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**Your future lies through the windscreen.....
.....not the rear view mirror**

Tony Lewis, Principal Education Officer, CIEH

The future is bright for the profession. As opportunities in local government contract they are opening up in public health and wellbeing, being part of the in-house and third party audits with commercial concerns.

Dr Alan Page
Principal lecturer, Middlesex University

The profession faces challenges in its local government heartland. But the future is far from bleak for the EHP as more opportunities open up in the commercial and charity sector

Sterling Crew
Head of technology, Disney Consumer Products

The coming months and years will bring significant change. This is nothing new to environmental health colleagues but the pace of this change will be significant with much of it driven by the need to cut cost

Dr Jeremy Leach
Public health development manager,
Wealden DC



Freedom from routine inspection programmes should follow, although regulators would retain the ability to investigate workplace accidents and serious incidents, which could result in the loss of earned autonomy status. Surely this is what we mean by better regulation?

Jonathan Hayes
Head of risk management, Moto Hospitality

The role of local authorities as employers and trainers of EHPs will diminish as whichever government downgrades and combines the environmental health role into that of a single all-purpose regulatory officer. EHPs will increasingly be employed in the private sector because of their "can do" attitude to problem-solving and high education level and communication skill

Maurice Brennan
Head of environmental health, Birmingham University



EH through the rear view mirror

- Largely unchanged for decades
- Local government delivery dominates
- Politically influenced with strong 'local government' culture
- Focus on regulation or defending against regulation
- Fixated on five traditional sub-disciplines
- Resistance to assuming true 'profession' status
- Restrictive qualification process that cannot provide assurance of completion of the qualification for 2/3 of its students



EH through the rear view mirror

- Central governments dictates how we produce our EHPs but refuses to fund the process
- Absence of an evidence base means it is difficult to resist the target culture and the imposition [in local government] of 'dumbing-down' measures designed to ensure consistency of delivery and measurable outcomes
- High initial salaries [in local government] that flat-line quickly and are not commensurate with EH education processes and supervising bodies expectations of practitioners
- Lack of support for EH work by both central and local government (on average, only 1% of l.g. budget goes towards EH and no sponsoring central government department)
- Lack of career progression and professional development opportunities [in local government]

Time for these.....?



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But.....



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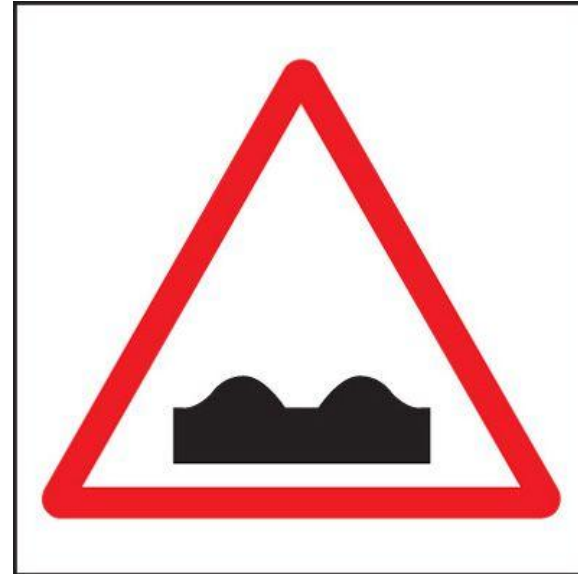


Rear view mirrors allow us see what we
have just passed

Signs.....



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telling us what's to come and giving us an opportunity to prepare or change our route

Signs.....



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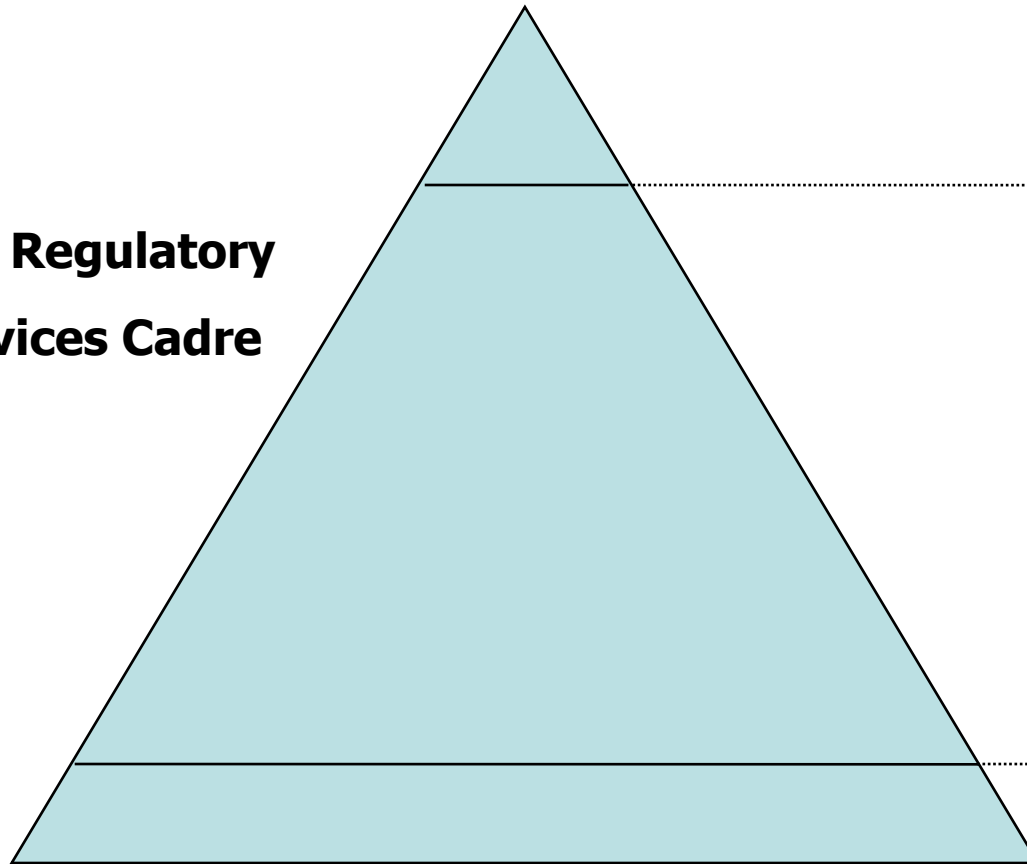
Finance

- Hole in public sector finances (£190bn borrowing per annum)
- Failure of government's to address the debt could mean a reduction in the country's credit rating by the international credit rating agencies - currently rated AAA
- Drop in rating will mean credit costs will rise and difficulty in refinancing sovereign debt
- Bankruptcy and the UK going 'cap in hand' (again!) to the IMF
- Huge change, driven by finance is inevitable



Political change - Labour's [LBRO's] vision

The Regulatory Services Cadre



High risk/profile work -
specialist practitioners

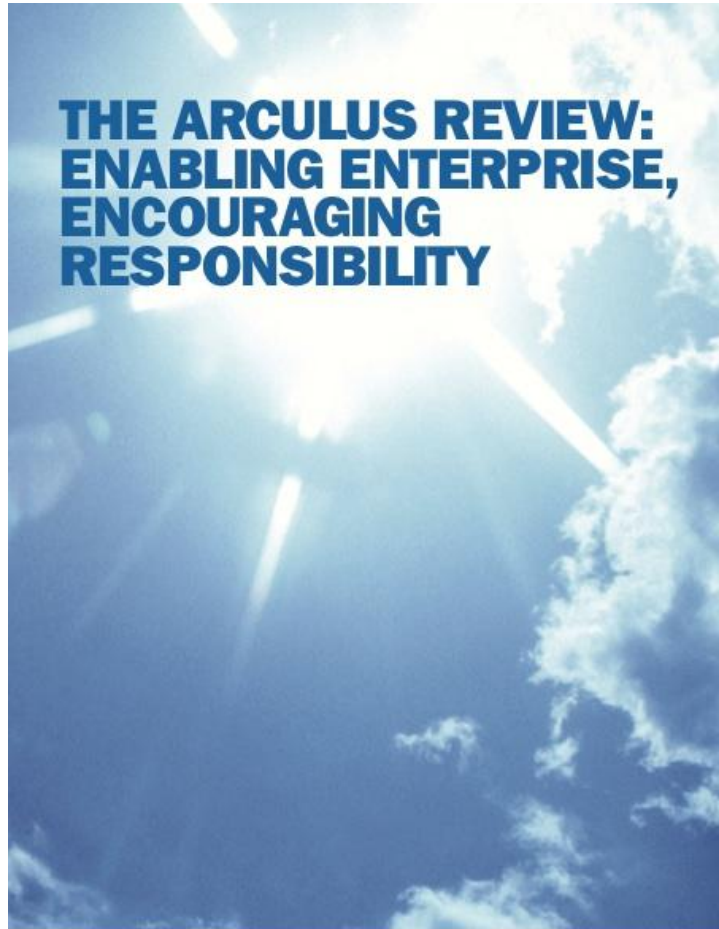
Low risk/profile - general
compliance work

Undertaken by general
practitioners (Regulatory
Services Officers)

First response/triage

Political change - Conservative Vision

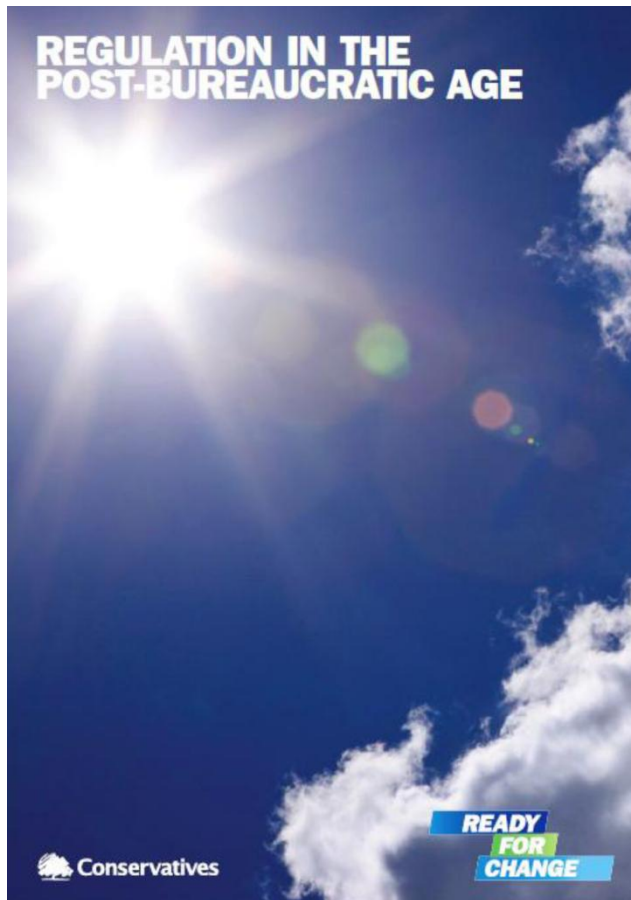
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A report for the Conservative Party

- Business focused
- EHPs are criticised within
- Regulators to be directly under the control of Parliament
- No new regulations without an equal number being deleted
- LBROs Better Regulation initiatives praised

Political change - Penrose report



- One in...one out
- Public to nominate most burdensome regulations – most problematic to be repealed or amended within 12 months
- Sunset clause on all regs
- Parliamentary accountability for all regulators
- Powers of all inspectors to be curbed
- Companies to arrange their own, privately audited inspections and to be allowed to refuse entry to all government inspectors (incl EHPs)
- Inspections to be MOT style only
- New food safety and health and safety professions



EH through the windscreen

- Change beyond recognition delivering opportunity
- Local government delivery will decline and the majority will operate outside of government
- Co-regulation and assumption of the right to refuse entry to Inspectors to become widespread within a framework of earned autonomy for medium and large organisations
- Focus on high risk/profile work for a smaller cadre of specialist professionals (possibly operating in the private sector but more likely as part of regional structure)
- Focus on culture change and professionalism within a defined framework for the high risk/profile group

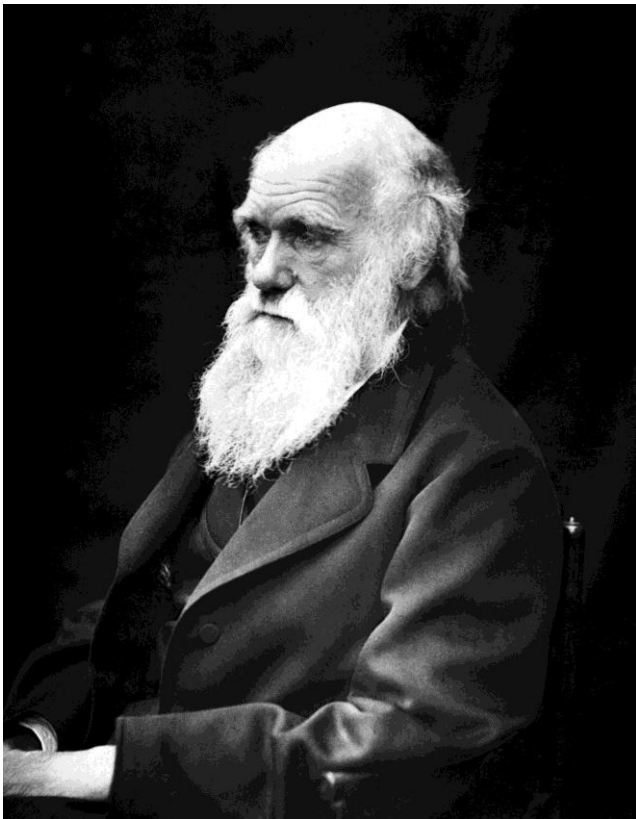


EH through the windscreen

- Low risk, basic compliance monitoring for the majority left in LA's
- Focus on competence (not qualifications) for the local government workforce
- Revalidation of practitioner registration on a regular basis based on competence
- Professionalisation for the new majority operating in the private sector and the high profile cadre in l.g. - research, publications, personal responsibility for competence and professional development
- Higher standards ??



Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882)



“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change.”

“In the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed”



Opinion

- The future is bright and full of opportunity;

BUT

- Environmental health will have to become adaptable, flexible, capable of collaboration and improvisation if it is to make the most of what is about to be presented

....and

- Be prepared to sacrifice 'tradition' but not our core values

“Tradition is an explanation for acting without thinking”

Grace McGarvie, American Political Scientist



Key question

- How might we morph the profession into an adaptable, responsive entity when it does not exhibit a single prevailing culture?

Culture

- The EH culture is really that of 300+ disparate local authorities plus a myriad of other employers
 - 'the way we do it around here'



So, we must be prepared to

- Take a pragmatic view on structures and delivery systems

BUT

- Offer no compromise on the core value of protecting public health



In practice, this means...

- Using our ability to:
 - Influence change via influencing those in authority
 - Be prepared to co-operate with others to make the new structures and systems work
 - Support each other in a time of change
 - Influence the thinking of the next generation of EHPs



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Influencing those in authority



Influencing

- All key agencies and discipline specific competencies
- LBRO on competence, leadership and 'world class regulation'
- BIS and Sarah Anderson
- The Conservative Party and John Penrose MP
- FSA and qualifications for food inspectors
- HSE and the (co-regulation pilot) the H&S consultants register



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Co-operate with others to make
the new structures work



Co-operating with.....

- LBRO
 - To develop its vision for World Class Regulation
 - Competence
 - Leadership
- Conservatives
 - Working with John Penrose to develop his vision for regulation
 - Andrew Lansley MP for public health
- LibDems
 - Trying to build contacts with John Thurso MP
- Trading Standards Institute and Institute of Licensing



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Supporting each other in a time of
change



The thorny question of placements

- The issue of the lack of placements cannot be allowed to continue
- Local government wants EHPs but is not prepared to provide placements
- Central government demands integrated training but is not prepared to fund it
- CIEH is now actively looking at alternatives to placements and hopes to have something in place by spring 2010
- **BUT to address the placement desert and take on board the direction of travel of LBRO and/or Conservative/LibDems means that EHP education will change beyond all recognition**
- **The practitioner of the near future and his/her practice will look nothing like the current picture**



In summary

- The future is bright and, perhaps for the first time in living memory, we have the opportunity to turn Environmental Health into a real profession
- We will only achieve this if we are prepared to embrace change and support one another
- Your future does lie through the windscreen but, remember, we ignore the signs in the rear view mirror at our peril

"Change is as inexorable as time, yet nothing meets with more resistance." Benjamin Disraeli



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Any final questions?