



**POOSH Summit**  
**Friday 26 November 2010**  
**Chartered Institute of Environmental Health**  
**15 Hatfields**  
**London SE1 8DJ**

**Attendees:**

HSE	Mr Geoffrey Podger	Chief Executive
HSE	Mr Peter Brown	Head of Work Environment, Radiation & Gas Division
AOHNP	Ms Susanna Everton	London Regional Director
BOHS	Mr Roger Alesbury	Past President
BOHS	Mr Steve Perkins	Chief Executive
CIEH	Mr Andrew Griffiths	Chair, POOSH Summit
CIEH	Mr Graham Jukes	Chief Executive
CIEH	Mr Tim Everett	Executive Director, Professional Services
CIEH	Mr David Kidney	Head of Policy
IEHF	Mr Reg Sell	POOSH Representative
IEHF	Mr P Buckle	President Elect
FOM/SOM	Dr Peter Griffin	POOSH Representative
IRM	Mr Paul Hopkin	Director
IOSH	Mr Rob Strange	Chief Executive
IOSH	Mr John Holden	POOSH Representative (2011)
IIRSM	Mr Brian Nimmick	Chief Executive
RSPH	Dr Selwyn Hodge	Chair
RSPH	Mr Paul Madgwick	POOSH Representative
SARS	Mr Harry Hopkins	POOSH Representative
Secretariat	Mrs Anna McNeil	

## **1. Welcome and introductions**

Mr Andrew Griffiths welcomed everyone to the POOSH Summit and informed the group that the meeting had been arranged, and was due to be chaired, by Neil Budworth who unfortunately was unable to be present as he was overseas.

All those present introduced themselves and stated their role within their organisation. It was agreed that the minutes of the Summit would be cleared with Mr Podger before circulation.

**Action: Secretariat**

## **2. Presentation by Mr Geoffrey Podger, Chief Executive, Health & Safety Executive**

Mr Podger stated that the HSE was a catalyst to ensure that things are done and are not necessarily the organisation that actually delivers the services required. He added that even with the recent departure of Lord Young his report still remains government policy and will be implemented. The HSE have already been working to develop responses to the recommendations, in particular:

- Short risk assessment for low risk workplaces and
- New occupational safety consultants register

HSE will be holding a meeting on 21 December to discuss the scope of the review.

It was also reported that the Adventure Activities Board is being wound up.

It was noted that Lord Young held particular views on the insurance company sector and the role they played in the compensation culture; it was unsure how government would move this forward.

Mr Podger stated that he felt this was an ideal opportunity for the occupational health and safety community to decide how they wished to take the occupational safety consultants register forward – whether it would be on a voluntary membership basis, which he felt was probably the wise way. He felt that this part of the agenda had now been opened up.

### **Spending Review 2010**

It was stated that 2/3rds of the HSE budget came from the government and the other 1/3<sup>rd</sup> from other sources. Therefore a 35% reduction in government funding really equated to a 20-25% reduction in funding. HSE wanted to recover more costs for the done they do and felt that it was good to claim costs from companies where they were found to be at fault. However, the final budget figures were still pending.

### **HSE Projects**

HSE wanted to focus on how to carry out proactive work. It was felt to be better to work with industries, trades unions and industry professional bodies rather than just to target individual organisations. However sectors needed guidance on certain

topics and it was possible that more could be done by the professional bodies and industry organisation to produce expert guidance. Potentially this may be an area for POOSH to consider.

A White Paper on Co-Regulation is due in the spring of 2011 and it will consider the needs for visiting organisations based on an independent audit.

### **Big Society and Small Government**

It was noted that the local authority inspectors and regulators were unsure how many posts would be lost as a result of the spending review. These inspectors and regulators perform a valuable job and are a worthwhile resource; it would be good to try and safeguard their positions. SMEs in particular need this information and guidance, which is easily accessed from their local authorities.

### **3. Response from delegates**

Q. Will Lord Young be replaced?

A. No replacement is anticipated, however Lord Young still has a personal interest in this topic. It should be noted that in a recent debate in the House of Lords the response from the government was given by Lord Freud.

Q. Will there be one minister implementing the Lord Young Review?

A. No, it was unlikely there would be one minister with sole responsibility for the Lord Young Review.

Q. Regarding the scope of the Occupational Safety Consultants Register – where does safety end and health begin? Will there be a stronger focus on health and safety?

A. The meeting scheduled to take place on 21 December will discuss this point.

Q. What does ‘consolidate regulations into a single accessible format’ mean?

A. All the legal requirements remain the same but they are all in one place. It was noted that not many organisations actually need access to all HSE regulations, so HSE are looking at which regulations would be helpful if consolidated. If any organisation has ideas please let Mr Podger know.

**Action: All**

Q. The issue of technicians in the Lord Young review was raised (see page 31 of the review for the text). It was noted that certain professional bodies already had relevant qualifications in place.

A. The issue of technicians will be further investigated and it may be found not to be a high priority.

Q. The role of HSE and future guidance was raised.

A. HSE felt it was better for industry to own its own guidance.

Q. Cost recovery was discussed and concerns raised; for example safety cameras have been shown to raise safety standards but because there is also an associated income stream, the benefits and the good work become maligned and missed.

- A. HSE do not wish to recover costs purely because they know where costs can be recovered, ie. Easy targets.
- Q. Conflict between guidance and regulations was discussed. If the HSE were going to produce less guidance, will they promote the guidance produced by the organisations present at the Summit.
- A. HSE was unable to confirm that at the moment as the paper had not yet been officially signed.
- Q. How would HSE quantify 'low risk'.
- A. This would probably be almost impossible, so common sense must prevail.
- Q. If there are to be changes in the guidance will the HSE reviews its own guidance or do they plan to leave it to the professional bodies or industrial organisation to review the guidance.
- A. Industrial bodies and professional organisations should prepare guidance.
- Q. The role of the HSE in future research was discussed. How will the HSE be able to influence the research agenda to ensure that health and safety is still on the agenda.
- A. Research is a very important area and with prioritising it should be possible to ensure that good research is not penalised.
- Q. The advice and guidance offered to SME will diminish. The case of taxation benefits (large company supplies an on site gym for staff it is a tax benefit, if an SME offers gym membership it is deemed to be a benefit in kind and the staff are taxed accordingly). Do SMEs have a champion.
- A. Government wants to help SMEs through the Business Innovations and Skills Department.

Mr Geoffrey Podger had to leave the Summit to attend another meeting. Mr Peter Brown agreed to answer questions in his absence.

#### **4. Agreement on future action: Group discussion**

Group discussion structured against the 'How can you help' slide and Peter Brown from the HSE agreed to reply to questions from the group:

- Championing good practice
- Improved research
- Improved guidance
- Improved engagement with SMEs

Championing good practice:

- Q. Concern was expressed about the level of understanding on the HSE and Building Control Alliance as they were working together – why had this alliance been set up.
- A. This was seen as a way of reaching parts of the construction industry. This may be an area that POOSH may wish to issue a statement outlining the possible flaws with an lack of training.

Consideration should be given to whom the statement to be issued by this group should be directed to. It was added that the new government wanted to work with individual organisations and there was really no need for a 'big' statement.

It was agreed that all evidence produced by the various members of POOSH should be more accessible and shared within the group. This would be a good way of letting the SMEs have expert guidance.

It was suggested that the HSE website should have links to other groups for guidance.

Consideration should also be given to POOSH being a critical friend of the HSE. It would be POOSH's way to report what is being done by the group and to highlight what does and doesn't work.

The HSE may consider commissioning guidance from appropriate POOSH members. Co-badging of guidance with the HSE should also be considered.

It was noted that there was a shifting focus on the HSE's part and that the lack of funds may mean there might mean a gap in the guidance available.

It was recommended that POOSH could be a conduit between the HSE and professional bodies.

The group requested that HSE give more prominence to attending the POOSH meetings and Peter Brown agreed that if invited he would be happy to attend future POOSH meetings.

Consideration was also given to doing a mapping exercise to find out what guidance was currently available.

Two main questions were considered:

- a) to what extent is interface with government useful
- b) is this group to provide input to fill the guidance gaps

A possible meeting with SMEs was considered; that may be useful in finding a delivery route to SMEs.

## **5. Summing up**

It was agreed that the following points should be integrated into a POOSH Statement:

- a) POOSH wants to work with HSE as a critical friend and to be a touchstone on the HSE factors
- b) POOSH wishes to share information and be open about guidance and to allow others to have input if relevant
- c) POOSH would be happy to be a 'commissionee' of the HSE and to produce guidance which could be co-badged with the HSE
- d) POOSH would aim to be a conduit between HSE and the professional bodies

- e) POOSH would like to engage with SMEs and will ask the Federation of Small Businesses to provide a speaker for a future POOSH meeting to enable POOSH to address their needs
- f) POOSH will aim to map the guidance available and direct people to it
- g) POOSH should be revitalised; with a revitalised POOSH the level of representation on the group should be elevated. Members were asked to consider the level of their current representative and thus show commitment to POOSH
- h) Peter Brown confirmed he would be happy to attend future POOSH meetings as the HSE representative, or if appropriate he would nominate another colleague to attend if the topic was outside his area of expertise
- i) It was agreed that all member organisation could inform their membership that this Summit had taken place

Consideration was given to the possible attendance of a Minister. Peter Brown suggested that Chris Grayling may be willing to attend a POOSH meeting if the focus of that meeting was on the Big Society.

Lord Way may also be a possible invitee for a future meeting.

The meeting closed at 1300.

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