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**Analysis of Training Needs for HSL in Support of
HSE Inspectors: Summary of Main Findings**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Some members of staff at the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) had asked for more training in the areas of law and general health and safety, in order to be better prepared and able to support Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Inspectors in the areas of incident investigation and enforcement work. Equally, HSE field staff had expressed recognition that there was potential to improve HSL staffs' abilities to contribute effectively to the work of HSE staff. It was agreed that two focus groups would be held with appropriately knowledgeable staff from HSL and HSE, in order to obtain a clear idea of what the additional knowledge and skills are that HSL staff require. The HSE Corporate Science and Knowledge Unit (CSKU) funded this work.

Focus groups were chosen to gain insights into the current training situation and potential developments. However, due to time and availability restraints, the sample size used to inform this research project was restricted. While the sample size was very small, those selected to participate have considerable experience working with and/or for both HSE and HSL, so it was considered that their range of experiences would be sufficient to reflect the training needs of HSL staff.

Aim

The aim of the project was to find out what additional training HSL staff require, in order to provide more effective support to front-line HSE inspectors in incident investigation or enforcement work (including advice). The results of the project will be used to inform a training course specification for HSL staff training in the future, such a training course would be relevant to all types of HSL staff that interact with HSE inspectors.

Main Findings

1. Identifying Training Needs

○ *Competency Framework*

HSL staff need to work within a competency framework, this would ensure that the HSL skill base is transparent to HSE when asking for HSL support. This framework might be *job* based rather than *band* based.

● **Detailed development plan**

Having established a competency framework plans should be made to identify how, when and where individuals can gain the necessary skills and experience to ensure they are competent for their job role.

● **Identify who needs training, why and how**

It was agreed that not all HSL staff require all training and that it would be costly for HSL to use a blanket training approach. Therefore, targeted training with some individuals acting as mentors to others was the recommended approach.

2. Specific Training Needs

- **Health and safety legal knowledge**

A basic knowledge of health and safety legislation was seen as being important for all HSL staff to understand how HSL work fits into that of the HSE Inspector. While staff thought it was particularly important to have basic legal knowledge (e.g. the Health and Safety at Work Act, key regulations, the role of 'guidance', formal enforcement options etc.), they also thought that basic health and safety knowledge (e.g. NEBOSH certificate/ diploma) was needed.

- ***Developed understanding of roles***

Linked to basic health and safety knowledge was the notion that HSL staff should have a better understanding of the HSE Inspector's role, and vice versa. HSE staff need to be aware of HSL staff training and experience and to provide clear job specifications.

- **Training in evidence handling**

It was assumed by HSE Inspectors that all HSL staff providing support to investigations had training in evidence handling, although it is not given as a matter of course.

- **Targeted advanced training**

It was recognised that not all staff require advanced training, but it was thought imperative that advanced training should be available for those who are likely to be called upon to be expert witnesses. While HSL staff do usually receive expert witness training before attending court, it was thought that a more pre-emptive approach was needed so that staff will better understand the implications of their work.

3. Approaches to Training

- **Training courses**

Basic knowledge in the Health and Safety legal framework would be best taught via formal training courses, as would evidence handling etc

- **Mentors**

It was suggested that experienced HSL staff could act as mentors or points of advice for those who interact infrequently with HSE Inspectors. The knowledge and skills of these individuals should be developed for the benefit of all HSL staff.

- **Secondments**

Although acknowledged to be cost and time prohibitive, it was thought that secondments to HSE were an excellent way of developing HSL knowledge but that opportunities are rare because HSE Specialist Inspectors etc. also require secondments.

- **Developing contacts between HSE and HSL**

HSL should continue to develop contacts with HSE Inspectors and use the opportunities to learn more about their roles.

1 INTRODUCTION

Some members of staff at the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) had asked for more training in the areas of law and general health and safety, in order to be better prepared and able to support Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Inspectors in the areas of incident investigations and enforcement work. Equally, HSE field staff had expressed recognition that there was potential to improve HSL staffs' abilities to contribute effectively to the work of HSE staff. It was agreed that two focus groups would be held with appropriately knowledgeable staff from HSL and HSE, in order to obtain a clear idea of what the additional knowledge and skills are that HSL staff require. The HSE Corporate Science and Knowledge Unit (CSKU) funded this work.

Focus groups were chosen to gain insights into the current training situation and potential developments. However, due to time and availability restraints, the sample size used to inform this research project was restricted. While the sample size was very small, those selected to participate have considerable experience working with and/or for both HSE and HSL, so it was considered that their range of experiences would be sufficient to reflect the training needs of HSL staff.

The aim of the project was to find out what additional training HSL staff require, in order to provide more effective support to front-line HSE inspectors in incident investigation or enforcement work (including advice). The results of the project will be used to inform a training course specification for HSL staff training in the future, such a training course would be relevant to all types of HSL staff that interact with HSE inspectors.

2 METHODODOLOGY

Two focus groups were held with appropriately knowledgeable staff from HSL and HSE, in order to obtain a clear idea of what the additional knowledge and skills are that HSL staff require. Participants were selected to represent a range of experiences of working with HSL staff from a cross-section of scientific disciplines.

2.1 FOCUS GROUP ONE

The first focus group was held on 6th December 2005 and consisted of a mixture of staff from the following groups:

- HSE staff who used to work for HSL
- HSL staff who used to work for HSE
- HSL staff who are experienced in providing support to front-line HSE Inspectors in incident investigations or enforcement work (including advice).

The aims of this focus group were:

1. To explore the differences between HSE and HSL in training provision and other relevant organisational factors which might affect the quality and suitability of the work delivered by HSL staff; and
2. To identify which elements of HSE training would be useful and relevant to HSL staff.

There were six participants in this focus group. This group consisted of: three HSE staff who previously worked for HSL, one HSL staff who previously worked for HSE, and two HSL staff experienced at advising inspectors.

2.2 FOCUS GROUP TWO

The second focus group was held on 25th January 2006 and consisted of a group of operational HSE Inspectors (not Specialist Inspectors) from different areas of HSE operations. All participants had experience of working with HSL staff. The aims of this focus group were:

- i) To explore the nature of the mismatch between the work HSL sometimes delivers and that which HSE requires; and
- ii) To try to identify where HSL staff lack skills, knowledge or experience, which, if addressed, would improve the quality of support HSL could provide to HSE.

There were four participants in this group. Information from a fifth Inspector was collected via a telephone interview because he was unable to attend the focus group. Participants did not take part in more than one focus group.

3 MAIN FINDINGS

The following is a summary of the main points raised by participants during each of the two focus groups. They have been organised into topic areas and summarised. In places, a comment made by a participant is not accurate and hence, a footnote has been added to correct any misperceptions.

3.1 FOCUS GROUP ONE

3.1.1 Structure/ training focus

A difference in the structure, focus and intent of training in HSE compared with HSL was identified. All inspectors are trained generally, and to the same standards (irrelevant of having a degree in a specialist subject)¹, those that had moved from HSL thought that they had built on their previous knowledge with specialised knowledge when moving to HSE. It was noted that HSE training is in tightly defined topic areas².

It was agreed that the HSL approach to training is not structured in the same way as HSE's initial inspector training. It was thought by some that HSL staff training was 'fitted in' wherever it could be rather than planned. While this suggested that much of HSL staff training was 'ad hoc', an alternative view was that it is not random but focused down a particular route that is different to HSE; HSL staff are scientists not inspectors or specialist inspectors. However, it was agreed that HSL staff gain relevant experience and training over time and that this depends on the activities and work that the individual is involved in rather than a planned programme of development. The customer focused nature of HSL means that the main priority is to do the job in hand, and that does not require staff to be trained in skills that might be irrelevant for much of the time.

3.1.2 Clarity of job descriptions/ role

A clear distinction to emerge between HSE and HSL was that HSE have a competency framework and specific job descriptions for HSE inspectors, which is tightly related to the training structure. However, it was thought that HSL lack a clear definition of roles and, therefore, training competence requirements. There was general agreement on the ambiguity of HSL job descriptions and role division associated with 'bands', this is compounded by the fact that in different Groups and Sections the different bands seem to have different roles and responsibilities³. Aligned to this was the need for clearer awareness and distinction of roles between HSL scientists and HSE inspectors. This was thought to be particularly true now that HSE has moved to 'Specialist Pools' (see Section 3.1.4.2 "Understanding each others' roles").

3.1.3 Barriers to training for HSL staff

- HSL chargeable hours regime was seen as a barrier to additional training that affected both trainer and trainee.

¹ This is only true for regulatory inspectors, i.e. general site inspectors who enter at B4 and complete the 2-year training programme. This is not the case for all Specialist Inspectors who generally enter HSE at B3 level. These staff will spend 6 months in a field team (usually FOD) followed by 6 months in a FOD specialist team (if one exists, currently there is not one for human factors).

² HSE training for inspectors is currently being revised.

³ The same can be true in HSE outside of the general inspector grades.

- The need to maintain chargeable hours was also thought to be a barrier to knowledge transfer within teams at HSL; one or two individuals in a team will build up a great deal of experience in working with Inspectors but it is difficult for that knowledge to be shared.
- There was thought to be a training/ learning culture at HSE that was not evident at HSL. For example, in HSE every opportunity is taken for Inspectors to learn from others (e.g. visiting Courts to listen to proceedings) and to attend the training courses they need. One ex-HSL member of staff reported that it had taken three years before he was able to attend a particular course (because it cost a large proportion of the Section's annual training budget) and yet at HSE he did three similar courses in one year.
- There was discussion about the potential tension between the HSL Section and Central controlled budget system, specifically how this influenced decisions to approve training requests. It was also thought that any training requirements identified during this exercise should be funded centrally, as there will be conflicting demands on the limited Section budgets.⁴

3.1.4 HSL Training Needs (knowledge gaps)

One of the participants started by saying that HSL requires a competency framework to be defined before training needs can be identified and there was general agreement with this throughout the group. However, the group went on to identify some key areas where additional knowledge/ training might be required.

3.1.4.1 Legal framework

A view expressed by one participant, who had moved to HSE from HSL, was that HSL staff are considered to be 'legally naive' by HSE Inspectors who have used HSL resources. Others who had also moved to HSE supported this view. Specifically, it was thought that HSL staff often neglect to put health and safety advice, analysis or findings into context i.e. within the constraints of health and safety law. To rectify this, it was thought that targeted training was needed within HSL to increase staff knowledge of the legal framework within which HSE inspectors work. It was also considered important for HSL staff to have knowledge of the implications of legal challenges to health and safety prosecutions. Without such training there is a risk that the scientific advice given by HSL may be inappropriate or fail to meet Inspector's needs. HSL staff need to be aware of what they do not know about Health and Safety Law and Enforcement.

3.1.4.2 Understanding each others' roles

Those who had made the transition from HSL to HSE raised the point that many HSE inspectors were not aware of the remit of HSL scientists. For example, if drawing upon resource from the Technical Pools, most HSE Inspectors (if they had no previous experience of working with HSL) would assume that the knowledge and experience of each pool member is basically equivalent; they would presume that HSL staff had the same legal knowledge and enforcement powers as specialist inspectors.

Similarly, it was thought that HSL scientists are not necessarily aware of what is required of them by HSE inspectors. In some cases the HSL regime results in scientists who are deep topic specialists; individuals know a great deal about their topic area, what constitutes best practice and what constitutes advancement beyond compliance, but that might not be enforceable under

⁴ HSE B4 inspector training is funded out of the corporate budget, rather than a local budget.

Health and Safety Law. An Inspector needs to know what he can legally enforce a company to do and what he can recommend as best practice, but this is not always clear from HSL reports.

3.1.4.3 Communication skills (verbal and written)

The now-HSE participants noted that HSE Inspectors require ‘tightly written’ reports; this was related specifically to the need to comply with the legal process. Here, again reference was made to the legal training given to HSE staff.

It was noted that HSL scientists are required to use different writing styles depending on the audience e.g. scientific papers, technical reports, witness statements etc. However, the point was again made that sometimes the reports written for inspectors fail to be fit for purpose. Here, in addition to HSL requiring some understanding of the legal implications of a report, it was thought that HSE should communicate requirements more clearly to HSL. HSL need clear information about the purpose of the work and/or report to ensure it is fit for purpose, this is particularly important because often HSL are only involved in one aspect of any investigation and are not provided with complete information. Again, HSE staff often assume that HSL staff know what is required rather than spelling out their specific requirements.

At a general level it was thought that some HSL scientists needed to develop verbal communication (including listening) skills. HSE staff need to give clear instructions based on the level of knowledge and competence of the HSL staff involved.

3.1.4.4 Sector specific knowledge/ training

In some circumstances (e.g. nuclear sector) there is a need for HSL staff to develop sector specific knowledge.

3.1.5 Training Format

The discussion went on to consider how the identified training needs could be addressed.

3.1.5.1 Shadowing

Shadowing was considered as an option but while it is potentially very useful, it was acknowledged to be an expensive and time-consuming approach. It was reported to work well for HSE staff, for example HSE Inspectors had attended court proceedings to observe the legal process in action.

Recognising the financial and time consuming nature of shadowing, some suggestion was made that HSL staff should look to gain ‘field’ experience informally by building up relationships with Inspectors. This approach also improves the efficacy of communication between HSE/HSL and is mutually beneficial. It was not clear how this would be achieved.

3.1.5.2 Contacts

Developing contacts at HSE provides a point of communication and a good information source (and vice versa with HSL). However, it was noted by one HSL participant that it is not always clear who should be contacted regarding particular issues/topics.

It was suggested by one of the now-HSE participants that there is a need to build HSL’s profile within HSE; this would require the involvement of the Business Development Unit and is not just ‘training related’.

3.1.5.3 Other

Recognising that costs are a potential barrier to training, the group discussed the possibility of targeted training instead of a blanket approach. It was suggested that those individuals, within HSL, who already had some experience dealing with Inspectors could develop their experience, perhaps with formal training, and act as points of contact or mentors for other HSL staff who might have only an infrequent need to liaise with HSE Inspectors.

It was also agreed that, even if financially possible, a blanket approach to training is not necessarily the best approach because training is not the same as competency. HSL staff do not only need training but also the opportunity to consolidate that training with experience. Again, the point was made that HSL management need to consider individual job roles and identify who would benefit most, i.e. those who are likely to go on joint visits with Inspectors and provide expert witness statements. This sort of training would not be beneficial or required by all scientists at HSL.

Currently, some HSE teams (e.g. through the Divisional Development Manager/DDM) run regional tutorials for colleagues. A now-HSE participant suggested that this 'joined up working' approach could be extended to include HSL staff.

3.2 FOCUS GROUP TWO

3.2.1 Initial discussion

One participant expressed surprise that HSL staff are not trained to the same basic level as HSE Inspectors. Other participants thought this misconception was common, saying that there is a tendency for many Inspectors to 'accept' HSL members of staff as equals "*after all they are HSE*"; assuming that members of staff have a certain level of training.⁵

This discussion naturally flowed to the issue of HSE Specialists/Technical Pools. One participant explained to the others that HSL scientists are all qualified/experienced at different levels and that when using HSL staff from the 'pools' it should not be assumed that one HSL member of staff is the 'same' as another or that they are the 'same' as HSE Specialists from the pool. No guidelines have been set down about how to treat HSL staff as a pool resource (e.g. if the inspector is called away, it might be assumed HSL staff are competent to be left alone at the site but this is not always the case).

It was agreed that HSE Inspectors require guidelines about using staff from the pools.

3.2.2 Experiences of working with HSL staff

The group was asked about their experiences of working with HSL.

One participant had worked with HSL on two occasions, both times dealing with major incident investigations and had not experienced any problems. However, he did go on to explain that the report that was produced in support of the work was 'too scientific' even for inspectors. It would need to be simplified if it was to be used in a court prosecution etc.

⁵ This assumption by inspectors is common and not only applies with respect to HSL, but also towards other HSE scientific and technical staff.

A second participant reported that HSL staff accompanying an Inspector are usually very experienced, so understand 'how' things work. Some of the HSL experts used have an industry background, and therefore will inherently have the awareness of how to act and behave. Therefore, they had not experienced any problems when working with HSL staff but they are aware that problems may exist when working with new disciplines. The individual did not have any direct experience of any such problems, however.

A third participant reported a range of experiences working with HSL staff all of which were good and he said he did not have any adverse comments to make. The team he used 'concentrated on the facts'. They were required to sift the wreckage following a fatal incident and assist HSE in establishing the facts of what happened; they were involved in analysis only.

A fourth participant reported quite mixed experiences:

- In one case the HSL specialist produced a report that was difficult for others to understand;
- In another instance the report-writing period was protracted and;
- In two experiences with working with specialists from the same section, one experience was of 'fit for purpose working' but in the other, the report did not comply with HSE needs.

The fifth participant reported that while he had only limited experiences of working with HSL colleagues, his experiences had been good. He did comment, however, on the nature of the reports that were produced and the fact that it would be nice to be able to cut and paste text from the HSL report to his letter to site, but that was not always possible with some reports from HSL.

3.2.3 Questions asked of Focus Group Facilitator

The participants asked a number of questions that allude to their underlying assumptions about HSL staff. They were as follows:

- Is this enquiry driven by the recruitment of new staff?
- What is the training currently given to new recruits? e.g. it was assumed that staff had some training on legal procedures and on 'evidence handling' (including the handling of paperwork used as evidence and personal notes.)
- Are HSL staff warrant holders? (Facilitator explained that some staff do hold warrants but they do not have the same powers as HSE Inspectors and are only allowed to use them when accompanied by an inspector)
- How would HSE know which HSL staff held a warrant?
- Is there a competence framework or action plan? For example, is there a plan to gain industry experience etc?
- How many people could need training?

3.2.4 Communication between HSE and HSL

3.2.4.1 A clear brief

One Inspector noted that HSE staff need to provide HSL colleagues with a clear brief about what is required and this should be understood by all parties. In that way, HSL can ensure that what is delivered is what is required. There is a tendency for HSE to assume that HSL staff know what is required; more is expected of HSL than would be of other contractors who form part of the HSE call-off contract.

It was again highlighted that there are different levels of experience within HSL and that a focused brief is essential to minimise inadequate reports (see above).

3.2.4.2 Establishing contact with HSL

It was thought that there is a need to develop clear channels for finding the most relevant HSL member of staff for a job. Currently, most Inspectors contact HSL staff who they already know and if appropriate the request is cascaded internally to other relevant staff. This approach is used because Inspectors are not necessarily aware of who it is best to approach, formally.

Approaches were also made through Section Heads because it was recognised that they have the knowledge to select the appropriate people for the work. In one case, the Inspector used primarily HSE specialists but direct links with HSL had started to develop.

3.2.4.3 HSL specialist knowledge

The Inspectors felt it was important to make the point that once a 'specialist' steps out of their field of expertise they are no longer a 'specialist'. HSL staff need to be clear about their role and how this is distinct from the role of the Inspector. This has particular implications for Human Factors staff where they need all round knowledge of incidents to provide appropriate support.

3.2.5 HSL Training Needs

The discussions went on to consider the specific training needs of HSL staff.

- **Legal knowledge/ expert witness training**

The entire group agreed that HSL scientists should gain training and experience relating to health and safety legal processes, especially if involvement in accident investigations or court cases is likely. For example, one Inspector had asked HSL staff to carry out work that will require an expert witness statement and possibly a Court appearance. The Inspector had been surprised to learn that the individual to whom the work had been assigned, did not have expert witness training. He thought that there should be a core of HSL staff who have received the training, who could then be utilised in cases where there is potential for a prosecution.

Others commented that it is not always clear if work will result in a prosecution, it was therefore suggested that there should be more widespread expert witness training across HSL but others thought that a more general 'legal' awareness training might be sufficient. Either way it was agreed that HSL staff should be better prepared because "*court cases are about winning (not justice) and solicitors will do anything to discredit witnesses*".

The issue of deciding whether staff should have expert witness training is not unique to HSL, and the same concerns were raised about other contractors that HSE might employ to provide expert witness statements.

3.2.5.1 Competency Framework

As noted previously, there is a possibility that HSE expect more from HSL than they should, however there was agreement that all HSL staff should have the same basic level of training. A competency framework could determine this; it was thought that competencies are more useful if they are relevant to a specific job and not just a broad view of all scientists at the same band.

3.2.5.2 How to meet the training need

There was some discussion about how the gaps in knowledge could be addressed but this was not comprehensive. It was thought that skills, knowledge and experiences should be developed through a combination of on the job training for example, by accompanying more experienced HSL staff on site visits etc. and formal training courses.

Participants in the group asked if there was a mentoring system in HSL, and the Focus Group Facilitator confirmed that a system was being re-introduced. The group also mentioned NEBOSH training but felt that this would not be required by everyone and may be too time intensive.

It was also thought that because of the number of experienced staff working at HSL, there might not be many scientists who would require training. However, that raises the question of what will happen when those individuals move on or retire.

3.3 SUMMARY OF TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

3.3.1 Identifying Training Needs

- **Competency Framework**

HSL staff need to work within a competency framework, this would ensure that the HSL skill base is transparent to HSE when asking for HSL support. This framework might be *job* based rather than *band* based.

- **Develop detailed development plan**

Having established a competency framework plans should be made to identify how, when and where individuals can gain the necessary skills and experience to ensure they are competent for their job role.

- **Identify who needs training, why and how**

It was agreed that not all HSL staff require all training and that it would be costly for HSL to use a blanket training approach. Therefore, targeted training with some individuals acting as mentors to others was a suggested approach. The training should be linked to individuals' interests and career plans.

3.3.2 Training Requirements

- **Health and safety legal knowledge**

A basic knowledge of health and safety legislation was seen as being important for all HSL staff to understand how HSL work fits into that of the HSE Inspector. While staff thought it was particularly important to have basic legal knowledge (e.g. the Health and Safety at Work Act, key regulations, the role of 'guidance', formal enforcement options etc.), they also thought that basic health and safety knowledge (e.g. NEBOSH certificate/ diploma) was needed.

- **Developed understanding of Inspectors' role**

Linked to basic health and safety knowledge was the notion that HSL staff should have a better understanding of the HSE Inspector's role, and vice versa. HSE staff need to be aware of HSL staff training and experience and to provide clear job specifications.

- **Training in evidence handling**

It was assumed by HSE Inspectors that all HSL staff had training in evidence handling, although all HSL need this training, currently it is not given as a matter of course.

- **Targeted advanced training**

It was recognised that, even if it was practical to train all staff in all things, not all staff require advanced training, but it was thought imperative that advanced training should be available for those who are likely to be called upon to be expert witnesses. While HSL staff do usually receive expert witness training before attending court, it was thought that a more pre-emptive approach was needed so that staff will understand the implications of their work.

- **General communication skills**

The need to improve communication skills was raised by some participants.

- **Report writing for purpose**

Training, practice and support in writing reports that are fit for purpose was also highlighted.

3.3.3 Approaches to Training

- **Training courses**

Basic knowledge in the Health and Safety legal framework would be best taught via formal training courses, as would evidence handling for example.

- **Mentors**

It was suggested that experienced HSL staff could act as mentors or points of advice for those who interact infrequently with HSE Inspectors. The knowledge and skills of these individuals should be developed for the benefit of all HSL staff.

- **Secondments**

Although acknowledged to be cost and time prohibitive, it was thought that secondments to HSE were an excellent way of developing HSE knowledge but that opportunities are rare because HSE Specialist Inspectors etc. also require secondments.

- **Developing contacts between HSE and HSL**

HSL should continue to develop contacts with HSE Inspectors and use the opportunities to learn more about their roles.

4 APPENDICES

4.1 FOCUS GROUP ONE QUESTION SET

Focus Group One: Tuesday 6th December 2005

Participants: HSL staff who have transferred to HSE and vice versa. Also invited were staff who have experience in supporting HSE enforcement activity.

Two key questions to be addressed by the work:

1. What training HSL staff might need to better understand what inspectors do?
2. What HSE Inspectors require from HSL in order to do their jobs more effectively.

Questions

For those of you who left HSL to move to HSE:

Is there anything you know now that you wished you knew when you worked at HSL that would have helped your work in support of HSE?

Those who work at HSL, is there anything you feel would help you work more effectively with HSE staff? Any skills, knowledge or experience you wish you had, or your staff had?

Or those who've moved from HSE to HSL, is there anything that you naturally do because of your training with HSE that HSL staff could learn from?

What elements of HSE Inspector training might HSL staff benefit from?

Are there specific skills and knowledge that you think HSL staff need to develop to support your work more effectively?

What do you think is the difference between HSE & HSL training?

How can the training be delivered/ the skills learned? For example, what skills would benefit most from,

- Formal training?
- Support/ supervision/ on the job training?
- Shadowing?

4.2 FOCUS GROUP TWO QUESTION SET

Focus Group Two: Wednesday 25th January 2006

Participants: HSE staff who have experience of working with HSL colleagues, or are responsible for teams of staff who use HSL resources.

Two key aims to be addressed by the group:

1. Explore the potential mismatch between work that HSE requires and HSL can currently deliver.
2. Try and identify where HSL staff lack skills, knowledge and experience which if addressed, could improve the quality of support HSL provide to HSE (if, indeed, it does need improving).

Questions

1. What are your experiences of working with HSL?
 - Starting with the Good. What do we do well? Why?
 - What's not so good?
 - Why?
 - How could it be improved?
 - What's needed to meet your requirements?
 - What would make your life easier?
 - What influences your decision to use HSL staff?
 - Are there occasions when you would choose HSL Specialists over HSE Specialists? Or vice versa? Why?
2. What would improve your interactions with HSL?
 - How do you interact with HSL – do you go to people you know or Section/Group heads in the first place?
 - Are HSL able to respond in appropriate timescales
3. Is there anything about the role of an inspector that you think HSL staff don't appreciate/understand?
4. How could the gaps in skills, knowledge, experience be filled?