

Local authorities and HSE in partnership

An evaluation

Prepared by **PA Consulting Group**
for the Health and Safety Executive 2008

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PA Consulting Group was appointed to undertake an evaluation of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Local Authority (LA) partnership during the summer of 2008. The purpose of the evaluation was to enable HSE to take an informed view of the contribution that the partnership can and should make to a new strategy. The evaluation was commissioned by the Local Authority Unit (LAU) of HSE and conducted jointly with representatives from Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS). This report is the output of that exercise and aims to answer three key questions:

- to what extent has the partnership delivered on the seven commitments in the Statement of Intent?
- do the benefits of the partnership outweigh the costs?
- what does the partnership need to do going forward to ensure its long-term health?

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1 Introduction

1.1 Aims and objectives of this report

PA Consulting Group was appointed to undertake an evaluation of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Local Authority (LA) partnership during the summer of 2008. The purpose of the evaluation was to enable HSE to take an informed view of the contribution that the partnership can and should make to a new strategy. The evaluation was commissioned by the Local Authority Unit (LAU) of HSE and conducted jointly with representatives from Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS). This report is the output of that exercise and aims to answer three key questions:

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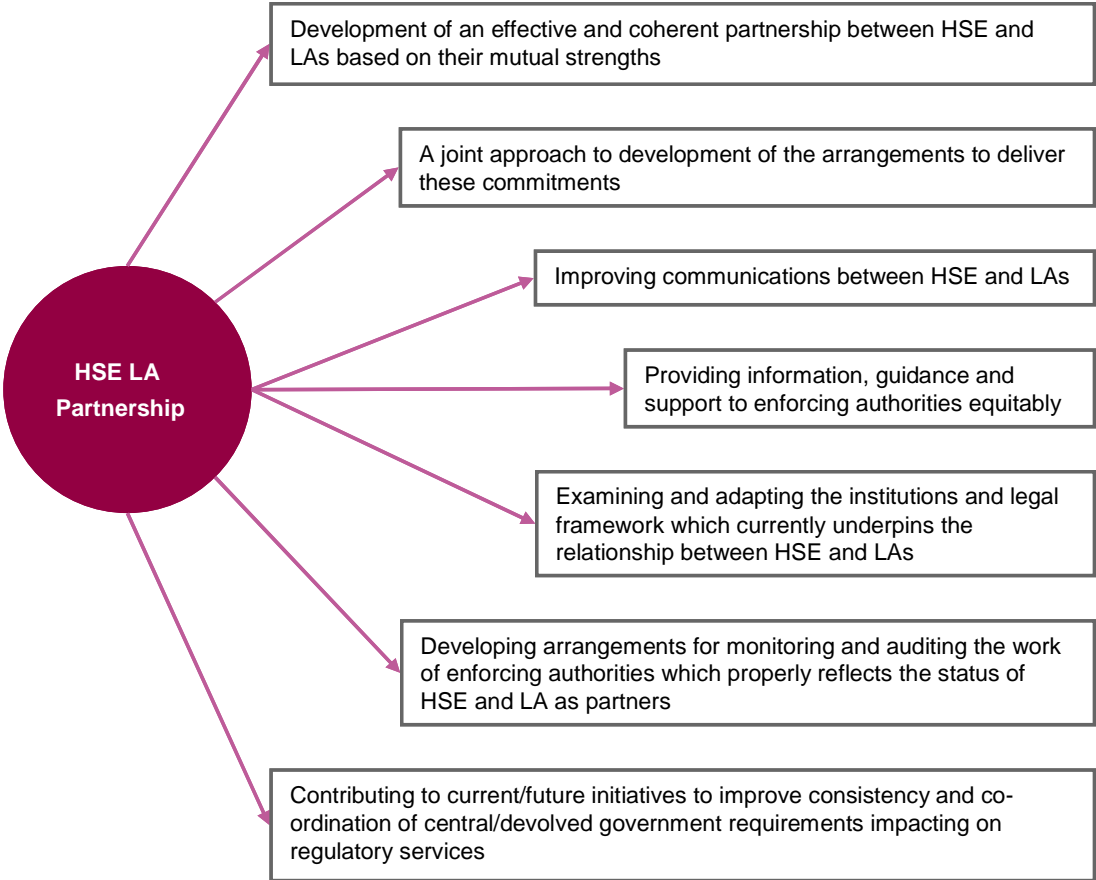
These questions are answered explicitly in section 2.1 of this report and explored in more detail in sections 2, 3 and 4.

1.2 Context of the partnership

The HSE/Local Authority partnership was formally established in 2004, underpinned by the seven commitments in the "Statement of Intent" (shown in Figure 1 overleaf.). These were jointly agreed by HSE and Local Authority representative bodies, setting out local government's and HSE's commitment to working together to help deliver the Health and Safety Commission's (HSC)¹ Strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond. As a result, a range of partnership activities were introduced, including the creation of seven regional Partnership Teams to co-ordinate partnership activities and initiated a range of other joint working initiatives, such as joint visits and inspections. Alongside the partnership, HSE and Local Authorities have been working jointly on delivering the national programme of health and safety priorities outlined in Fit3, "Fit for Life, Fit for Work, Fit for Tomorrow".

¹ The Health and Safety Executive and the Health and Safety Commission have now merged. To reflect this change, all references to HSC have been changed to HSE.

Figure 1. The seven commitments in the Statement of Intent of the HSE LA Partnership



It is clear that the partnership has achieved a considerable amount to date, however the regulatory landscape for the partnership is changing and this will mean the partnership needs to evolve:

- The Better Regulation Executive (BRE) and the recommendations from the Hampton Review pose a number of challenges for the partnership - ensuring risk-based approaches to inspection, investigation and enforcement practice.
- The establishment of the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) with responsibility for improving local authority enforcement of environmental health, trading standards, fire safety and licensing regulations, will have implications for partnership working.
- New Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and equivalent outcome agreements in Scotland and Wales will mean that health and safety will have to further compete with other local priorities. However these agreements may also present an opportunity to raise the profile of health and safety across local government.
- The more joined up and proportionate approach to public service regulation that the Comprehensive Area Agreements (CAA) aim to achieve are likely to have an impact on partnership working and how Local Authorities report their activities to HSE.

- The Local Government Associations (LGA) Group Development Strategy is underway and will review the ways of working and structures of LGA central bodies, including LACORS.

These changes are not necessarily 'threats' to the success of the partnership. However, they do mean that the partnership needs to be robust enough to sustain itself for the future, evolve as the environment changes and, in a world where resource constraints become more pervasive for partners, the partnership must prove that it does add real value to the work of all partners.

A stocktake² of the partnership in October 2007 outlined that the partnership was delivering real and tangible benefits for health and safety through joint working and declared that the partnership was 'flourishing'. There was a recognition that there had been a 'step change' in the way that HSE and Local Authorities work together.

This evaluation is based on the premise that there is a need for a partnership to deliver the required outcomes and assesses the effectiveness of the current arrangements for doing so. The evaluation seeks to build on the findings of the stock-take of October 2007 with a wider analysis of all aspects of the partnership, including a greater focus on whether the benefits outweigh the costs.

For the purposes of this report, we use the term 'partners' to mean all bodies that are currently engaged in the partnership - HSE, LACORS and the 410 Local Authorities.

1.3 Evaluation approach

Our overall evaluation approach started from the position of formulating strong, testable hypotheses based on a understanding of what constitutes successful partnership working. We then tested these hypotheses through three research methods:

In-depth interviews with key stakeholders

We conducted fifteen face to face interviews with key stakeholders working at strategic and operational levels within Local Authorities (including local councillors, Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and Chief Officers), HSE (including Partnership Managers), and wider representative bodies to ensure we captured the views of people who will be influential in developing the partnership in the future. These interviews, amongst others, covered large, small, rural and urban Local Authorities to help us establish if there was any difference in their experience of the partnership. To provide a wider stakeholder view, we conducted interviews with representatives from the Union of Shop Distributors and Workers (USDW), the British Retail Consortium (BRC) and the Small Business Forum (SBF).

² Available at http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/committees/hela/171007/h4_01.pdf

National survey

In order to ensure a robust evidence base for the evaluation that is statistically valid and representative across all involved in the partnership, we conducted an on-line national survey. The survey was issued to HSE Field Operations Directorate (HSE FOD) and HSE Policy Group staff and through LACORS to all 410 Local Authorities. Questions were multiple choice based on the five point Likert scale and respondents were asked to fill in the survey only if they had experience of partnership working.

The survey was sent to around 1500 staff and we received 405 responses from HSE and Local Authorities representing a response rate of 27%. There was a roughly equal split in responses from HSE and Local Authorities, as shown below:

Table 1. Number of respondents to online survey by organisation

Organisation	No of respondents
HSE	208
LA	197
Organisation not known	30
Total	435

A broad mix of responses were received across all levels of HSE and Local Authorities:

Table 2. Number of HSE respondents by job type and level

Job level	HSE Job type		
	Enforcement	Sector	Policy
Band 0	5	0	1
Band 1	9	0	2
Band 2	33	3	7
Band 3	85	5	13
Band 4	3	0	4
Band 5	16	4	2
Band 6	11	3	1
Total	162	15	30

Table 3. Number of LA respondents by job type and level

LA Job type	No of respondents
Heads of Service	29
Team Leader	101
Health and Safety Enforcement Officer	47
Technical Officer	12
Other	3
Total	197

This sample is of a sufficient size and distribution to be statistically robust and for the key messages emerging to be a meaningful representation of the wider population. A copy of the questionnaire and the detailed analysis of responses is available as a technical annex to this report.

Focus groups

A series of regional focus groups were held in London, Taunton, Edinburgh, Leeds, Manchester and North Wales with representatives from HSE and Local Authorities attending. There were approximately 12-15 people at each focus group. For Local Authorities, the majority of attendees were at operational level (EHOs or Chief Officers) and similarly for HSE, the majority of attendees were operational inspectors.

The focus groups were an opportunity to test the robustness of the emerging findings from the survey, prioritise key issues for stakeholders 'on the ground' and explore in more depth opportunities for future development.

1.4 Additional material

A short stand alone management summary is available to support this report, with further information on the survey methodology, results and analysis contained within a separate technical annex.

2 Key findings

The partnership is generally in a good state of health given its stage of development and objectives. It has produced a 'step change' in the relationship between HSE and Local Authorities with the introduction of successful joint working initiatives in many areas across Great Britain and has successfully delivered on many of the objectives it set out to achieve four years ago.

However, there is a recognition that although the partnership has achieved a lot in its first four years, effort and resource need to be committed to ensure the partnership continues to deliver benefit. The partnership is at a clear decision point and partners must now decide what they want from the partnership going forward - is the current level of co-operation and co-ordination sufficient or should the partnership move towards greater collaboration, co-ownership and joint delivery?

2.1 Overall assessment of the partnership

The partnership has achieved much, moving from a historic situation of co-existence to a position where partners now very clearly align their respective activities and support each other where appropriate. There is a high level of consensus between partners both at operational and strategic levels about the strengths of the partnership, in particular the role of Partnership Managers and Teams in building up levels of trust and improving the flow of information and communication between partners. There is now more effective joint working on the ground in many areas, resulting in improved working relationships between partners and a better understanding of their mutual strengths. In addition, the provision of information, support and guidance from HSE to Local Authorities is highly valued. Partners have moved from a culture of distrust to a sense of greater equality and this should not be underestimated as one of the achievements of the partnership. In our opinion the partnership has matured well during its first four years and the foundations are in place for continued success.

The next section of this report outlines our answers to the three key questions asked as part of this evaluation:

1. To what extent has the partnership delivered on the seven commitments in the Statement of Intent?

The partnership has delivered against much of the Statement of Intent, particularly in the areas of communication, the flow of information between partners and the provision of training, guidance and support. Commitments on performance management, auditing and examining the institutions and legal framework underpinning the relationship between HSE and Local Authorities are perceived to be only partially delivered.

2. Do the benefits of the partnership outweigh the costs?

Overall, the benefits of the partnership were perceived by partners to outweigh the costs. Key benefits focussed on more targeted use of resource, effective joint working on the ground, improved levels of trust between partners and greater sharing of information. There is anecdotal evidence of the partnership having a positive impact on overall health and safety outcomes but it is difficult to prove a direct causal link. It was widely recognised that in order to sustain the benefits of the partnership going forward, the current steady state costs of the partnership would need to be maintained.

3. What does the partnership need to do going forward to ensure its long-term health?

The partnership should continue to build on its success to date by maintaining and developing the Partnership Teams and ensuring there is greater communication about the roles and responsibilities of the high level governance structures. In order to develop further the partnership must now address some key issues - implementing a more robust performance management framework to ensure consistent delivery of health and safety outcomes, better alignment of planning cycles between partners' and further improvements to the flow of information and communication between partners.

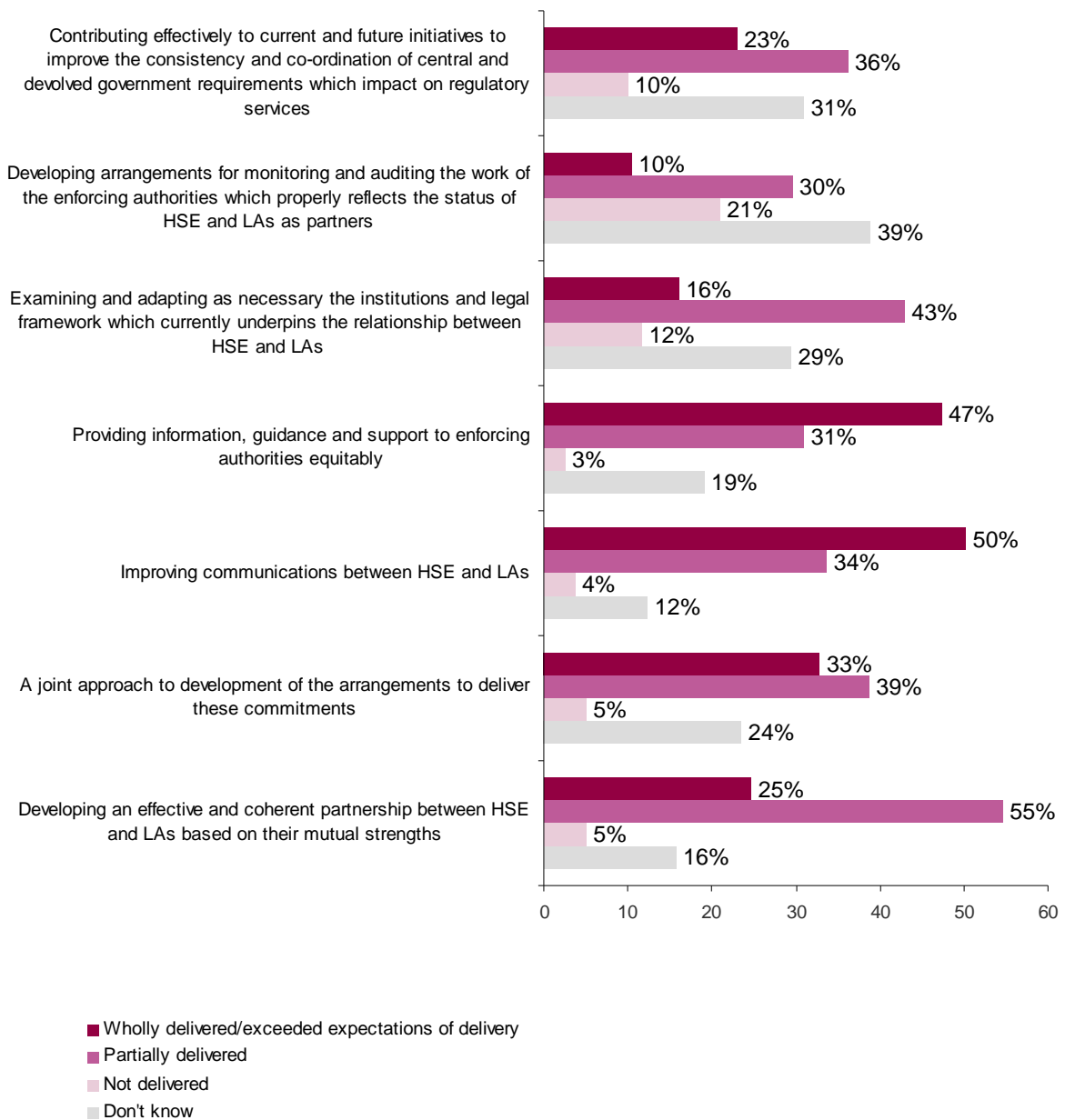
The current successes of the partnership are not consistent across regions not all partners fully engaged . Although it is recognised that Local Authorities can deliver health and safety outcomes without actively taking part in the partnership the evaluation has shown that being involved in the partnership results in significant benefits that support delivery of health and safety outcomes. From an overall system perspective, there is therefore a need to ensure greater consistency in engagement, recognising that in a world of limited resources, 100% engagement is not practical - and given the nature of the risk profile across authorities the partnership needs to ensure a focus on the relationships that will deliver the greatest impact on health and safety outcomes.

Findings were broadly consistent across regions, but where any differences were identified, particularly in relation to devolved administrations, these are identified within the main body of the report. Some differences were evident between large and small local authorities, in particular, in relation to their view on how the partnership should develop and again this is discussed within the main body of the report. There appears to be no correlation between a Local Authority's CPA rating and its involvement in or view of the partnership.

2.2 Delivering against the Statement of Intent

The seven commitments in the Statement of Intent (2004) set out very clearly the partnership's aims and objectives. The evaluation confirms that the partnership has delivered well against the objectives supporting improving communications, developing a partnership based on mutual strengths and providing information, guidance and support equitably to partners:

Figure 2. "To what extent do you feel that the partnership arrangements have delivered on the seven commitments in the Statement of Intent?" (combined HSE and LA responses)



Source: HSE LA evaluation national on-line survey

However, there is little evidence that the partnership has delivered on the development of performance management arrangements and examining the legal arrangements of the partnership. At focus groups and in the on-line survey, there was strong consensus that the lack of strong performance management structures means there is little or no consequence for non-engagement in the partnership and, in addition, that the existing Enforcing Authority Regulations were 'unhelpful' in supporting partnership arrangements.

A summary of progress against each of the Statement of Intent commitments is included below, with these developed in more detail in the following sections. The information is a collation of results from the on-line survey and insights gathered from the focus groups and in-depth interviews.

Table 4. Summary of how the partnership has delivered against the Statement of Intent

Statement of Intent	How has the partnership performed?
Development of an effective and coherent partnership between HSE and LAs based on their mutual strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Better targeting of resources towards priority areas as a result of joint working and joint planning of projects. √ A more trusting relationship between partners with better mutual understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities. √ Better on the ground working relationship through joint visits and inspections. √ Raised profile of Health and Safety within Local Authorities.
A joint approach to development of the arrangements to deliver these commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Increased role of Local Authorities in decision-making process through fora such as LACORS and the Local Government Panel (LGP). √ More effective fora for Local Authorities and HSE to plan how they will deliver priorities e.g. regional and county level fora. X Sufficient engagement of Local Authorities in the setting of strategic priorities.
Improving communications between HSE and LAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Improvements in the flow of information between partners (HSE and Local Authorities but also inter-authority) through Partnership Teams. √ Increased informal communication as a result of joint visits and inspections. √ Better links between HSE and Local Authorities through LACORS. √ HELex extranet an invaluable source of information for Local Authorities. X Clear and robust communications above regional group level.
Providing information, guidance and support to enforcing authorities equitably	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Increased access to training, support and guidance for Local Authorities from HSE. √ Access to the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) was invaluable. √ Increased sharing of advice between partners on joint inspections. X Full exploitation of the Local Authority opportunities to provide information, support and guidance to other Local Authorities.

Statement of Intent	How has the partnership performed?
Examining and adapting as necessary the institutions and legal framework which currently underpins the relationship between HSE and LAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Introduction of the Section 18 Standard which applies to all Enforcing Authorities. √ Greater representation of views of local councillors at a strategic level with the HSE Board through the LGP. √ Review of Enforcing Authority Regulations resulting in the introduction of the Flexible Warranting initiative. √ Reconstitution of HELA to provide strategic oversight of the partnership between Local Authorities and HSE, including setting up specific Task and Finish Groups to drive forward projects. X Clarity at operational level about high-level governance structures.
Developing arrangements for monitoring and auditing the work of the enforcing authorities which properly reflects the status of HSE and LA as partners (for example, replacement of the LAe1 form)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Raised profile of monitoring and auditing e.g. through the HELA Task and Finish Group to ensure compliance with the Section 18 Standard. X Lack of effective and robust auditing mechanisms such as inter-authority auditing and peer review. X Clear measures of success for the partnership. X Effective performance management of Local Authorities, particularly those that are less effective in delivering on health and safety outcomes.
Contributing effectively to current and future initiatives to improve the consistency and co-ordination of central and devolved government requirements which impact on regulatory services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Greater flexibility in enforcement boundaries, currently through the piloting of flexible warrants. X Clarity about the role of the partnership going forward in relation to the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO).

Key: √ - largely delivered. x - areas for further development

In the following sections we will explore these themes more fully.

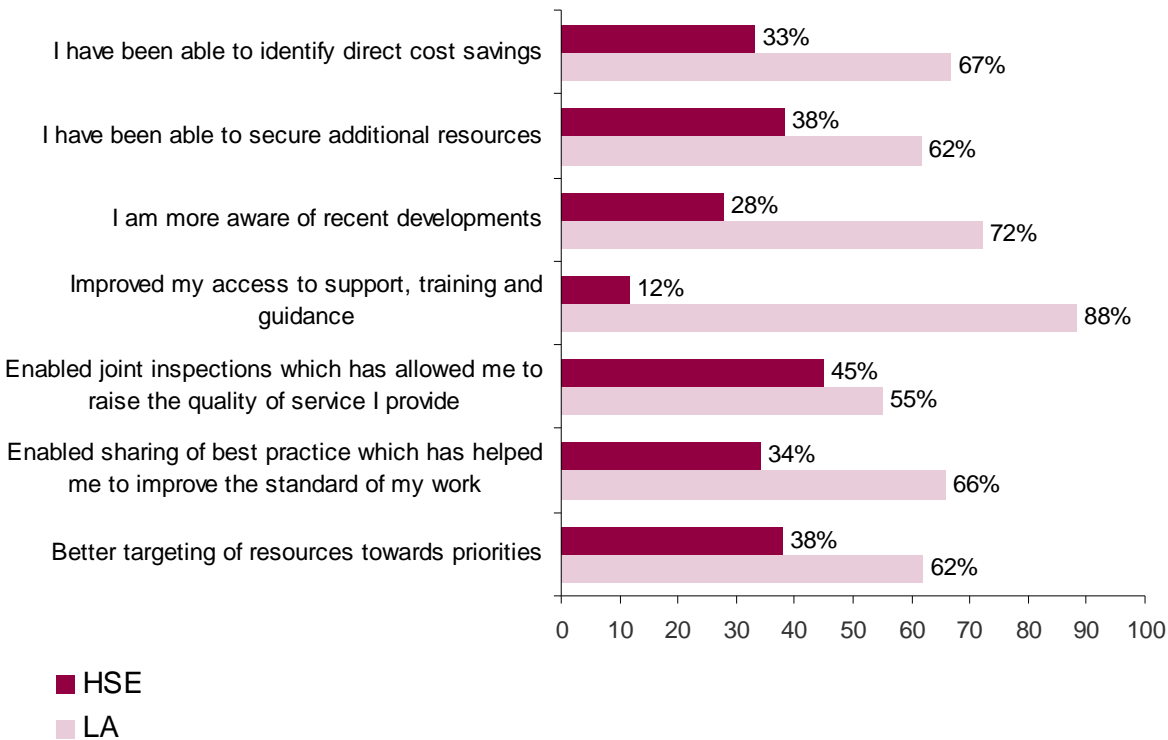
2.3 Developing an effective and coherent partnership

Commitment 1 of the Statement of Intent: Developing an effective and coherent partnership between HSE and LAs based on the principle of making the best use of their respective strengths, and applying collective resources in the best way to tackle national, regional and local priorities for health and safety.

2.3.1 The partnership has led to a better targeting of resources with more joint work planning

Increased targeting of resources towards agreed priorities was seen to be a key benefit for partners - clearly evidenced within the national survey (see figure 3 below), in stakeholder meetings and through focus groups. All partners have significant resource constraints which means that to deliver benefits the partnership must ensure that the limited resources available in health and safety are used to the best effect both locally and nationally.

Figure 3. Positive responses to the survey question "I can point to clear evidence of the following benefits from partnership working in terms of outcomes for me"



Source: HSE LA Evaluation national on-line survey

Overall, Local Authorities are more likely than HSE to agree that the partnership has brought clear benefits, including better targeting of resources towards priorities and identification of direct cost savings. Respondents to the survey and representatives at focus groups gave the following examples of how the partnership has facilitated better targeting of resources:

- Joint creation of focused service and/or work plans has helped Local Authorities to identify priorities and target resources.
- Central leadership on priority topics has led to improved consistency in high risk areas.

- Sharing of materials, employees and expertise in response to specific initiatives and campaigns (for example, 'Working at Heights') make it easier for Local Authorities to understand where to put their resources.
- Sharing agendas openly between partners and having a clear understanding as to the rationale behind national priorities set by HSE can mean that Local Authorities are more motivated to target resources into priority areas.

The partnership has facilitated and improved joint planning of projects at a regional and local level. In some areas strong regional structures exist for joint planning and Local Authorities and HSE now work together to plan for their local area, producing a work-plan to deliver over the year.

Case study

In London, the management structure is set up for joint working and producing genuine joint work plans, and allows for the assimilation of Local Authority plans into Divisional and wider strategic priorities such as Fit3.

In Wales, there are three regional Task Groups containing representatives from each Local Authority and HSE in Wales (North Wales, South West Wales and South East Wales). All Task Groups sign up to deliver one 'all Wales' project, but each Task Group plans at a regional level what their regional priorities are and how to deliver them.

Joint work plans allow HSE and Local Authorities to work together to achieve outcomes in their regional area resulting in joint ownership and delivery of health and safety outcomes, a fundamental aspects of successful partnership working.

"Before the South West Regulators' Forum (SWeRF), I was not aware of any regional group that looked at regional planning of delivery. This has produced improved information flows, sharing of ideas and practices, and communication with Local Authorities in other counties in the region. The partnership team has been fundamental to improving the relationship between Local Authorities and HSE, and providing a mechanism for opening up dialogue and working together for the benefit of the business and public" (LA Inspector)

2.3.2 The partnership has resulted in a more trusting, although not necessarily a more equal, relationship

There was a high degree of consensus in all focus groups, interviews and through the survey that the partnership has resulted in a shift in the relationship between HSE and Local Authorities from a 'parent-child' relationship to one based on greater equality and mutual understanding of each other's strengths. Whereas traditionally, the HSE was seen to be the enforcer of high risk and 'important' premises and the relationship tended to be about 'who did what' in terms of enforcement boundaries, the relationship is now based on the feeling that partners are inspectors in the wider health and safety system.

"Closer links have enabled good working relationships to blossom and have also broken down misconceptions and potential competitive tendencies" (HSE Inspector)

"HSE and LA inspectors are talking now in terms of the same priorities and same 'language' and because there is more interaction and understanding of respective roles, there is more mutual respect" (LA inspector).

At an operational level, there is a much better relationship between Local Authorities and their local HSE FOD counterparts. Increased familiarity and contact between the partners has resulted in increased respect for each other's roles and increased mutual support.

Local Authorities have described how HSE is less frequently "dominating" in the relationship and is more likely to ask their opinion. Local Authorities are now more likely to recognise the strengths of the HSE with its specialist expertise and more focused approach to enforcement. Local Authorities value the expertise and experience that HSE inspectors bring, e.g. help and support with fatal accidents and investigations.

Increased joint working has meant that HSE now has a greater understanding of the constraints of Local Authorities in delivering health and safety outcomes, including constraints on resources, internal political pressures, competing local priorities and the lack of profile and status of health and safety. HSE now also recognises the coverage that Local Authorities have in getting across health and safety messages to their local community, particularly businesses. HSE is more likely to recognise the strengths that Local Authorities bring to the table, such as knowledge of the local community and an understanding of health and safety synergies with other policy areas.

However, despite increased levels of trust, attendees at three focus groups and a small proportion of on-line survey respondents felt that the partnership was not still not an 'equal' one for a variety of reasons:

- HSE is still viewed by Local Authorities as being the main driver in the relationship, shaping the agenda nationally, driving projects forward and setting priorities.
- Where strong regional links were not in place, some Local Authorities felt that they were being 'pushed' into projects with little opportunity to influence the agenda at a national level. During some discussions on Fit3, they felt that resources had been unnecessarily directed away from local priorities due to the need to comply with national priorities.

For some this was problematic and raised the question of whether the partnership was a "true" partnership or a relationship of a different kind. Other respondents commented that an 'unequal' partnership did not necessarily mean that the partnership was not effective. For example, some Local Authorities (particularly where strong regional planning and joint visits exist), fully recognised and

accepted the HSE's role as the central policy making body and national regulator and did not see this as a barrier to effective delivery of the partnership.

Given HSE's role as a national body and Local Authorities' focus on delivering local priorities there will always be an element of tension and some imbalance in the relationship. However as the rest of this evaluation evidences, this does not necessarily detract from the ability of the partnership to support all partners in meeting their objectives but does mean the partnership needs to actively monitor the status and health of the partnership and be open to develop the relationship to reflect the changing dynamics of the partnership.

2.3.3 Health and Safety still has a relatively low priority within most Local Authorities and there is inconsistency in levels of engagement

The partnership has gone some way towards raising the profile of health and safety within Local Authorities through the work of the Partnership Teams, the LGP, HELA and the work of the LACORS Policy Forum. However, health and safety still has a relatively low priority within Local Authorities for a variety of reasons:

- EHOs within Local Authorities have a range of responsibilities over and above health and safety which often take priority, particularly if a target is associated, such as food safety.
- General resource constraints within Local Authorities mean that it is not possible to do everything that HSE would like to, even if the 'will' exists amongst EHOs.
- Local councillors usually have limited interest in health and safety it does not feature highly in Local Authority Cabinet or other governance meetings or feature favourably in the local media.

Despite high levels of engagement from some Local Authorities, there is real variation in the level of commitment to health and safety between Local Authorities, resulting in an uneven implementation of health and safety strategies. This is widely recognised by both HSE and Local Authorities who do engage, leading to them posing challenges to the benefits of partnership working.

2.3.4 Joint visits and inspections are seen to have improved relationships between partners and in some cases, have led to better enforcement

Joint visits and inspections between HSE and Local Authority operational staff are an important part of partnership working and where these have taken place, partners were broadly positive about their impact. They are seen to improve the flow of information between partners and improve the enforcement process as a whole. For example:

- Joint inspections allow for the exchange of information, learning opportunities and sharing of best practice, thereby improving the confidence of all staff involved.
- Joint visits and inspections have developed trust between partners and are evidence of improved working relationships at an operational level.

- Joint inspections on multi-site industrial estates have resulted in quick and efficient updating of both authority databases and has ensured that the HSE line has been communicated to Local Authorities.

"A problem raised in the LA enforced sector was also apparent in the HSE enforced premises, and we were able to develop agreed, consistent advice for application in all steel stockholders. This was both equitable and enhanced HSE's reputation with the industry" (HSE Inspector)

In general, Local Authorities felt slightly more positive about joint visits and inspections than HSE, citing as invaluable learning from HSE inspectors on the ground. There was the sense that LA inspectors felt more 'confident' inspecting as a result of working closely with an HSE inspector and had a greater understanding of enforcement in relation to topics for Fit3.

Joint inspections have resulted in increased understanding of partners' mutual strengths. Local Authorities have reported that they have learnt from HSE's more focused style of enforcement, with HSE inspectors report that they have learnt about the more educative and advisory style of enforcement from Local Authorities.

Joint visits and inspections are also perceived to improve enforcement outcomes, one of the key objectives of the partnership. Although these examples are anecdotal, they point to clear emerging evidence of the benefits of the partnership:

- Enforcement 'issues', particularly supply chain issues, can be dealt with more quickly when partners are present on site.
- Consistency of enforcement is improved as standards are shared and understood by partners.
- Improved sharing of information about the duty holder helps to identify problems or issues which are common to both organisations.
- Duty holders receive a one-stop shop 'service' and response to their problem quickly.

Case Study - Drinks Delivery Pilot

Following a successful joint HSE/council pilot in Blaenau Gwent and Cardiff, all 22 local authorities in Wales participated in a project to improve manual handling practices in pubs and other licensed premises. During the pilot, a training DVD was developed to assist landlords in providing suitable manual handling training for what is sometimes a transient workforce. Approximately 600 premises were visited by council regulatory officers using an inspection toolkit including benchmark standards, ensuring a consistent enforcement approach across Wales. Initial evaluation indicates substantial improvement within both the drinks delivery sector and the licensed trade and further visits are planned. (Your Council's role in health and safety, HSE and LACORS)

2.3.5 HSE and Local Authorities have ongoing concerns about roles, responsibilities and resource

Although the partnership has resulted in improved joint relations, concerns remain about the impact of the partnership on roles, responsibilities and resources.

Some Local Authorities reported that they believed that the partnership placed an additional resource requirement on them through, for example Fit3, or greater co-ordination and planning required by the partnership. Although a very small proportion, some saw a risk that the partnership could be viewed cynically as HSE trying to use a 'cheaper' resource to deliver its priorities. Similarly, some HSE inspectors reported that committing to the partnership at a time of reducing resources meant they were being taken away from other priorities.

Both HSE and Local Authorities saw resource constraints as a threat to the partnership. Finite resources mean that however committed people are to the partnership, they may be unable to deliver on those commitments if other pressures arise.

Some HSE staff felt that the division of roles and responsibilities was not clear and that, despite the additional training and guidance offered to Local Authorities, Local Authority inspectors were not as confident as HSE staff to enforce health and safety, leading to concerns about consistency of enforcement.

Some interviewees also commented that there was a lack of clarity about the difference between the ELOs and the Partnership Managers. In some areas, Partnership Managers were former ELOs. In others the role of the ELO has been similar to that of the current Partnership Manager with some ELOs going beyond their 'traditional' role as advisors on the enforcement boundaries between HSE and Local Authorities. A small number of Local Authority representatives felt they were unclear in some cases who they should contact and wanted greater clarity about respective roles and responsibilities.

2.4 A joint approach to development

Commitment 2 of the Statement of Intent: A joint approach to developing the arrangements to deliver these commitments.

2.4.1 There are a range of structures and processes which allow Local Authorities to influence and engage in the decision making and planning process

Overall, the role that Local Authorities have in shaping the agenda of the partnership has greatly improved. Structures and processes that allow Local Authorities to influence and engage in the decision making and planning process are in place and where they work, are effective. In some areas, where regional coordination is particularly effective, Local Authorities have strong input into HSE programmes and strategies.

It is widely recognised that LACORS, through the Policy Forum, plays an important role in allowing representatives from Local Authorities to influence and engage with health and safety policy making. The Policy Forum comprises Local Authority representatives from eleven government regions across Great Britain: a health and safety liaison group nominee and a heads of service group nominee from each region. The health and safety liaison group nominee is drawn from county liaison groups whose membership comprises health and safety officers from individual Local Authorities. Similarly Heads of Service participate in county and regional groups and are nominated to sit on the Policy Forum. The regionally nominated representatives act as a conduit for information into and out of county and regional liaison groups, allowing issues identified within regions to be raised at the Policy Forum and key messages communicated back to the regions.

The LACORS Policy Forum also plays an important role in ensuring views from the regions are fed into other governance bodies. LACORS undertake the joint role as secretariat to HELA and the Local Government Panel. The co-chair of HELA is also the Chair of the LACORS Health and Safety Policy Forum and other members of the LACORS Policy Forum make up the local government representation on HELA. Views collated within the LACORS Policy Forum are fed into HELA via the representatives from the Policy Forum. This process is designed to ensure that the views from the county groups are fed to the regional Policy Forum representatives, these in turn are fed into LACORS Policy Forum which feeds into HELA.

Political representation of Local Authorities is through the LGP which is made up of local councillors nominated by the local government associations. This ensures that the voice of local councillors is heard at HSE Board level. LGP has made real progress in ensuring that the views of local councillors are heard at the highest level within the HSE. There has been real improvement in the way meetings are held and in the way that partners engage with one another on a more equal basis. However, challenges remain in ensuring that the views of Local Authorities are fully represented. These include:

- Feedback mechanisms from the Policy Forum to County and Regional Liaison Groups. These are not always as effective as they could be. There is an element of disconnect between what happens at the LACORS Policy Forum and activities beneath at a Regional and County Liaison Group level. Although formal mechanisms do exist, LACORS are dependent upon individual representatives taking an active role in communicating with Local Authorities within their area to ensure the effectiveness of this structure.
- At a regional and local level, Local Authorities often do not have a chance to influence and engage with the setting of priorities. More could be done by HSE to understand local priorities and feed these into the HSE priorities. Where there is a disconnect and local priorities take precedence, such as the implementation of Smoke Free legislation, Local Authorities can find it difficult to see how partnership adds value.
- HELA has a strong 'brand' amongst some Local Authorities. However there is a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of HELA and how the views of Local Authorities are fed into this body
- There is the recognition that the LGP membership can change due to local election results. This means that continuity in the relationships built up by local councillors with the HSE Board may be lost.

- It is recognised that the LGP could do more to fulfil its role as providing high level strategic direction to the partnership.

2.4.2 Although improvements have been made in joint planning, there remain issues with timing

The partnership has made progress in ensuring HSE involves and engages Local Authorities early on in the planning process, for example, Fit3 has been particularly effective in engaging Local Authorities early in the planning cycle. However due to the nature of central government and local government planning processes there remain tensions.

Local Authorities develop their plans during late autumn with the aim of fixing them by the end of January. HSE generally undertakes planning during the winter with the aim of fixing plans in March. During the earliest stages of the partnership this meant that Local Authorities had fixed their plans before they received any planning information from HSE, leading to considerable frustration on both sides. Local Authorities felt that HSE failed to take reasonable account of their planning needs, HSE perceived Local Authorities to be unwilling to take on board HSE proposals.

Considerable progress has been made in this area, particularly through Fit3. Local Authorities are now represented on all HSE's main project/programme boards, helping to make early decisions on the direction and implementation of planning. This means essential information is now made available in the autumn to allow Local Authorities to make provision for activities within their plans and it is supplied in a format better suited to Local Authority needs.

Nevertheless, there remain tensions. Details of some of the HSE-driven campaigns still only emerge after Local Authority plans are fixed. This may limit the ability of some Local Authorities to react when their resources have already been committed to other priorities. The recent Ladders Campaigns were cited by Local Authority representatives as illustrating this problem.

Arrangements should be reviewed to ensure as much information as possible is provided to Local Authorities when they need it. This is important for HSE as identifying resources and how they will be used within Local Authority plans is essential to ensuring Local Authority inspector resource can be committed to targeted health and safety activities.

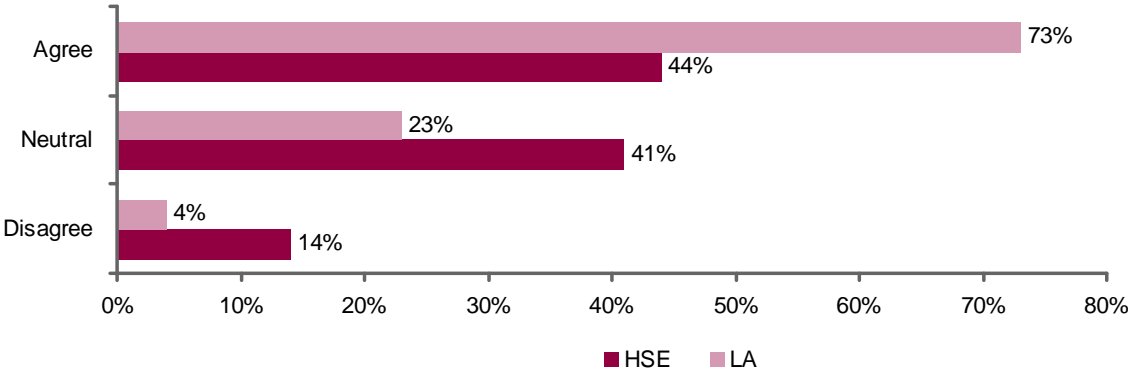
2.5 Improving communications

Commitment 3 of the Statement of Intent: Improving communications between HSC, HSE and Local Authorities to ensure, in particular that Local Authorities and their representative bodies are adequately involvement in the development of policy advice to the HSE, and in the planning and delivery of the operational activities with carry them into effect.

2.5.1 The partnership has improved the flow of information and communications between partners

Good partnerships require the provision of information to flow freely between partners and for effective communication to take place at all levels. Respondents in the survey and in interviews saw improvements to information flows and communications as one of the key benefits of the partnership, breaking down barriers and leading to sharing of best practice and advice.

Figure 4. "There is a good communication/flow of information between partners"

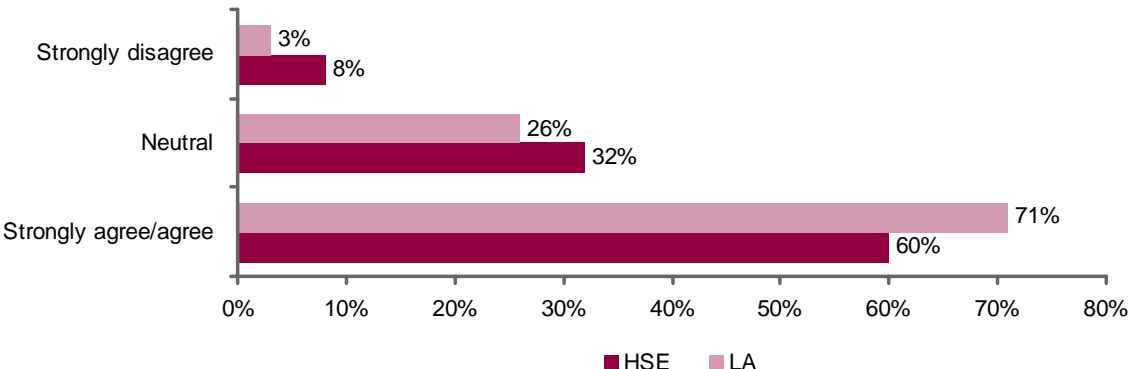


Source: HSE LA evaluation national on-line survey

41% of respondents who were asked what benefits accrued from the partnership in terms of outcomes for them, said that the partnership has made them "more aware of recent developments".

"The HSE and Local Authorities have worked together to deliver a wide range of communication mechanisms not least through the county group. The quality of information emanating from HSE is second to none, although some times the partnership role and the role of Local Authorities is not overly reflected in the publications. Again, I think there is more work to do in this area, hence 'partially delivered'". (LA inspector)

Figure 5. " I believe that the role of Partnership Teams has been valuable to joint working"



Source: HSE LA evaluation national on-line survey

The partnership has put in place a number of activities which have successfully increased the flow of information and communications at an operational level:

- Partnership Teams have opened up dialogue between Local Authorities and HSE and continue to be a vital channel for information and communication.
- Buddy Inspectors are valued by Local Authorities as a point of contact if they have an enquiry or an issue that needs to be resolved quickly, or where they need informal advice.
- Workshops, joint meetings and training events are seen as networking opportunities and improve communications between partners.
- Partnership Liaison Officers (PLOs) are valued by HSE as a means of improving communications, increasing knowledge by HSE of Local Authority ways of working. Additionally, PLOs act a useful on-going point of contact within Local Authorities for HSE after the secondment.
- Regional and County Fora bring partners together in one place to share information about their work and improve informal communications between partners, providing better communication not only between HSE and Local Authorities but between individual Local Authorities.
- The HELEX extranet is a useful source of information particularly for Local Authorities. This allows access to HSE information quickly and easily. The LACORS website was also viewed by survey respondents as a useful source of information from the partnership.
- Joint participation in Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs) and other events has also been effective in improving the flow of information and advice between partners.

Interestingly, although responses were mostly positive to this question, a fairly large proportion of respondents thought the partnership had only partially delivered on this commitment, citing the following challenges:

- Difficulty in using HELEX extranet - some Local Authorities and HSE staff reported difficulties accessing the extranet in terms of passwords, difficulties in finding information and lack of awareness about what is available.
- Lack of awareness of the Buddy Inspector scheme within Local Authorities.
- Poor communication between different county groups.
- Opportunities to raise the profile of health and safety more widely within Local Authorities are not being capitalised on.

2.5.2 Strategic communication is less effective

Although at an operational level, communication has improved, there is less evidence that it has improved above regional group level:

- Although there are effective communications channels in place supporting Partnership Team activity in the regions (e.g. Annual Report, the LAU newsletter), more could be done to ensure regular communications between Partnership Teams and, for example, LACORS.

- More could be done to ensure that the outputs of HELA meetings are communicated to the regions ensuring that decisions made at HELA are more transparent.
- The LGP only meets twice a year with the HSE Board meaning little ongoing communication at a strategic level.

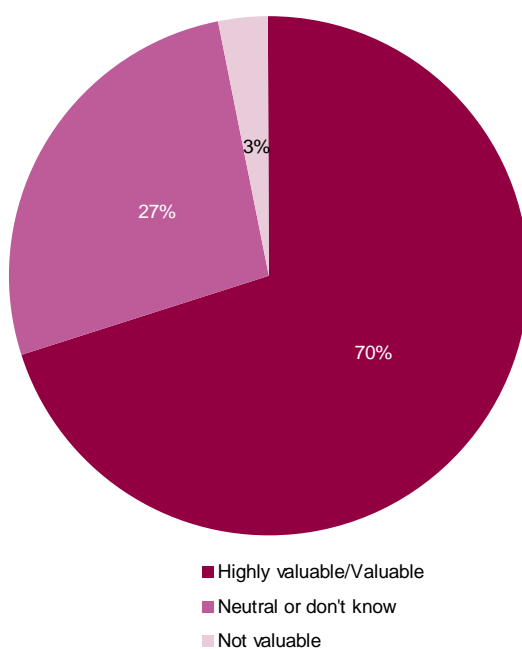
2.6 Providing information, guidance and support

Commitment 4 of the Statement of Intent: Providing information, guidance and support to enforcing authorities equitably.

2.6.1 Local Authorities greatly value the training, guidance and support offered by HSE to them, including access to specialist support

One of the key objectives of the partnership was to ensure the equitable provision of information, guidance and support to enforcing authorities. The evaluation has shown that this is one of the most highly valued and effective elements of partnership activity. This is provided through access to HSE training days, workshops, targeted training in topic areas, such as Fit3, joint visits and inspections and 'Partnership Action days' which bring together HSE and LA inspectors to share experience and learn from one another.

Figure 6. "In terms of getting the information that you required, how useful do you find the support offered by HSE Specialist Inspectors and/or the Health and Safety Laboratory?" (Local Authority respondents only)



Source: HSE LA evaluation national on-line survey

Local Authorities were particularly positive about increased access to training, guidance and support, citing that they are better informed as a result, were more 'confident' in their ability to enforce and able to provide an improved service for duty holders through more focused inspections. Technical training and topic area training (gas safety, noise, asbestos and dermatitis) were particularly valued. In addition increased contact with HSE has in some cases led to increased knowledge and understanding by EHOs of occupational health issues.

Local Authorities greatly value the degree of informal training and development opportunities that they receive as a result of better working relationships with HSE inspectors with more officers talking to each other. Following training courses, EHOs have contacted the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) for help, support and analysis of suspect materials and local EHOs are now more aware of HSL contacts and capabilities.

Increased access to HSL resources has been valued by Local Authorities where specialist expertise has been required, such as ergonomists and use of HSE equipment (Kenny device), electrical safety and lasers. Local Authorities have made good use of the specialist support available to them, with over 46% having requested specialist support 1-2 times in the last twelve months. A large proportion of Local Authority respondents (82%) said that they either found the Science and Technology initiative either highly valuable or valuable.

"Our Dept has used HSE specialists for Work at height, asbestos and slips advice, which has enabled us to more efficiently decide action following incidents in these areas. The provision of information via the websites (closed site, LACORS and previously accident investigation site, ECoshh etc) and the training events have improved our access to focused information and training to a very marked degree" (LA inspector)

However, some HSE survey respondents commented that more could be done to ensure that all Local Authorities and particularly EHOs are aware of the support and specialist advice available to them. It is also recognised that the governance arrangements for commissioning and management of research could be improved, with better monitoring of the outcomes of commissioned research and better coordination of research across Local Authorities to avoid duplication. There are also challenges around managing expectations of Local Authorities - although applying findings locally is relatively easy, developing research into national guidance is a complex process and there is often a long lead time before national guidance is issued as result of a piece of research.

2.6.2 The flow of operational support is largely one way

There is some evidence of the transfer of knowledge from Local Authorities to HSE through joint inspections and visits, with HSE staff learning how Local Authorities liaise with businesses and take on board different ways of working. However the flow is largely one-sided (from HSE to Local Authorities). Whilst this was not perceived to be a problem by HSE, it is important for partnership working that there is a two way flow of training, guidance and support in order for a 'true' partnership to take place.

Some progress has been made by the partnership in improving the degree to which Local Authorities work together, but this is patchy and more could be done to improve Local Authorities providing support to one another in key topic areas.

2.6.3 There is more scope to improve the sharing of information between partners

Currently, Local Authorities and HSE hold separate data on duty holders with Local Authorities often holding richer and more detailed information. Improved information flow from Local Authorities to HSE about 'duty holders', for example, the numbers and types of premises that need enforcement, would benefit HSE (with the caveat that the information would have to be useful and meaningful).

Staff at focus groups also commented that although the partnership had led to some sharing of statistical information e.g. through access to the HELEX extranet, more could be done to improve sharing of regional and local statistics between HSE and Local Authorities. This would mean, for example, Local Authorities having better access to the range of statistics that HSE Statistical Unit hold, or the Unit taking steps to make LA's more aware of where these statistics are held.

2.7 Examining and adapting the institutions and legal framework

Commitment 5 of the Statement of Intent : Examining and adapting as necessary the Institutions and legal framework which currently underpins the relationship between HSC, HSE and LAs..

2.7.1 There is a lack of clarity around high level governance structures

There remains a lack of clarity amongst both EHOs and Chief Officers in Local Authorities on how the decision-making process works above Regional Groups. Many respondents were unaware of how decisions are made within HELA or the LGP and how these are communicated 'downwards'.

Whilst the role of LACORS was seen to be very positive in improving the flow of information to Local Authorities, there was confusion over the role of the LACORS Policy Forum and the processes by which decisions at the Policy Forum feed into HELA. Although each region has a nominated representative for the LACORS Health and Safety Policy Forum, the level of engagement with county groups can differ, leading to a dilution of the effectiveness of the process.

Whilst it is recognised that the LGP as a forum has improved, its profile is still low beyond those who are already familiar with it. The LGP has done some positive work in getting 'out and about' and visiting for example, the All Wales Group. This has raised its profile, but awareness and recognition of its role is limited beyond a national level.

2.7.2 Some smaller Local Authorities would like to see firmer direction from HSE

As outlined earlier in the evaluation, one of the key challenges for Local Authorities in participating in the partnership is a lack of dedicated health and safety resource. In focus groups and interviews there was a views expressed from smaller Local Authorities, that they had difficulty in persuading Heads of Service, Directors and local councillors that resources are required in health and safety.

Parallels were often drawn with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) where the mandatory nature of the food hygiene regime means that resources are provided to EHOs to carry out activities in this area. Although the Section 18 Standard does set out what provision should be made in health and safety, HSE does not have a statutory audit role to enforce this and there is a view that in smaller authorities it can be difficult to justify why resources should be allocated to health and safety rather than areas with firmer prescription e.g. food standards.

Some authorities expressed the view that firmer direction would help them to secure resources for health and safety and target this on national priorities. Some Local Authorities cited Fit3 as useful in helping them justify resource as it clearly sets out a set of national priorities and outcomes. Although these EHOs said they did not want an Food Standards Agency style relationship, clearer direction may be useful in dealing with the internal challenge of resource constraints.

The experience of larger or urban Local Authorities is different. For them, greater resources tend to be available for health and safety, although choices still have to be made about the division of resources between competing priorities such as food safety. For these Local Authorities, firmer direction from HSE was not required or desirable.

2.7.3 There is evidence that greater flexibility in enforcement boundaries can bring positive results

Current initiatives in Flexible Warranting allow greater flexibility for enforcement by allowing either HSE or Local Authorities to enforce health and safety in an area which is not formally under their jurisdiction within Enforcing Authority Regulations. Flexible Warrants (FW) issued under Section 19 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 allow one Enforcing Authority to appoint another EA's suitably qualified inspectors to act within its field of responsibility. Flexible Warranting is seen to bring both benefits and also concerns to respondents, reflecting a sense of uncertainty about their role in the partnership and how they will develop in the future.

Table 5. Summary of HSE and Local Authorities views on the benefits and concerns about Flexible Warranting

Benefits of flexible warranting	Concerns about flexible warranting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSE benefits from having access to people on the ground who are able to respond to incidents quickly. • Local Authorities have been able to respond effectively to complaints about health and safety, in situations where the HSE would have been unlikely to get an inspector to the problem quickly enough, if at all. • Both HSE and Local Authorities have been able to provide a more responsive service to duty holders through the joint warranting initiative. • Many Local Authorities reported that they saw the Enforcing Authority Regulations as frustrating and getting in the way of good partnership, with Flexible Warrants as a positive way of overcoming this barrier. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some LA respondents saw Flexible Warrants as a way of HSE ‘off-loading’ work onto Local Authorities and were skeptical about the actual benefits that flexible warranting might bring. • HSE respondents felt that HSE may be exposed by allowing Local Authorities to enforce in other areas, as HSE and LA officers are not trained in the same manner indicating an ongoing level of distrust in competency of LA staff. • HSE Unions felt that Flexible Warranting may undermine their work and authority.

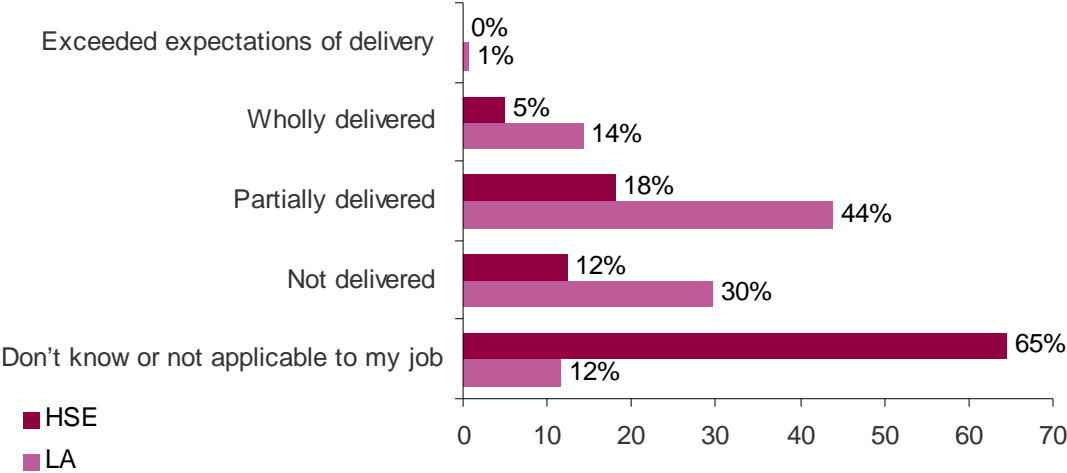
2.8 Monitoring and auditing

Commitment 6 of the Statement of Intent: Developing arrangements for monitoring and auditing the work of the enforcing authorities which properly reflect the status of HSE and LAs as partners.

2.8.1 Performance management is one of key areas where the partnership has not delivered against the Statement of Intent

One of the aims and objectives of the partnership is to ensure that effective monitoring and auditing arrangements are in place. The majority of respondents to the survey within both HSE and Local Authorities believed that the partnership has not delivered robust performance management:

Figure 7. "To what extent has the partnership delivered the commitment 6 of the Statement of the Intent".



Source: HSE LA evaluation national on-line survey

There has been some progress in developing the monitoring and auditing arrangements, such as the review of the LAE1 form, participation in peer review exercises and completion of Fit3 proformas as part of the Fit3 programme. Concerns to highlight are:

- Lack of benchmarking information to assess which Local Authorities are delivering effective health and safety outcomes.
- Lack of a national indicator against which to *measure* health and safety outcomes.
- Perception that self-auditing by Local Authorities is an insufficiently robust auditing mechanism to ensure good performance across the board.
- LAE 1 form does not accurately reflect outcomes as it is based around the number of inspection visits.

From an HSE perspective, a significant number of respondents to the survey commented that the lack of an effective monitoring and auditing regime reduces the benefits of partnership working and leads to a sense of frustration that not all Local Authorities are engaged equally in the partnership. For those Local Authorities who participate fully in the partnership, there is also the sense that their participation is not rewarded fully as long as those Local Authorities who do not engage are seen to 'get away with' non compliance. Lack of monitoring and auditing leads to concern for partners that there is a lack of consistency in performance in health and safety.

It is also recognised that Local Authorities are and will be monitored and audited on a wide range of other services, for example, through the forthcoming Comprehensive Area Agreements (CAAs) and their equivalents in Scotland and Wales. The risk is that additional performance monitoring of health and safety will disengage Local Authorities from the benefits that effective health and safety can bring to the community.

2.8.2 Section 18 Standard seen as a way to ensure greater compliance

Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work *etc* Act 1974 places a duty on the Health and Safety Executive and Local Authorities to make adequate arrangements for enforcement. It applies to all 410 LAs and the HSE Field Operations Directorate. HSE replaced previous guidance on Section 18 with the new Standard to:

- reflect that direction given by it is not optional,
- reinforce the section as a benchmark for those engaged in health and safety enforcement.

The standard provides a means to measure health and safety enforcement and cement partnership working and significantly, applies to all Local Authorities and HSE FOD.

At the time of writing, the new Section 18 Standard has been in place for five months with supporting toolkits either in place or in development. It is widely recognised that the new standard will address many of the issues outlined above. The HELA Task and Finish Group is examining how compliance against the Section 18 Standard can be audited to give HSE reassurance that both HSE FOD and Local Authorities are making adequate arrangements for enforcement.

2.9 Developing regulatory services

Commitment 7 of the Statement of Intent: Contributing effectively to current and future initiatives to improve the consistency and coordination of central and devolved government requirements which impact on regulatory services, in the context of expectations, priorities, minimum standards, monitoring and intervention.

As outlined at the beginning of this report, the partnership faces a number of external influences, such as the Hampton Review, the better regulation agenda and the creation of LBRO. The partnership has good links in place with colleagues in BRE, CLG and with other regulators. A good relationship exists with LBRO but it is too early to evaluate the impact of LBRO on partnership working and how well the partnership has contributed to any requirements arising as a result of the Local Better Regulation Office's (LBRO) work.

3 Partnership costs and benefits

The evaluation has shown that there is a high degree of consensus between partners at both operational and strategic level that the benefits of the partnership outweigh the costs, through more focussed and targeted enforcement, the degree of trust and cooperation that has developed as a result of the partnership and in the "softer" benefits that joint working has brought to partners. There is evidence that joint working such as joint visits and inspections can bring wider benefits to the health and safety system as a whole through greater focus on areas of risk and national priorities, quicker resolution of enforcement issues and a better service for duty holders (which contribute to some of the benefits identified as important to regulators in the Better Regulation agenda). As with many partnerships, however, it is difficult to prove a causal relationship between changes in output and outcome measures i.e. that changes in enforcement notices, prosecutions and injury levels are a direct result of the partnership.

3.1 Costs of the partnership

All partners incur some cost in working together:

HSE

- Running of Local Authority Unit.
- Funding of the Partnership Teams and Managers in the seven regions.
- Partnership communications, including management of the HELEX extranet as well as funding regional fora and the Annual Partnership Conference.
- Time spent by HSE Inspectors on joint visits and inspections.

LACORS

- Employment of policy staff ³.

Local Authorities

- Time for local councillors attendance at the LGP.
- Officer time for involvement in partnership meetings and activities.

³ LACORS policy staff produce guidance for Local Authorities, act as Secretariat for HELA and LGP, and liaison point with Local Authority Unit, representing LAs on HSE programmes and projects, coordination of Policy forum, weekly update emails, responding to consultations on behalf of LAs, lobbying on behalf of LAs, promotion and raising the profile of health and safety with Councillors, joint planning of annual conferences and regional updates with LAU.

It has not been possible within the scope of the evaluation to provide a detailed or accurate breakdown of all costs involved in the partnership, however, high level costs have been isolated to give an indication of the likely costs of maintaining the partnership in a steady state.

Table 6. Main costs associated with working in partnership

Organisation	Cost
Local Authority Unit (HSE)	Resources used to support partnership assumed to be 66% of total LAU resource devoted to partnership working = 10 FTEs.
Communications (HSE)	HELex extranet set up and running costs to be included as part of LAU.
Partnership Teams (HSE)	7 Partnership Teams, made up of Partnership Manager, Partnership Liaison Officers and Partnership Officer = 21FTEs.
Operational Inspectors (HSE)	Attendance at County Groups, activities related to buddying = 7FTEs.
LACORS (LGA)	2.5 x FTE.

HSE have estimated the costs of the partnership as about £2 million - of which £700,000 for the Local Authority Unit and £1.3 million for Partnership Teams⁴. This accords with our understanding of the high level costs of the partnership. It should be noted that some of these costs would be incurred irrespective of the existence of the partnership in that Local Authorities would still be Enforcing Authorities and require support and oversight from HSE (through LAU). We are therefore proposing that the direct costs of the partnership are the incremental costs incurred, that is, the partnership teams and 2.5 FTE within LACORS.

Please note that these costs are estimates only and purely indicative.

3.2 Benefits of the partnership

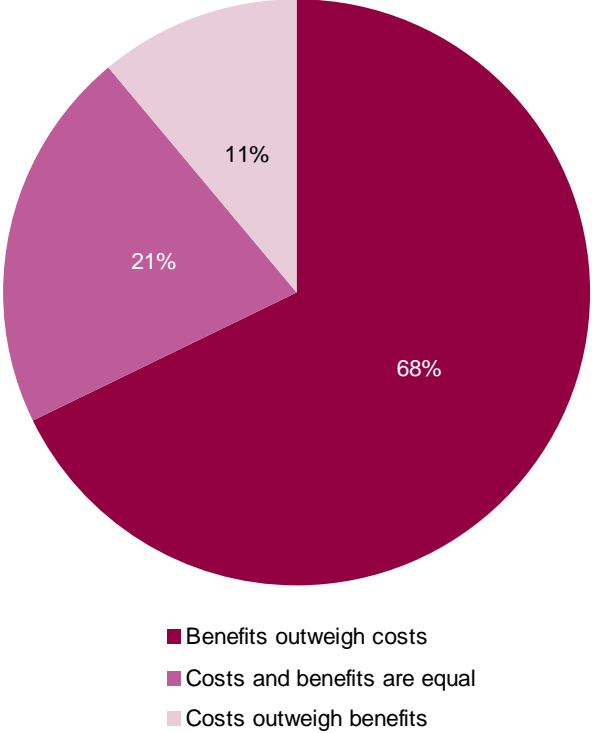
This section outlines some of the key benefits of the partnership and provides analysis of stakeholders' perception of whether the benefits of the partnership outweigh the costs.

3.2.1 Overall, the benefits of the partnership are seen to outweigh the costs

Most respondents to the survey felt very strongly that the degree to which the relationship between Local Authorities and HSE has improved since the partnership has been in place outweigh the cost of the partnership, and that although these benefits were often intangible, they were extremely valuable.

⁴ These are reported in the addendum to HSC/06/09
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/hscarchive/2006/140206/c09addendum.pdf>

Figure 8. "Do the benefits of the partnership outweigh the costs?" (combined HSE and Local Authorities).



Source: HSE LA evaluation national on-line survey

There is evidence that where strong relationships exist, there is a sense of quid pro quo - that the investment that HSE makes in terms of advice, guidance, information and support, means that Local Authorities are more likely to offer resource towards the HSE driven agenda.

As part of our evaluation stakeholders identified a wide range of benefits that have arisen as a result of the partnership - these are summarised in table 7 below:

Table 7. Table showing summary of benefits arising from partnership working

Benefit	Description
More effective joint working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved operational team working through joints visits and inspections and at a strategic level through county and national groups.
Improved communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better communications between partners at an operational level e.g. more informal joint working and contact on the ground and at a strategic level e.g. between LGP and HSE Board. Improved written communications for duty holders, especially in the LA sector.
Better customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More responsive service to duty holders in resolution of enforcement issues. Improved ability to respond to duty holder demand for information and guidance on a wider range of subjects. Improved response to complaints which involve two duty holders or where there is an issue of lack of consistency in enforcement.
Improved confidence of Local Authority inspectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training, advice, guidance and support to Local Authorities has increased Local Authority inspectors' confidence in enforcing health and safety. This has also increased HSE inspectors confidence and respect for LA inspectors.
Facilitated delivery of Fit3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment of an estimated 350 LA FTEs which otherwise might not have been provided. Better targeting of Local Authority resource to nationally identified risks and priorities. Partnership Teams and Managers playing a role in helping to facilitate effective delivery of Fit3 through the production of joint work plans.
Improved strategic links between HSE and Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closer strategic links strengthened by HSE and LGP meetings. Inter Local Authority links strengthened.
Better targeting of resources towards priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased level of dedicated resource focused on nationally agreed health and safety activity. Improved understanding by HSE of the Local Authority sector leading to better identification and targeting of risks in LA enforced premises. Various flexible warranting initiatives which re-directed Local Authority resource to the highest risks or made more efficient or effective use of partners resources.
Better enforcement outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is anecdotal evidence of better enforcement outcomes as a result of the partnership in that the combination of HSE and Local Authority inspectors working together on site has meant better identification of issues, improved consistency of enforcement standards and understanding of issues. More rigorous and consistent enforcement process e.g. improved training and development opportunities for Local Authority inspectors. Quicker resolution of issues by partners.

There is anecdotal evidence that efficiency and effectiveness gains may have flowed from joint working on the ground. Although these are anecdotal, they provide some good examples of potential

measures that might be used to assess "hard" benefits of partnership working going forward. There is, however limited robust evidence of the more quantitative benefits of partnership working.

"I can evidence better targeting of resources towards priorities as part of the partnership agenda. As a result of Fit3, we have more statistical information about our local area which helps us to prioritise our areas of work where the risk is highest" (LA Inspector)

Furthermore, not all respondents agreed that the benefits outweigh the costs. HSE respondents were more likely than Local Authority respondents to state that the costs outweigh the benefits of partnership working (of the 11% that said that the 'costs outweigh the benefits' of partnership working, over 90% were from HSE). A small minority of HSE inspectors at an operational level commented in the on-line survey that they perceived that the resource put into running the partnership was 'not paid back' by Local Authorities spending more time on health and safety. These findings indicate that the benefits of partnership working may be *perceived* to fall onto Local Authorities rather than HSE and that more needs to be done to improve communications about the benefits of partnership.

"More awareness within HSE as to exactly what the partnership does would be good - there are some staff (administrative and inspectors) who really do not understand the role of the PaCT team within the HSE environment and this should be addressed to improve the type of work that is completed" (HSE operational inspector)

"No doubt there are papers defining what the aims of partnership working are but perhaps a briefing would be useful. Just because a paper is available does not mean the purpose of partnership working is known to all. People also need to be made aware the organisational benefits of partnership working" (HSE Inspector)

3.2.2 In terms of the impact on the duty holder, the partnership has had mixed success

There is anecdotal evidence of a better service for duty holders as a result of joint working. Joint visits and inspections can allow for quicker resolution of an enforcement issue, improved consistency of enforcement and a more responsive service.

"Our partnership agenda has enabled provision of higher quality services to customers, because we have provided a cohesive delivery of health and safety services to recipients who would otherwise be receiving services in a post code and enforcing authority lottery.

We have also been able to provide a more responsive service to customers through the joint warranting initiative, which allows local authority officers bearing HSE warrants to pick up matters of evident concern - this piece of work would not have occurred without the partnership working agenda having been developed" (LA inspector)

However many larger retailers still perceive inconsistencies in enforcement and have a strong view that HSE should be working more closely with Local Authorities to ensure consistency of inspection both within and across Local Authorities. This is particularly important with larger retailers where a Health and Safety policy designed at HQ (often taking advice from HSE) is then questioned by a Local Authority inspecting one of their smaller stores. Large retailers also reported duplication of work by HSE and Local Authorities and viewed this unfavourably.

Many of the benefits highlighted elsewhere in this report have a knock on effect in terms of duty holders - better informed staff means an improved knowledge base for inspectors, and better trained and supported officers means an improved service for duty holders. These benefits will become more apparent as the partnership develops.

4 Next steps

This section sets out what is required to *maintain* the partnership in its current state (and ensure that the benefits of the partnership are sustained) and a set of key challenges and opportunities which partners are asked to consider in order to further develop the partnership.

4.1 Maintaining the partnership

In order to maintain the benefits already achieved by the partnership there is a need to continue to fund partnership teams, protect the role of Partnership Manager, communicate more widely roles and responsibilities of the existing governance structure and share best practice. These recommendations are critical to maintaining the benefits arising from the current partnership.

4.1.1 Continued funding of Partnership Teams and protection of the role of Partnership Manager

The evaluation has shown the importance of Partnership Teams and their supporting infrastructure. The interviews, on-line survey and focus groups all confirmed that without the Partnership Teams in place, the partnership would not sustain itself and potentially, the benefits that the partnership has brought may be lost. There is a need to maintain the infrastructure that support the teams at a national level (LAU and LACORS support) as this will ensure the big picture is maintained.

The role of Partnership Managers is critical to this and should be maintained and protected to ensure a single point of accountability and focus within each region. While there will be scope for Partnership Managers to take on additional roles in, for example, stakeholder management, care must be taken to ensure that maintaining and delivering the partnership remains their main focus.

Recommendation (1) Continue to resource Partnership Teams their supporting infrastructure.

Recommendation (2) Ensure the role of Partnership Manager is protected.

4.1.2 Communicating the roles and responsibilities of existing governance structures

The evaluation has shown that greater clarity about high-level governance structures would be beneficial to partnership working. Although many of the structures and processes are in place for robust governance, lack of engagement with, or lack of knowledge of these structures and processes, may inhibit successful partnership working.

Recommendation (3) : Clarify and communicate more widely the roles and responsibilities of high level governance structures and bodies.

4.1.3 Greater sharing of best practice and communication of partnership successes

From our evaluation it is clear that more work needs to be done to ensure HSE and Local Authority staff receive benefits from the partnership in the short term and that attention is paid to winning 'hearts and minds'. As part of our interviews and focus groups a range of options were identified that provide concrete actions:

- Regular publication in partnership publications of 'successes' of Local Authorities who had actively engaged in the partnership.
- More publication of what partners have achieved in the form of health and safety outcomes e.g. accident reduction, support for work related ill health, contribution to public health and linking this to wider community outcomes.
- Greater publication of successes of the partnership in the local media to create higher visibility amongst the wider community.
- Greater communication of the work of the partnership in health and safety to *other* Local Authority departments who may also have an interest in health and safety.
- Improved sharing of examples of best practice across regions e.g. where Partnership Teams have been particularly successful or innovative. (This happens to some extent in updates provided by LACORS, but a more formalised approach would be beneficial.)
- Partnership Manager, HElEx extranet and LACORS website could all provide useful mechanisms to support greater sharing.

Recommendation (4) Explore ways in which successes could be more widely publicised and how best practice can be shared across Local Authorities.

Recommendation (5): HSE and LACORS to examine ways of communicating more effectively with other Local Authority services where synergies with health and safety exist.

4.2 Ensuring the long-term health of the partnership - challenges and opportunities

As part of our evaluation we have identified additional areas where significant opportunities exist for the partnership to develop:

- Partnership teams.
- Governance structures.
- Standard setting and performance management.
- Planning cycles.
- Flow of information and communication.
- Training and development opportunities.
- Wider stakeholder engagement.
- Enforcement allocation.

These are developed more fully in the following sections and where appropriate recommendations provided.

4.3 Partnership teams

4.3.1 Formalisation of the roles and responsibilities of Partnership Teams

Building on our recommendations in section 4.2, it is clear there are additional opportunities to develop the role of Partnership Managers and teams. There are currently seven Partnership Managers with teams of, on average, three staff. As the evaluation has shown, there is a degree of variation in the roles and responsibilities of Partnership Managers and teams and in the types of activities they carry out. The codification of these roles would provide an effective tool for development of the partnership and provide a conduit to deliver on the elements of the Statement of Intent where there has been less progress. This formalisation is particularly important as Partnership Teams have also now taken on responsibility for wider stakeholder engagement and there may therefore be tension in terms of the relative resource allocation. Clarity around expectations of Partnership Teams would be helpful in ensuring that core partnership activities are sustained.

A formalised role for Partnership Teams and Managers could include:

- Description of the scope of Partnership Team roles and responsibilities, including a description of the differences in the role of the Partnership Manager and Enforcement Liaison Officer.
- Defined skill set for Partnership Managers closely related to partnership activities.

It is also recognised that there is a need to ensure greater sharing of best practice and knowledge around "what works" to take place to ensure more consistency across Partnership Teams in the regions. This could include:

- Standard set of reporting structures upwards (to LAU, LACORS and HELA) and downwards (to County Liaison Groups, Task Groups) and improved links between LACORS Policy Forum and Regional bodies.
- Standard deliverables, such as regional joint work plans.

Recommendation (6) Formalisation of the roles and responsibilities of Partnership Teams and Managers and greater sharing of best practice and knowledge around what currently 'works' in Partnership Teams.

4.3.2 More structured approach to PLO secondment process

Currently, PLOs are seconded from Local Authorities typically for a year, although at times for less. Feedback from the evaluation has shown that the role of the PLO is invaluable in building bridges between HSE and Local Authorities, but that lack of security of funding and the length of time of the secondment are challenges to the effectiveness of this initiative. A more structured approach to the secondment process would be beneficial, with all secondments lasting at least a year, with this agreed at the start of the secondment. This would allow PLOs to further embed the relationship between HSE and Local Authorities and maximise the value from the posting.

It is accepted that achieving the release of staff from Local Authorities can be difficult and that collectively partners need to look at creative solutions to support the secondment process.

Recommendation (7) Examine ways of ensuring a more structured approach to the secondment process, with a rolling programme of funding for the role of the Partnership Liaison Officer and communicating this to Local Authorities.

Recommendation (8) Examine ways of helping local authorities release staff for secondment to PLO roles.

4.4 Governance structures

4.4.1 Improvements to existing governance structures

Comments emerging from the focus groups supported the need to review or simplify the existing governance structures, as well as make improvements to the way they currently operate. Some suggested areas to explore are:

- A greater profile and role for HELA, LACORS and LGP to influence the strategic direction of the partnership.
- Capitalise further on the strong 'brand' of HELA amongst Local Authorities.
- Enhance the role of HELA as providing independent oversight of the partnership.
- Greater visibility of HELA, LGP and HSE Board members in the wider stakeholder community.
- Reinforcing and strengthening the HELA/LAU arrangements.
- Improved links between LACORS and regional representative groups.

Recommendation (9) Review the effectiveness and robustness of the existing governance structures and look at ways to improve these.

4.5 Standard setting and performance management

As the evaluation has shown, improving performance management and monitoring of the partnership was identified as one of the key areas where progress needs to be made and there are a number of opportunities for the partnership in this area.

4.5.1 Performance management

The HELA Task and Finish Group is currently looking at ways of monitoring and auditing compliance with the Section 18 Standard. It is proposed that this forms the basis for development of performance management arrangements for the partnership.

Recommendation (10) Section 18 Standard to build in new permanent monitoring arrangements, explore how compliance with the Section 18 Standard will be monitored, including establishment of peer review process and exploring the possibility of benchmarking Local Authority performance.

A number of additional suggestions were made at focus groups on opportunities to improve performance management:

- A more robust peer review process.

- Benchmarking performance of Local Authorities: This would provide a better understanding of how well Local Authorities are performing in relation to one another, how well HSE is performing, and a greater understanding of the degree of consistency in delivery of health and safety outcomes.
- Delivery of support and guidance to under-performing Local Authorities - good performance management is not just about having the right targets in place but about ensuring that where organisations struggle to deliver, that sufficient support and help is offered to identify the underlying causes of failure. A robust performance management system would mean that those Local Authorities who were not performing adequately could then be provided with additional support and guidance either from other Local Authorities or HSE.

Recommendation (11) Explore options for the development of a programme of support to be provided to Local Authorities where performance is in need of improvement.

4.5.2 Performance targets and indicators

A variety of discussions took place during the evaluation on the value of performance targets and indicators - however there was no definitive conclusion. The opportunities are highlighted below however no recommendations have been made in this area.

Joint partnership health and safety targets: Provision of joint targets for health and safety for both Local Authorities and HSE. Currently HSE has its own Departmental Performance Indicators but these are not shared by Local Authorities. Some Local Authorities have health and safety related targets in their Local Area Agreements and in Wales, performance indicators exist for health and safety. LA specific targets with HSE as well as LA as a collective would help ensure and focus work. This could mean creating a health and safety target for Local Authorities, or making it mandatory that health and safety forms part of the Local Area Agreements, as it does for food.

Creation of a national health and safety performance indicator: A national performance indicator would be nationally set and would require both HSE and Local Authorities to report against it. A performance indicator for health and safety exists in Wales⁵ and although it is recognised that it does help to raise the profile of health and safety and drives up resources into health and safety, it is not

⁵ The number of high risk businesses liable to a programmed inspection or alternative enforcement activity during the year for Health and Safety (2008 target - 9)

The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection or alternative inspection activity that were inspected/subject to alternative enforcement activity for health and safety (2008 target - 100%)

The percentage of new businesses identified during the year which were subject to an inspection for health and safety (2008 target - 60%)

The percentage of new businesses identified during the year which submitted a self-assessment questionnaire for health and safety (2008 target - 15%).

seen to reflect the outcomes of people on the ground, reflect partnership working outcomes or incentivise working towards the health and safety system as a whole.

4.5.3 Further alignment of planning cycles between partners

The evaluation has shown that the partnership has made progress in ensuring HSE involve and engage Local Authorities early on in the planning process, for example through Fit3 planning. However due to the nature of planning cycles there are still tensions and further work should be undertaken to understand the practical steps that could be taken to minimise these tensions.

Some areas for consideration of the partnership include:

- Greater convergence in HSE and Local Authority local planning cycles - respondents wanted to see more joint service planning at a local level, so HSE and Local Authorities work together to agree targets, inputs, outcomes and achievements in certain key priority areas.
- More formal consolidation of joint work plans where they are already in place.
- Improved communications internally within HSE so that HSE operational staff are aware earlier than currently of policy changes decided by central HSE to allow them more lead in time with their Local Authority contacts.

Recommendation (12) Assess feasibility of mechanisms for engaging Local Authorities further in the HSE planning cycle.

Recommendation (13) Explore how HSE can develop guidance for Local Authorities in line with their own planning cycles even if HSE decision-making is incomplete.

4.6 Improving the flow of information and communications between partners

Whilst this area was seen to be a very strong aspect of current partnership working, there are still ways in which the partnership could improve the way it shares information and communicates between partners.

4.6.1 Improved inter-authority working and collaboration

The partnership has led in some cases to greater inter-authority working. For example, HSE has worked with several Local Authorities at the same time to conduct joint warranting. Local Authorities and HSE are now more keen to collaborate with each other and 'let go' of some of the territorial aspects of their culture of inspection. Suggestions included:

- Greater sharing of good practice, training and guidance between Local Authorities.

- Greater partnership working not just between HSE inspectors and Local Authorities but between Local Authorities without HSE present. This could lead, for example, to one Local Authority providing training, guidance and support to another Local Authority.
- Improved means of feeding back information from inspections completed by Local Authorities to ensure they can be included in evaluations by HSE of wider initiatives for strategic purposes. Whilst more needs to be done, it is recognised that recent work has bridged the gap e.g. last year's release of the Local Authority profiles and Regional Statistical Packs.

Recommendation (14) Explore ways of improving inter-authority collaboration through more sharing of good practice and experiences between Local Authorities.

4.6.2 Marketing the 'image' of health and safety within Local Authorities and externally

One of the key challenges identified for the partnership was the ongoing poor image of health and safety within Local Authorities and in the wider community. More could be done to ensure that the contribution that health and safety makes to wider community objectives, such as well-being and economic regeneration, is fully realised. There are currently a range of ways in which the partnership does this e.g. through the LACORS/HSE publication on health and safety for local councillors, but there is scope for further improvement:

- HSE recognises it needs to engage Local Authorities at a more strategic level and target Chief Executives to push health and safety into the wider agenda of community safety, well being and economic regeneration. HSE believes that health and safety has something to contribute to all of these areas.
- More could be done to improve communications centrally from HSE and departments within Local Authorities where synergies with health and safety exist - this would help to raise the profile of health and safety more widely within Local Authorities.

Recommendation (15) Consider how to further engage local councillors and Chief Executives in the health and safety system, looking at existing mechanism such as LGP or new ways of doing this.

4.7 Training and development

A number of other specific suggestions for improvement were made as part of the evaluation and these are outlined below.

4.7.1 Wider range of training and development opportunities

HSE currently provides a range of training to Local Authorities on a variety of topics. The evaluation clearly shows that the provision of training and development opportunities by HSE is highly valued by Local Authorities and helps improve local skill levels, drive consistency and also support greater time spent on Fit3 activities. Joint training provides not only skills benefits but also helps create greater links between HSE and Local Authorities which again have a range of beneficial effects, fostering a feeling of 'train together, work together' which benefits partnership working.

A number of options were raised at focus groups and during the in-depth interviews for further provision of joint training and development opportunities:

- Local Authorities have indicated that they would like access to additional training and development opportunities in areas where HSE has expertise, such as legal advice training, investigations of fatal accidents (this already happens in some areas), contractor management procedures, and court processes. Local Authorities would like HSE to open up its internal training to Local Authorities allowing them to attend in line with local priorities.
- There is also the option to consider joint training of Local Authority and HSE inspectors both pre and post qualification. This would mean that both inspectors attend the same modules of accredited training courses, therefore improving consistency of training. It is accepted that joint training would be more feasible post qualification through, for example, joint attendance at, or training in, health and safety accredited modules. Pre qualification may be more costly to implement.
- Formalisation and greater transparency of secondments from Local Authorities to the HSE Fatal Investigation Teams.
- Provision of training by Local Authority inspectors to HSE in terms of informing them about how they work with local businesses.
- Further increase awareness of the specialist support available to Local Authorities.

Recommendation (16) Test options for better sharing of Local Authority expertise to HSE and extending out HSE training to Local Authorities.

4.7.2 Increase awareness of the Buddy Inspector scheme within Local Authorities

Several respondents to the on-line survey commented that the Buddy Inspector scheme was extremely valuable in improving joint working but that greater awareness of the scheme would be beneficial, particularly amongst Local Authorities.

Recommendation (17) Raise awareness of the Buddy Inspector scheme within Local Authorities.

4.8 Wider stakeholder engagement

There were a number of suggestions from focus groups and in-depth interviews about ensuring that the partnership engages more effectively with its stakeholders at a number of different levels. The driver behind these suggestions was that the wider health and safety *system* incorporates a much wider set of delivery partners than just HSE and Local Authorities. Incorporating these wider stakeholders would better deliver health and safety outcomes. The following suggestions were made:

- **Engaging with other regulatory bodies:** the evaluation has shown that it is important that health and safety regulation is seen as part of the wider remit of the Local Authority regulatory responsibilities and in some areas, the partnership has made good progress. For example, SWERF in the South West brings together representatives from other regulatory bodies together with HSE and Local Authorities to discuss wider regulatory issues in the region. Further development of such opportunities across regions would be beneficial.
- **Extending the 'formal' partnership to other bodies responsible for health and safety enforcement:** this means formally bringing in other bodies which also have responsibility for health and safety, such as the Commission for Inspection and Social Care and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) into the partnership.
- **Engage more fully with health:** Given the recent Dame Carole Black report, " Working for a Healthier Tomorrow", which puts a focus on keeping people healthy at work and helping them return to work after illness, there is an important opportunity for the partnership to engage more fully with health partners. This does happen today with some Local Authorities and HSE already having strong links with PCTs, but this is usually dependent on the internal structures of Local Authorities and whether health and safety is in the Local Area Agreement. This is an important opportunity for the partnership going forward.
- **Engaging the partnership with larger retailers:** in some areas, Local Authorities and HSE have worked together with larger retailers on specific projects, such as Royal Mail or Laura Ashley in North Wales. It was felt that as the partnership matures and develops, greater engagement with larger retailers would mean an improved service to duty holders and potentially, greater consistency of enforcement.

Recommendation (18) Explore ways that the partnership can engage more widely with external stakeholders.

4.9 Allocation of enforcement responsibilities

4.9.1 Further explore the benefits of greater flexibility in existing enforcement boundaries between partners

The Enforcing Authority Regulations set out the division of responsibility in enforcement boundaries between HSE and Local Authorities. The HSC's Strategy to 2010 and beyond suggested that there was no lasting logic to the current division of enforcement responsibility between HSE and Local Authorities and that it did not capture the full potential to work together, and subsequently led to the introduction of the Flexible Warranting initiative. This initiative has shown that greater flexibility around enforcement boundaries can lead to better use of joint resources (by removing barriers to action), an increase in the speed of response to issues of significant risk (because of LA inspectors' local presence) and generally to enhance partnership working (by recognising the equivalence of powers and skills between HSE and LA staff). This is reinforced by the Local Authority Construction Engagement (LACE) project has shown that greater flexibility surrounding Local Authorities working in the construction area is also beneficial.

However, many staff at focus groups and in the in-depth interviews felt that the on-going division of responsibilities still hampered effective partnership working. For example, HSE may have a slower response rate to a major incidents than Local Authorities but Local Authorities may not be empowered to respond because of the regulations. A review of the current roles and responsibilities in enforcement by partners would be helpful and could lead to increased benefits, for example, efficiency gains or better customer service. As part of this, the partnership could also explore areas where Local Authorities might take on higher risk areas of enforcement.

Recommendation (19) HSE and Local Authorities to work together to examine how the current enforcement boundaries could be developed.

4.9.2 Review the distribution of 'risk' across Local Authorities and HSE and align of resources accordingly

For the partnership to deliver fully on its intention to deliver effective enforcement outcomes, resources could to be managed more in line with risk and thought then given to the respective roles and responsibilities of HSE and Local Authorities. At the moment in the partnership, the distribution of risk against resource is not even, leading to the "double-peak" of health and safety enforcement.

Some opportunities identified in the in-depth interviews for the partnership going forward are:

- Better targeting of joint resources around risk based on current roles and responsibilities - this is a review of where it is appropriate for Local Authorities to take on enforcement responsibilities. For example, Local Authorities could take on more 'high' risk areas of enforcement if appropriate and efficiency gains result.

- Review of the overall distribution of risk between partners - this would assess the current risk profile in health and safety and then would allocate roles and responsibilities between HSE and Local Authorities accordingly.
- The creation of a single health and safety enforcement organisation. Currently, the legal division of roles and responsibilities of enforcing authorities is outlined in the Enforcing Authority Regulations. HSE are responsible for enforcement in areas such as warehouses, industrial sites, nuclear sites whereas Local Authorities are responsible for enforcement in leisure, distribution, retail and office sectors. However, it is widely recognised that enforcement responsibilities often overlap and that it would be beneficial at times to allow greater flexibility to enforcement between Enforcing Authorities where appropriate or even to merge the responsibility for health and safety into a single organisation. No recommendation has been suggested for this as it was accepted that if the partnership continues to build on its successes, there would be no need to merge the functions into one organisation.

Recommendation (20) Review the distribution of risk in health and safety and explore how partnership can ensure that joint resources are better targeted around risk.

4.10 Summary of recommendations

Topic area	Recommendations
Maintaining the partnership	<p>(1) Continue to resource Partnership Teams and the supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>(2) Ensure the role of Partnership Managers is protected.</p> <p>(3) Clarify and communicate more widely the roles and responsibilities of high level governance structures and bodies.</p> <p>(4) Explore ways in which successes could be more widely publicised and how best practice can be shared across Local Authorities.</p> <p>(5) HSE and LACORS to examine ways of communicating more effectively with other Local Authority services where synergies with health and safety exist.</p>
Partnership teams	<p>(6) Formalise the roles and responsibilities of Partnership Teams and Managers.</p> <p>(7) Examine ways of ensuring a more structured approach to the secondee process, with a rolling programme of funding for the role of the Partnership Liaison Officer and communicating this Local Authorities.</p> <p>(8) Examine ways of helping local authorities release staff for secondment to PLO roles.</p>
Governance structures	<p>(9) Review the effectiveness and robustness of the existing governance structures and look at ways to improve them.</p>

Topic area	Recommendations
Standard setting and performance management	<p>(10) Build in new permanent monitoring arrangements for the Section 18 Standard and explore how compliance with the Section 18 Standard will be monitored, including establishment of peer review process and exploring possibility of benchmarking Local Authority performance.</p> <p>(11) Explore options for the development of a programme of support to be provided to Local Authorities where performance is in need of improvement.</p>
Improving current planning arrangements	<p>(12) Assess feasibility of mechanisms for engaging Local Authorities further in the HSE planning cycle.</p> <p>(13) Explore how HSE can develop guidance for Local Authorities in line with their own planning cycles even if HSE decision-making is incomplete.</p>
Enhancing current flow of information and communications	<p>(14) Explore ways of improving inter-authority collaboration through more sharing of good practice and experiences between Local Authorities.</p> <p>(15) Consider how to engage further local councillors and Chief Executives in the health and safety system, looking at existing mechanism such as LGP or new ways of doing this.</p>
Training and development	<p>(16) Test options for better sharing of Local Authority expertise to HSE and extending out HSE training to Local Authorities.</p> <p>(17) Raise awareness of the Buddy Inspector scheme within Local Authorities.</p>
Wider stakeholder engagement	<p>(18) Explore ways that the partnership can engage more widely with external stakeholders.</p>
Enforcement Allocation	<p>(19) HSE and Local Authorities to work together to examine how the current enforcement boundaries could be developed.</p> <p>(20) Review the distribution of risk in health and safety and subsequent redrawing of the enforcement roles and responsibilities of HSE and Local Authorities.</p>

Local authorities and HSE in partnership

An evaluation

PA Consulting Group was appointed to undertake an evaluation of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Local Authority (LA) partnership during the summer of 2008. The purpose of the evaluation was to enable HSE to take an informed view of the contribution that the partnership can and should make to a new strategy. The evaluation was commissioned by the Local Authority Unit (LAU) of HSE and conducted jointly with representatives from Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS). This report is the output of that exercise and aims to answer three key questions:

- to what extent has the partnership delivered on the seven commitments in the Statement of Intent?
- do the benefits of the partnership outweigh the costs?
- what does the partnership need to do going forward to ensure its long-term health?

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