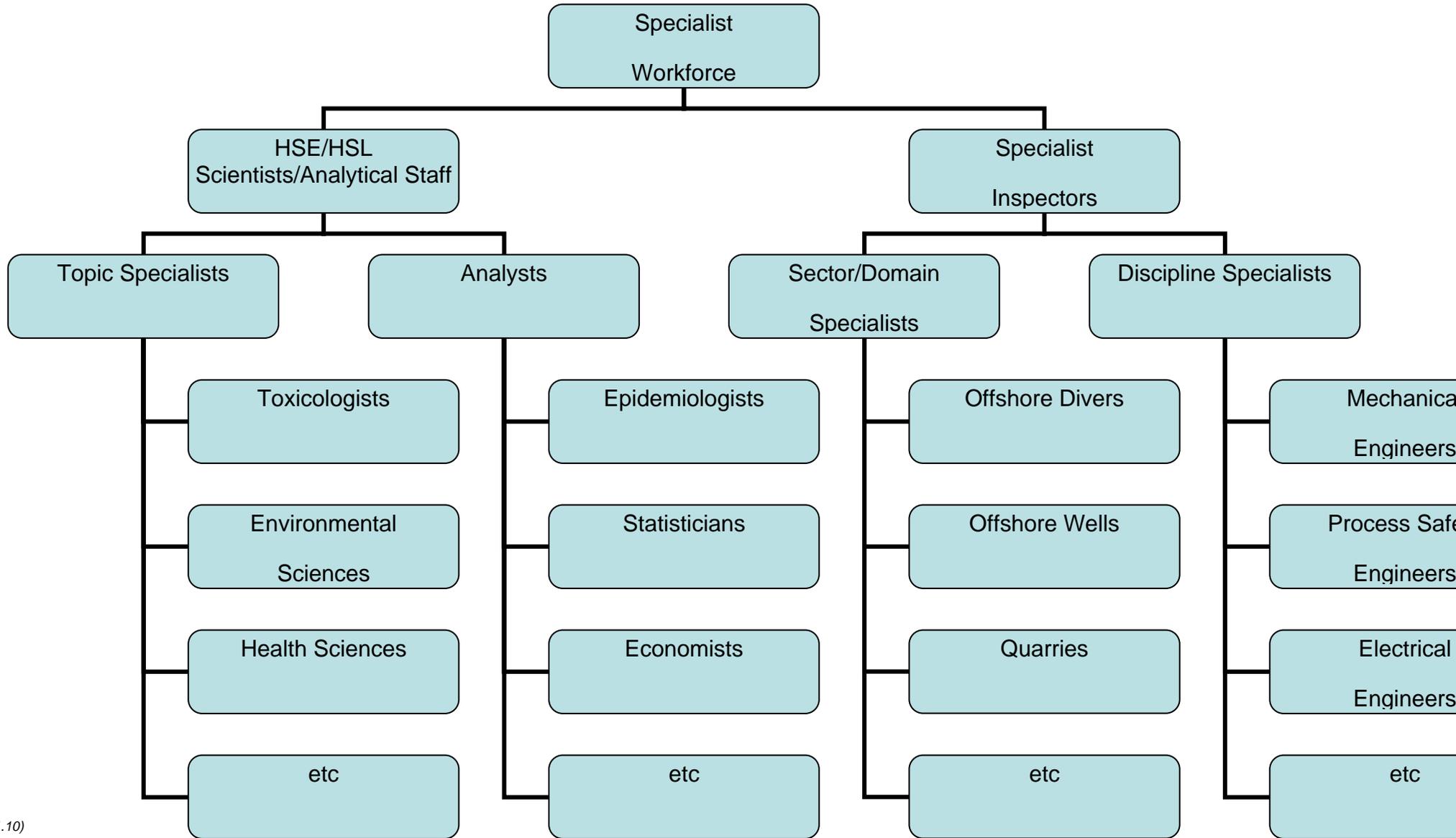
October 2010

A Snapshot of Specialist Workforce
Capability and Capacity Issues

TRIM: 2011/239368

(Report Attached Separately)

HSE's Specialist Workforce



ANNEX 4

Summary Issues/Barriers

HSE Culture/Organisational Boundaries

- Limited mechanisms to manage discipline issues at a corporate level
- Limited mechanisms to share resources across organisational boundaries where this may be feasible to address geographical resource gaps.
- Limited corporate oversight of specialist resource needs/issues affecting delivery
- PAFs and success criteria measure results within silos – lack corporate behaviour drivers.
- Pay structure leads to migration of staff to areas offering higher salaries.
- Migration of staff to ND and OSD leaves others facing resource gaps
- Limited arrangements for succession planning and business continuity
- Can matrix management deliver against HSE business needs? CSD model would indicate this is possible.
- Are specialists part of the team or simply a service provider?
- Are we making the best multidisciplinary approaches and shared learning from those who currently work in matrix management arrangements?
- Concerns (of some specialists) about introducing a technical officer grade

Conflicting priorities

- Need good quality information about what work is needed/undertaken to make decisions about allocation of resource.
- Currently have no means to balance conflicting priorities across divs/dirs
- Implications for HSE income if resource is diverted from cost recoverable to non-chargeable work.
- Reactive work squeezes strategic work

Transparency

- Business need for specialist work is not always clear/transparent.
- Difficult to see how resources are deployed, or could be made available, to address priority issues in other areas of the business.
- HSE track record implementing tough management decisions

Costs/Financial Issues

- How HSE should access specialists - external vs in house support
- Specialist recruitment and EYT costs not shared equally: mainly borne by HSL/FOD –those investing may not get payback before staff move on.
- Recruitment cost implications include:
 - Reputation risks
 - Failed recruitment exercises – wasting time and money
 - Training costs – max efficiency to minimise direct/lost opportunity costs
 - Transfer/loss of corporate knowledge
 - Productivity losses

Continuity

- Changes to retirement arrangements make it difficult to succession plan.
- Changes to retirement arrangements present an opportunity for HSE - skilled/ experienced professionals can choose stay longer
- Vulnerabilities exist where corporate knowledge lies with one person.
- HR data quality – lacking info such as career experience and qualifications that could usefully inform succession planning

END