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Introduction

I am pleased to introduce this functional strategy for health, safety and environmental protection (HS&EP).

The requirement to keep people safe and protect the environment – at home and overseas – has been set by the Secretary of State for Defence and the Permanent Secretary. I will support this requirement by leading the HS&EP function, and will work closely with the leaders of other functions who also have HS&EP responsibilities.

Our vision for HS&EP in Defence (the HS&EP vision) is for us to:

- aim to eliminate health-and-safety related deaths;
- aim for an injury-free workplace; and
- protect the environment from harm.

Many challenges within Defence are unique. We operate around the world – on land, at sea and in the air – using complex equipment and in challenging political and diplomatic situations. Defence is complex, but our approach to HS&EP cannot be.

Building a strong culture of safety, where there is genuine care for all those who deliver Defence activities and those who may be affected by Defence activities, there is open and honest reporting, and everyone feels able to speak up, is vital to prevent accidents, injuries and deaths. Keeping to these principles, with the support of strong management systems, protects people and delivers strong environmental and operational performance.

As we train and prepare our armed forces for operations to protect our nation, I am determined that we will not compromise on safety for any business objective.

This strategy describes the steps we need to take across Defence, building on the existing procedures that are in place. It also describes how we will achieve our vision as part of a five-year plan.

To support this strategy, we need professionally qualified, confident and experienced HS&EP professionals. I would like all Defence personnel to feel proud to identify themselves as playing a part in the HS&EP function, and to get satisfaction from being asked for advice.

I look forward to leading the already significant contribution the HS&EP function makes to Defence, and to working with all our stakeholders and the wider community to achieve our vision.

Dave King
Director, Health Safety and Environmental Protection
This strategy is designed to describe the role the HS&EP function plays in protecting our people and the environment, managing risks, maintaining our reputation and delivering our Defence goals.

Our HS&EP plans, systems and personal-development goals should reflect this strategy.

**What does a Functional Strategy do?**

This functional strategy describes the HS&EP function and the authorities that the function owner (the Chief Operating Officer) delegated to the function leader (the Director of Health, Safety and Environmental Protection). These authorities include:

- putting in place an agreed ‘operating model’ that sets out how Defence and external organisations will work together to deliver the HS&EP vision;
- setting objectives, through the Defence Plan, for the commands, the Defence Nuclear Organisation (DNO) and the enabling organisations (EOs) that provide supporting services;
- setting standards, rules and other business controls, including assurance arrangements with the Defence Safety Authority (DSA), on the routine conduct of business across Defence;
- setting the policy, strategy and governance framework for HS&EP;
- taking ownership of HS&EP policy;
- making sure HS&EP policies are followed, through the Defence Safety and Environment Management System (SEMS); and
- setting the roles, responsibilities and authorities within the HS&EP function.

The HS&EP function is owned by the Chief Operating Officer (COO), who is accountable to the Permanent Secretary through the Head Office Executive Committee (ExCo). The Director of Health, Safety and Environmental Protection (the HS&EP Director) is the Function Leader and owns this HS&EP Strategy.

Defence has a programme of change to establish a strong Head Office HS&EP Team to help to deliver continuous improvement in HS&EP. The Team will:

- drive forward change and improve the HS&EP culture across Defence;
- advise the Secretary of State and the Permanent Secretary on HS&EP issues; and
- set the policy framework to make sure Defence operates safely, in line with the Defence Plan.
Why do we need an HS&EP Functional Strategy?

Organisations with strong HS&EP leadership and effective management systems, and people committed to these, are safer, more productive and more efficient.

The main benefits of having this strategy are as follows.

• Significantly reduced harm to our people and the environment
• Continuous improvement of health and well-being across Defence
• HS&EP professionals who are competent, confident and proud to identify themselves as members of the profession
• Staff who can be deployed nationally and across the globe, and who people can have confidence in
• Increased productivity through a healthier, happier and better motivated workforce
• Improved HS&EP data collection and analysis across Defence, to help with informed decision-making and continuous learning
• The ability to more strictly keep to laws and Defence regulations, rules and standards, and government policy
• A stronger reputation for corporate responsibility
• Avoiding legal cases and the damage that they can do to our reputation
This strategy is built on three priorities designed to deliver the HS&EP vision.

Priority 1 – Safety Leadership

Function leaders need to demonstrate a relentless pursuit of an injury-free workplace, and set the tone for the HS&EP vision of:

- aiming to eliminate health-and-safety related deaths;
- aiming for an injury-free workplace; and
- protecting the environment from harm.

Function leaders drive behaviours, and behaviours define the safety culture of an organisation. Safety culture is influenced by the tone from the top, so it is essential that function leaders across Defence do the following.

- Constantly aim for an **injury-free workplace**
- Demonstrate that they will **not compromise on safety** for any other business objective
- Believe that their actions are most effective when they **genuinely care about their people and each other**
- Maintain **open and honest reporting** and recognise and encourage behaviour which is consistent with this
- **Hold to account** those who knowingly break the rules
- Demonstrate an understanding that **people make mistakes**, and these are rarely malicious

In the HS&EP Directorate we will work with relevant stakeholders, including the function leaders for the People and the Analysis and Digital functions, to improve data collection and analysis processes so we can clearly demonstrate how we are performing on HS&EP across Defence. We will take ownership of HS&EP policy and review policy documents to make sure they are simple, clear and up to date. We will develop and direct the Defence SEMS to provide a systematic approach to assurance of HS&EP policy, demonstrate the Defence leadership’s commitment to HS&EP and help support all stakeholders to gain a deep understanding of and confidence in the SEMS.

Our workforce needs to feel empowered, and function leaders need to listen to the workforce’s views on all aspects of HS&EP. It is through this relationship that we will understand and be better able to address:

- the work practices that cause frustration and mistakes;
- the issues that have arisen in the purchase of equipment and have caused delays;
- where the workforce has failed to learn from previous mistakes; and
- how to manage the risks that the workforce faces every day.
Priority 2 – Environmental Protection

The HS&EP Team will work with stakeholders to make sure we achieve the HS&EP vision of ‘protecting the environment from harm’.

The Team will:

- put in place the right policies and practices to influence the behaviours of those who carry out Defence activities, plans and programmes;
- make sure those who carry out Defence activities consider and use measures to reduce any negative effect their activities have on the environment; and
- influence leadership to drive forward achievable strategies to preserve, protect and improve the environment we operate in, now and for future generations.

The HS&EP Team will help Commands, DNO, EOs and other functions to make sure Defence keeps to regulations and international commitments, and provide direction and input on environmental-protection objectives and measures.

Priority 3 – Health

The HS&EP Team will put policies and processes in place to make sure that:

- we go beyond our employer’s duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act; and
- the workforce knows about, and is actively encouraged to carry out, their own HS&EP responsibilities.

The HS&EP Team will work with all Defence stakeholders to make sure that the HS&EP vision is achieved.

The Team will:

- set the policy, strategy and assurance arrangements to provide the workforce with a healthy and safe working environment; and
- give Defence stakeholders direction and input on the way that Defence manages potential industrial hazards (for example, transport, asbestos, lead and Legionella).

The Team will work closely with other functions, such as People and Healthcare and Medical, to make sure that the health and well-being of our people (our most important assets) are at the forefront of Defence activities. They will work with the Defence Medical Services (DMS), who own the Healthcare and Medical function, and with the Chief of Defence People (CDP) team, as the owners of the Defence People Mental Health and Wellbeing (DPHWB) Strategy, to:

- make sure our strategies are delivered to promote a culture of positive physical and mental health and well-being across Defence; and
- maintain or improve healthy workplaces, with appropriate levels of risk management.

Joint efforts across Defence and between the workforce and line managers will continue to develop policy, procedures, education, guidance, tools and interventions to prevent or reduce health risks for Defence and individuals.
Roles

Health, safety and environmental-protection activities are carried out across Defence.

The key roles in managing HS&EP in Defence are summarised in the table below and then explained in more detail on the following pages.

**HS&EP Directorate**
1. Owns and maintains the Defence SEMS and HS&EP policies
2. Agree and co-ordinate the five-year plan for third-party assurance
3. Own agreements with relevant statutory bodies
4. Provides support, expertise and guidance on HS&EP, and set professional standards

**Commands, DNO and EOs**
1. Delivers Command, DNO and EO activities in line with the Defence SEMS
2. Carries out first-party management checks and second-party assurance across the Defence SEMS
3. Accountable for their own HS&EP performance
4. Maintains expertise relating to health, safety and environmental-protection

**DSA**
1. Provides third-party assurance across the Defence SEMS through the five-year plan
3. Owns detailed supporting documents where HS&EP Directorate has a formal agreement with a regulator
4. Provides technical and regulatory support, expertise and guidance to Commands, DNO and EOs
The HS&EP Director leads the function and owns, develops and maintains the HS&EP policies and the Defence Safety and Environmental Management System (SEMS). We also lead by agreeing and co-ordinating the five-year plan for third-party assurance.

We support HS&EP across Defence by providing expertise, guidance and feedback to continuously improve HS&EP performance and policies, and helping with the development of HS&EP professionals across Defence.

We influence HS&EP across Defence by co-ordinating and driving forward the agenda of the Defence Safety and Environment Committee (DSEC) and by liaising with government departments, statutory bodies and allies to share best practice on HS&EP and risk management.

We check Defence's performance relating to HS&EP by providing management information on HS&EP performance and risk management across Defence, developing the five-year plan for third-party assurance, and involving and consulting all HS&EP stakeholders.
Commands, DNO and EOs lead on HS&EP through the responsibility delegated to them by their Letters of Delegation. They make sure their activities are delivered in line with the law, policy, Defence regulations and Defence management systems.

Commands, DNO and EOs support HS&EP by carrying out monitoring to identify areas for improvement, and investigating safety-related accidents, incidents and near misses in order to influence their own action plans.

Commands, DNO and EOs influence HS&EP by referring significant HS&EP risks from across Defence to the DSEC so that they can be made as low as reasonably practical (ALARP) and tolerable.

Commands, DNO and EOs check their performance relating to HS&EP by carrying out management checks and second-party assurance of their management systems' performance against the key HS&EP policy.
Role of Defence Safety Authority (DSA)

DSA lead HS&EP by providing independent third-party assurance of management systems across Defence, agreeing the five-year plan for third-party assurance, and maintaining a body of professionals to carry out HS&EP investigations, inspections and audits.

DSA support HS&EP by investigating the most serious HS&EP related accidents and incidents to identify the causes and identify ways to prevent them happening again, and by sharing their findings and any trends identified from inspections and audits.

DSA influence HS&EP by enforcing Defence’s HS&EP regulation where current regulation is not sufficient or where MOD has a HS&EP related Disapplication, Exemption or Derogation (DED) from legislation (that is, where Defence cannot meet standard legislation, due to the nature of its business or equipment, or where legislation doesn’t exist).

DSA check their performance relating to HS&EP by providing third-party assurance of the management systems in Defence, analysing HS&EP-related accidents and incidents, and producing an independent annual assurance report.
Governance

The HS&EP Director owns the HS&EP policy which the Commands, DNO and EOs are governed by.

The Defence Safety and Environmental Committee (DSEC), is the main forum responsible for HS&EP governance within Defence. The DSEC is chaired by the Permanent Secretary and is made up of senior leaders from all the Commands, DNO, EOs and a Non-Executive Director (NED). It is supported by the Director General DSA (as an independent advisor) and the HS&EP Director (as secretariat support).

The DSEC complements other formal governance structures and decision-making processes and forums such as the Defence Board and the Head Office ExCo. The DSEC is supported by a Steering Group, chaired by the HS&EP Director, and is empowered to progress the DSEC-approved work streams. The Steering Group is made up of representatives from the Commands, DNO, EOs and key HS&EP stakeholders.
HS&EP professionals

An important focus for the HS&EP function is to manage, develop and accelerate the capability and skills of our HS&EP professionals across Defence.

There are currently around 1,500 Defence personnel (military, civilian and contractors) who are in a HS&EP-related role, and many more who have HS&EP responsibilities. We want them all to be part of a qualified, accredited and competent HS&EP profession which can influence the whole organisation.

We want professionals who have the capability and skills to;

- develop and maintain healthy workplaces;
- ensure the safe delivery and use of equipment and infrastructure; and
- carry out defence activities safely.

HS&EP professionals should be qualified to national competency standards, making them confident and proud to identify themselves as members of the profession.

We want personnel in the HS&EP function to take satisfaction from the fact that people outside the profession routinely ask for their advice, enabling them to contribute to the continuous improvement of all aspects of HS&EP across Defence, other government departments, industry and the communities in which we operate.

We aim to achieve this by:

- defining a set of competency and qualification requirements for each HS&EP role;
- recruiting and developing people with the necessary HS&EP skills, experience, qualifications, competence and recognised professional accreditations;
- building diverse, high-performing, passionate and committed HS&EP teams across Defence; and
- developing career paths in HS&EP so people can build a rewarding, long-term career in the HS&EP function.
Implementing this strategy

The HS&EP Director will oversee the process of implementing this HS&EP functional strategy. We will use the four-stage ‘Plan-Do-Check-Act’ approach to implement it and to continually improve our performance relating to HS&EP.

The four stages of the approach are as follows.

- **Plan**: identify problems and opportunities
- **Do**: implement potential solutions
- **Check**: assess the results
- **Act**: implement improved solutions

**Plan**

This step involves identifying and understanding the problem or the opportunity, then defining ways forward.

We do this by doing the following.

1. Developing an HS&EP plan focussed on developing and maintaining an effective Defence Safety & Environmental Management System (SEMS). The HS&EP plan will be linked to the Defence Plan and wider organisational plans.
2. Discussing the HS&EP plan with stakeholders and gaining their input. One of the main ways we do this is by consulting the DSEC Steering Group.
3. Agreeing the HS&EP plan with the members of the DSEC and making sure that any extra resources we need are bid for as appropriate through ABC Planning Rounds by the relevant sponsor.

**Do**

This step involves implementing the potential solutions in the plan.

We do this by doing the following.

1. Using the HS&EP Team to deliver the HS&EP plan.
2. Working closely with leadership of the Commands, the Defence Nuclear Organisation (DNO), the Defence Safety Authority (DSA) and the Enabling Organisations (EOs) to help them deliver their aspects of the HS&EP plan.
3. Working closely with relevant Head Office colleagues on issues including planning, budgeting, performance management and risk management.
4. Managing relationships with relevant statutory bodies (including those in the devolved administrations) through formal agreements.
5. Working with other government departments, industry and the supply chain to maintain consistency and regularly share information.
Check

This step involves analysing and understanding information on HS&EP performance to assess how the HS&EP plan is working.

We will do this by doing the following.

1. Agreeing and maintaining a five-year plan for third-party assurance to assess the effectiveness of the Defence SEMS.

2. Co-ordinating and managing the delivery of the five-year plan for third-party assurance and assessing the results of the third-party assurance to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the Defence SEMS.

3. Working with others across Defence to collect and analyse management information (MI) on health, safety and environmental performance.

4. Identifying and analysing performance trends and insights and presenting these to stakeholders including senior leadership (through Exco and the DSEC), the Commands, DNO and EOs (through the DSEC Steering Group) and the workforce (all those employed by the MOD (military or civilian) or those supplying Defence or undertaking Defence activities on behalf of Defence.

Act

This step involves identifying opportunities to improve the HS&EP plan, that will feed into the next version of it.

We will do this by doing the following.

1. Regularly reviewing progress against the HS&EP plan with stakeholders including the DSEC Steering Group and the DSEC.

2. Using learning from assurance, audits and incident investigations to strengthen the HS&EP plan, the Defence SEMS and associated HS&EP policies.

3. Assessing HS&EP risks and the associated risk-management plans to identify changes in risk, or gaps in our understanding of risk, that may require changes to be made to the Defence SEMS and associated HS&EP policies.

4. Learning from other government departments, industry, the supply chain and international partners to identify best practice or learning opportunities that can help strengthen the Defence SEMS and associated HS&EP policies.

5. Reviewing and updating the Defence SEMS policy documents.