



Ministry
of Defence

Health Safety & Environmental Protection (HS&EP) Functional Strategy

October 2021



Contents

Introduction	3
Purpose of this strategy	4
Priorities	6
Roles and guiding principles	8
Governance	12
HS&EP professionals	13
Implementing this strategy	14

Note: Throughout this document, the term 'Defence' refers to the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

Note: Throughout this document, the term 'Defence organisations' refers to Military Commands, Top Level Budgets (TLBs), Defence Nuclear Organisation (DNO) and Enabling Organisations (EOs) collectively.

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.

The Director HS&EP is responsible for creating the HS&EP vision. The three priorities designed to deliver the HS&EP vision are set out on the following pages of this HS&EP Functional Strategy. The HS&EP vision is set out in figure 1 below.

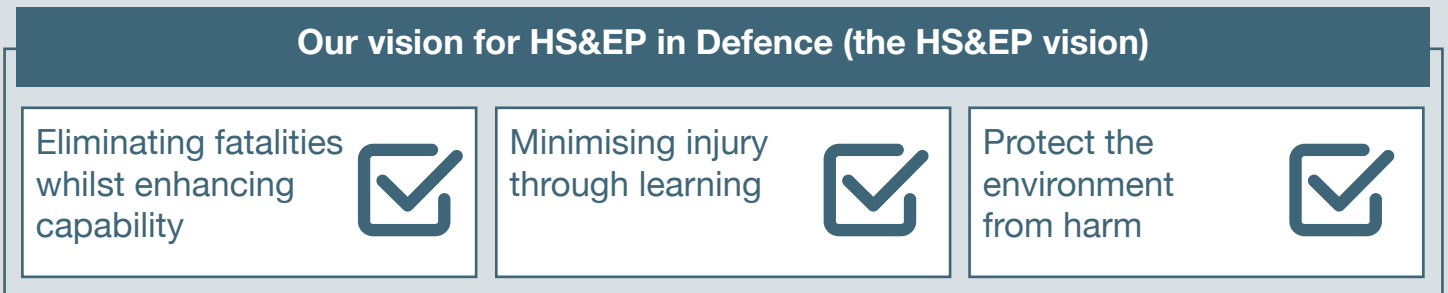


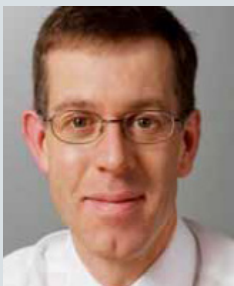
Figure 1 – Vision for HS&EP in Defence

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 Risk-Based Assurance 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

Purpose of this strategy

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 is the purpose of this functional strategy?

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 Defence organisations 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.



Functional Priorities

This strategy is built on three priorities designed to deliver the HS&EP vision.

Priority 1 – Safety Leadership

Function leaders need to lead in line with the following aims of the HS&EP vision.

- Eliminate fatalities while increasing capability
- Minimise injury through learning
- Protect 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 drive the behaviours necessary to achieve the aims of the HS&EP vision. They drive those behaviours by doing the following.

- Demonstrating that they will **not compromise on safety** for any other business objective.
- Believing that their actions are most effective when they **genuinely care about their people and each other**.
- Maintaining **open and honest reporting** and recognise and encourage behaviour which is consistent with this.
- **Holding to account** those who knowingly break the rules.
- Demonstrating 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:

- work with the Climate Change and Sustainability (CC&S) Team and the Infrastructure Team to develop and maintain the Defence environmental-protection policy;
- 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 Defence organisations 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 – occupational 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 and guiding principles

The roles, responsibilities and guiding principles for managing HS&EP in Defence are set out in more detail in the HS&EP Operating Model. Some of the key roles and guiding principles are shown in the table below and are covered in more detail on the following pages.

HS&EP Directorate

1. The Director HS&EP has responsibility for HS&EP Functional Leadership across Defence, on behalf of the Chief Operating Officer (COO).
2. The Director HS&EP owns the HS&EP Functional Strategy, the HS&EP Operating Model and the overarching Defence Safety and Environment Management System (SEMS).
3. The Director HS&EP will, on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, own the Risk-Based Assurance Plan covering all HS&EP assurance including compliance with (meeting the requirements of) statutory legislation, Defence policy, and Defence regulation.
4. The Director HS&EP will undertake the scrutiny of Strategy, Corporate Governance and Planning relating to HS&EP across Head Office and the Defence organisations.
5. The Director HS&EP leads the development framework for HS&EP professionals, including training needs, qualifications, career development and professional accreditation.

Defence organisations

1. Defence organisations lead on HS&EP through the responsibilities set out in their letters of delegation issued by the Permanent Secretary (or any equivalent delegated authority).
2. Defence organisations develop and maintain their own safety and environmental management system (SEMS) that is specific to their organisation.
3. Defence organisations make sure their Defence activities are delivered in line with the Defence SEMS and their own SEMS.
4. Defence organisations establish their own safety committees to provide governance across HS&EP issues within their area of responsibility.
5. Defence organisations are accountable for their own HS&EP performance.

DSA

1. The Director General DSA leads on and controls all 3rd Line of Defence (LoD) assurance of Defence activities.
2. The DSA will produce the Defence HS&EP Annual Assurance Report (AAR) covering all HS&EP assurance of Defence activity.
3. The DSA leads on Defence HS&EP regulation and provides independent assurance to the Secretary of State, through the Permanent Secretary.
4. The Director General DSA is responsible for developing and delivering their element of the Risk-Based Assurance Plan on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, thereby maintaining the independence of the DSA.
5. The DSA is the convening authority for Service Inquiries (SIs).

HS&EP Directorate

The HS&EP Director is the HS&EP Function leader and owns, on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, the Defence Safety and Environmental Management System (Defence SEMS), the Risk-Based Assurance Plan covering all HS&EP assurance. The HS&EP Director is responsible for developing and maintaining effective HS&EP policies and guidance.

We support HS&EP across Defence by developing and maintaining effective HS&EP policies and guidance on behalf of the Secretary of State for Defence. We also provide expertise and guidance to develop professional standards and the HS&EP functional competencies.

Lead

Support

Influence

Check

HS&EP
Directorate

We influence HS&EP across Defence by co-ordinating and driving forward the work of the Defence Safety and Environment Committee relating to HS&EP. We also influence HS&EP by engaging with internal and external stakeholders on Defence-wide strategic HS&EP issues.

We check Defence's performance relating to HS&EP by conducting scrutiny of Defence organisations' individual SEMS, to make sure they comply with (meet the requirements of) the Defence SEMS, and their Performance and Risk Reviews (P&RR) relating to HS&EP.

Defence organisations

Defence organisations lead on HS&EP through the responsibilities set out in their letters of delegation, and make sure their Defence activities are delivered in line with the Defence SEMS and their own SEMS.

Defence organisations support HS&EP by providing the Director HS&EP with resources and expertise for developing Defence HS&EP policy. Defence organisations also support HS&EP by developing their own SEMS that sets out how the Defence SEMS and underpinning policy and regulations will be delivered in a way specific to the Defence organisation.



Defence organisations influence HS&EP by acting as the Senior Duty Holder (SDH) if they consider that their organisation's Defence activities lead to a risk to life that requires enhanced safety management arrangements. Defence organisations also influence HS&EP by escalating risks to the Permanent Secretary and the Secretary of State, if appropriate, through the appointed Duty Holders.

Defence organisations check, and are accountable for, their own HS&EP performance. They are responsible for making sure that HS&EP aspects are included in their Performance and Risk Reviews (P&RRs). They are also responsible for identifying, assessing, managing and responding to their HS&EP risks.

Defence Safety Authority (DSA)

The DSA leads on Defence HS&EP regulation and provides independent assurance to the Secretary of State, through the Permanent Secretary. All 3rd Line of Defence (LoD) assurance of Defence activities will be conducted under the control and leadership of the Director General DSA. The DSA also leads on major accident investigations.

The DSA support HS&EP by developing and maintaining Defence HS&EP regulations on behalf of the Secretary of State, through the Permanent Secretary. The DSA also support HS&EP by developing and delivering their element of the Risk-Based Assurance Plan. And the DSA also support Defence organisations, if requested, to help them conduct non-statutory investigations.



The DSA influence HS&EP by enforcing Defence's HS&EP regulation. The DSA's regulators are authorised, through the DSA Charter, to enforce Defence regulations when necessary. The DSA's enforcement model is, where reasonable and possible, in line with statutory equivalents in order to produce similar outcomes.

The DSA check HS&EP issues and where a high-risk activity presents a risk to life, the DSA has the right to investigate the activity, on a 'dynamic risk basis', while the activity is underway. The DSA will produce the Defence HS&EP Annual Assurance Report (AAR) covering all HS&EP assurance of Defence activity.

Governance

The Defence Board is responsible for the top-level leadership and management of HS&EP in Defence. The Defence Board is supported by the Defence Safety and Environment Committee and sub-committees.

The Defence Safety and Environmental Committee (DSEC) is the principle forum responsible for HS&EP governance within Defence and acts as the Functional Accountability Body (FAB). The DSEC is chaired by the Permanent Secretary and is made up of senior leaders from all the Defence organisations 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 HS&EP Functional Steering Group (FSG) provides the Director HS&EP with advice and support on the strategic direction of the HS&EP Function. It is made up of a small group of senior leaders chaired by the HS&EP Director and acts as the Functional Oversight Group (FOG).

The Director HS&EP is also supported by the HS&EP Functional Delivery Group (FDG), which is the forum for discussions and consultation between the HS&EP Director, senior stakeholders and HS&EP professionals from across Defence organisations. The FDG also acts as the 'delivery body'.



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.

The Director HS&EP is the HS&EP Head of Profession, is appointed by a letter of delegation from the Chief of Defence People, and leads on development of the Defence-wide HS&EP Profession 'Offer'. The Offer has been designed for employees who are in HS&EP roles or aim to work in HS&EP roles. It explains the principles and processes that Defence use for career development. It also outlines how to identify, assess and develop skills that professionals need in order to have a rewarding HS&EP career.

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 through:

- professional leadership
- professional standards and competencies
- learning and development
- cultivating talent
- strategic workforce planning, and
- building partnerships.



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 effective HS&EP Operating Model, and developing and maintaining an effective Defence Safety & Environmental Management System (SEMS). The HS&EP Operating Model explains how the HS&EP Function contributes to Defence and interacts with other Defence organisations. It sets out the framework for making sure HS&EP is considered and appropriately applied across Defence, in line with the Defence Plan and the Defence SEMS. The HS&EP Operating Model also sets out how Defence organisations consider HS&EP when delivering the Defence tasks set out in the Defence Strategic Direction.

2. Discussing the HS&EP Operating Model with stakeholders and gaining their input. One of the main ways we do this is by consulting the HS&EP Functional Steering Group (FSG) and the HS&EP Functional Delivery Group (FDG)
3. Agreeing the HS&EP Operating Model with the members of the Defence Safety and Environmental Committee (DSEC) and making sure that any extra resources needed to deliver it are bid for as appropriate through ABC Planning Rounds by the relevant sponsor.



Do

This step involves implementing potential solutions to identified HS&EP problems and opportunities.

We do this by doing the following.

1. Using the HS&EP Team to deliver the elements of the HS&EP Operating Model that the Director HS&EP is responsible for.
2. Working closely with leadership of the Defence organisations and the Defence Safety Authority (DSA) to help them deliver their aspects of the HS&EP Operating Model.

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.
6. Developing and deploying, experienced, professionally qualified, confident and motivated HS&EP professionals across Defence.



Check

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

We will do this by doing the following.

1. Agreeing and maintaining a Risk-Based Assurance Plan. There will be one Risk-Based Assurance Plan, owned by the Director HS&EP on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, covering all HS&EP assurance including compliance with statutory legislation, Defence policy, and Defence regulation.
2. Co-ordinating and managing the delivery of the Risk-Based Assurance Plan and assessing the results to understand the outcomes.
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 Defence organisations (through the HS&EP Functional Steering Group) and the workforce (all those employed by Defence (military or civilian) or those supplying or undertaking activities on behalf of Defence).



Act

This step involves identifying opportunities to improve the HS&EP Operating Model, 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 Operating Model with stakeholders including the DSEC and the HS&EP Functional Steering Group.
2. Using learning from scrutiny, assurance, audits and incident investigations to strengthen the HS&EP Operating Model, 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 HS&EP Operating Model, 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 HS&EP Operating Model, the Defence SEMS and associated HS&EP policies.
5. Reviewing and updating the HS&EP Operating Model, the Defence SEMS and associated HS&EP policies.





Ministry
of Defence

Health Safety & Environmental Protection
(HS&EP) Functional Strategy

October 2021