

“Regulatory Services’ officers of the future’ - IES research findings for LGA

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Background

Research commissioned by LGA to consider:

- Drivers for change and impact on service priorities and organisation
- Consequent trends in, & options for, workforce - work roles, skill mix
- Consequent future skills and training needs
- Will there be a generic 'regulatory services' officer of the future?

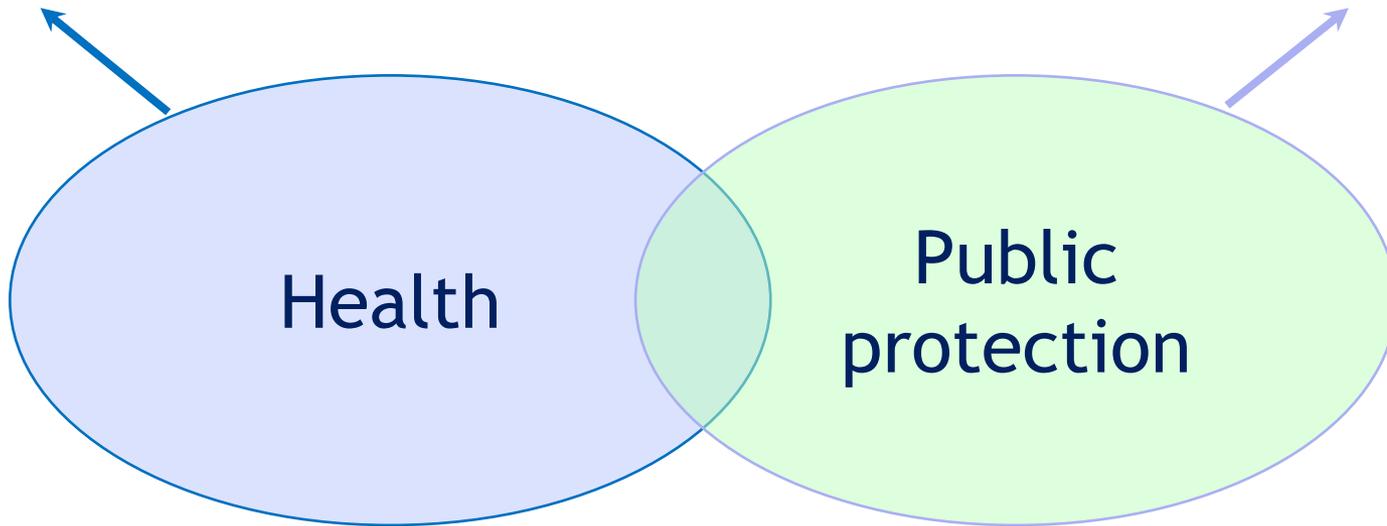
Structure of findings

- Drivers for change and directions of travel
- Organisational responses to financial pressures
- Teams and roles
- Skill needs
- Developing the next generation
- Choices and challenges
- Next steps

Drivers for change: fundamental purposes remain

Wider public health

Crime prevention



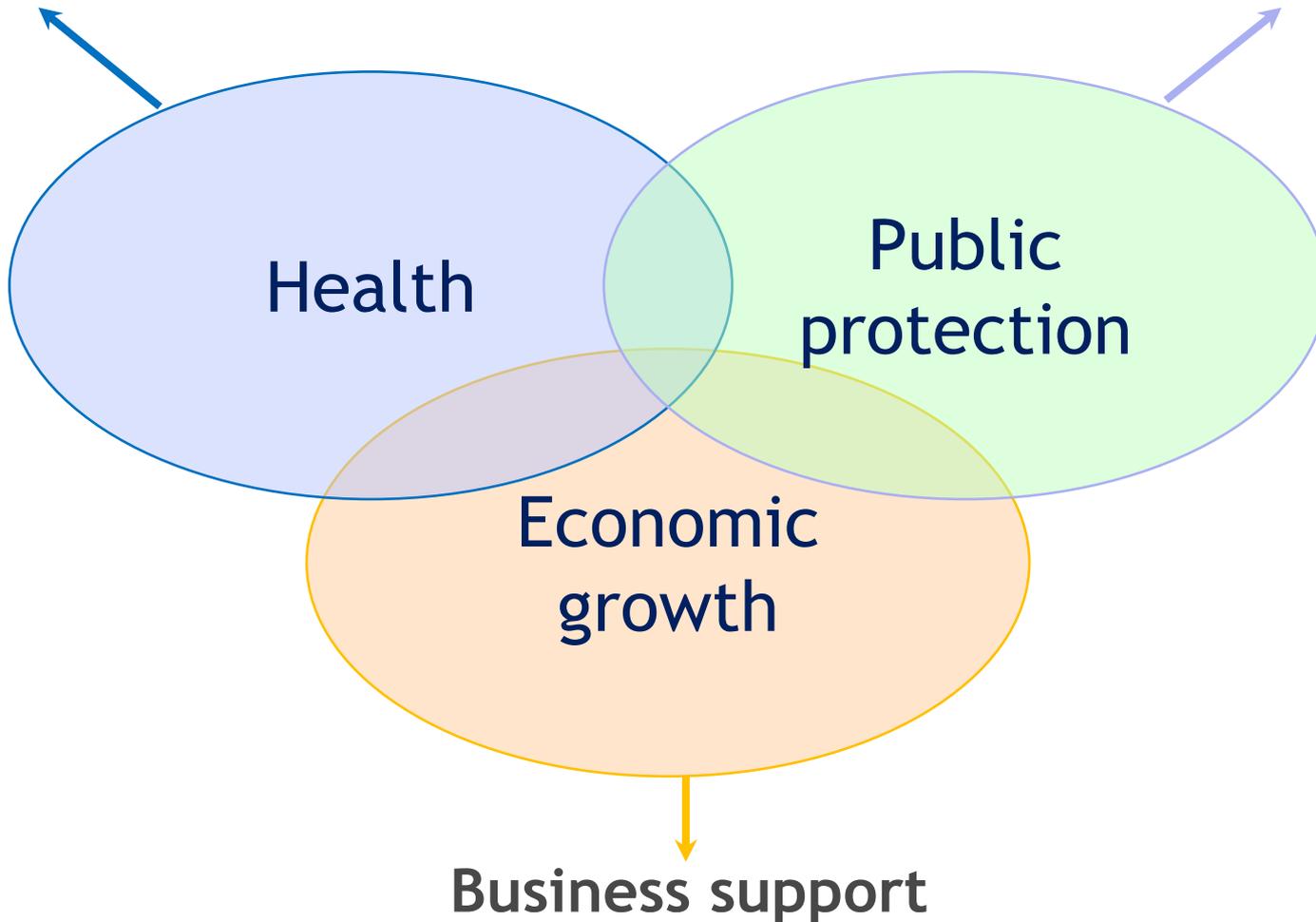
Health

Public protection

Drivers for change: economic and business agenda

Wider public health

Crime prevention



Health

Public protection

Economic growth

Business support

Drivers for change summary: high aspirations and wide agendas

- Affected by same changes as other services (eg, budget cuts, new models of delivery)
- But some drivers for change are specific to regulatory services eg better regulation agenda, public health transfer, major fraud
- High aspirations and wide agendas in recent years has brought them close to other bodies
- Is thinking of them as ‘regulatory services’ helpful?...
- ..but will reduced budgets narrow agendas again to focus on enforcement and regulation?

Some similarities & differences between EH, TS & licensing

Similarities	Differences
They all have an element of regulatory work with businesses eg a business start-up may have contact with all 3 services. However, other regulatory services (eg building control) are not included in this grouping	EH still has a greater component of routine inspections (although decreasing in some councils), L also high element of routine work. TS more 'intelligence-led'
All small services in LA terms	In two-tier authorities, EH and L sit at second tier (eg district) and TS at first tier (eg county), so not always co-located
All have discretion in the services they choose to offer and their balance between advice and enforcement	EH still predominantly premises or site based. Most elements of TS predominantly business (not premises) based, increasingly across wider geography
Some shared areas of concern eg EH/TS on food. Also shared skill sets around working with business and investigation/enforcement	Engage with different sources of risk, different aspects of legislation and significantly different knowledge bases - EH more strongly science-based (eg in food, land, pollution, noise), TS and L more strongly focused on crime
Increasing dialogue between the three occupations and some CPD offerings could be relevant to all 3 occupations	All three have very different education and training models, especially in initial training.

Responses to financial pressures

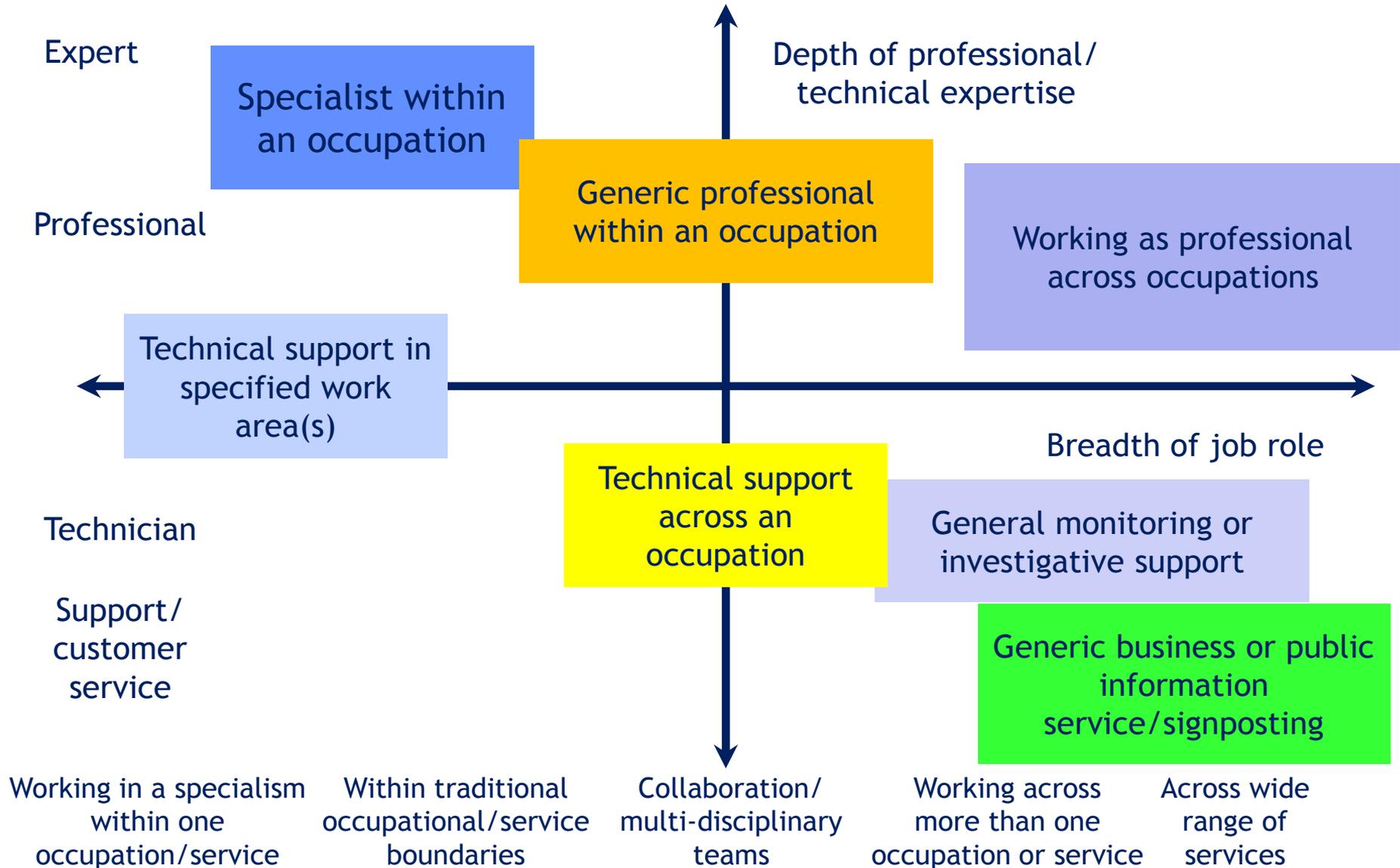
The 40% cut in local government funding has led to:

- Reduction of posts
- Loss of expertise; resilience reduced
- Putting small services into wider Directorates
- Some sharing across councils, especially informal sharing of professional staff/expertise
- Cutting low risk work and adopting 'intelligence-led' approaches
- No quick fix through outsourcing or charging

Teams

- Diverse ways of organising at team level
 - Business-facing versus neighbourhood/citizen-facing
 - Crime versus business advice/willing compliance
 - Diverse sets of expertise and team organisation still required even when two or more services under same Director
- The degree of organisational diversity - rational at local level - can hinder a clear narrative about nature and direction of services themselves

Job design: breadth & depth of roles



Key skill sets

Investigation & Enforcement

Generic competencies incl. analytical skills, communication, collaboration, evidence-based approach

Understanding, working with & advising business

Understanding & knowledge of relevant legislation

Technical & specialist skills, knowledge & experience

Key skill sets - current skills gaps

Investigation & Enforcement

Generic competencies incl. analytical skills, communication, collaboration, evidence-based approach

Understanding, working with & advising business

Understanding & knowledge of relevant legislation

Technical & specialist skills, knowledge & experience

Are we developing the next generation?

- Three active bodies and no shortage of wide range of training providers for those already working in these occupations.
- Training does not seem to map clearly onto skill progression across job roles, especially for entrants coming into technical support roles.
- Occupations have very different initial training models.
- First degree courses have been difficult to sustain and placements for EH hard to secure.
- Occupations operating at below replacement.
- Low career visibility, lack of compelling career narrative and shortage of support for trainees.

Choices and challenges: Services at a Crossroads

These services face some significant choices in their purposes and organisation:

- Wider pro-active purposes or narrower regulatory role, focused on high risks?
- Should business advice & enforcement be undertaken by same teams and individuals or separated?
- Moving closer to each other ('regulatory services') or closer to other partners, services and occupations?
- Might new services emerge or strengthen which may cut across some existing boundaries? eg food safety
- Geographical location: wider reach v local delivery

Choices and challenges: Workforce resourcing and development

- Retention of enough existing expertise for national resilience
- Stronger rationale for resourcing models:
 - Skill mix by level/grade
 - Role breadth versus depth of officers
 - Role design and career paths at technician & below
- Marketing these occupations to next generation: What's the narrative?
- Clearer work and training pathways for entrants at different levels & with varied qualifications

Choices and challenges

- All of these issues break down to three big questions councils and their partners need to address:
 - What are ‘regulatory services’ here to do and what should they focus on?
 - Where should they sit geographically and organisationally?
 - How do we ensure officers within services have the right skills and maintain national capacity?

Next steps

LGA follow up work will:

- 1) Focus on major strategic questions for services
- early 2015
- 2) Support professional bodies, BRDO, councils to address manager concern re skills gaps