

## Mapping the UK OHS 'system'

If we are to secure better coordination of all the assets in UK OH&S we need a better map of all the major UK OH&S players, showing their roles and how they interact.

This has never really been attempted.

What is needed is an equivalent of a Pieter Breughel type canvass (see below), showing all the different actors working away, playing different roles across the UK occupational landscape.



This has never really existed at a Governmental level. An attempt was made in a report (see pages 4 and 5 at <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100104183913/http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file52340.pdf>) of the Risk and Regulation Advisory Council, a Tony Blair inspired body set up to deal with concern about risk aversion and regulatory burdens etc. This put the archetypal SME at the centre of the system with others such as HSE, trade bodies, major clients, unions, insurers, H&S bodies like RoSPA, IOSH etc all clustered round about and interacting in various ways. (The cartoon in the report is quite crude. The real picture is a much more complex spider's web.)

The next nearest inventory perhaps was an HSE A –Z list of



organisations that provide health and safety information - but that list, which included links to individual websites, seems to have disappeared from the HSE website due to shortage of staff to keep it updated.

The organisation OSHWORLD, run by former HSE Head of Information, Sheila Pantry OBE, has a portal [www.oshworld.com](http://www.oshworld.com) with links to hundreds of validated and authoritative websites worldwide together with country and subject links and is constantly updated

How best might we go about re-creating a map of the UK 'H&S system'? Many in leading positions in OS&H use this term quite freely without necessarily understanding the diversity, complexity, role, reach and interaction of its various parts.

Does it need a big diagram, or an explanatory text or some other approach?

In Scotland there is map showing links between key players ( <http://www.hse.gov.uk/scotland/networks.pdf> .) This is interesting but it looks as if it is a map of institutional relationships, not a map of influences surrounding ordinary people in the world of work. Being very unkind – and notwithstanding their importance to good governance - one could say that it is a policy maker's/bureaucrat's view of social reality not one based on real world operational considerations.

There is a need perhaps to take time out with a flip chart and lots of coloured pens to create a map which puts the typical UK business at the centre and all the other players spaced round about it with links in turn between them.

The key questions include: who does what? how? when? with whom? with what result? Where are the strengths and weakness? Where are the overlaps? Where are the gaps and missed opportunities for synergy?

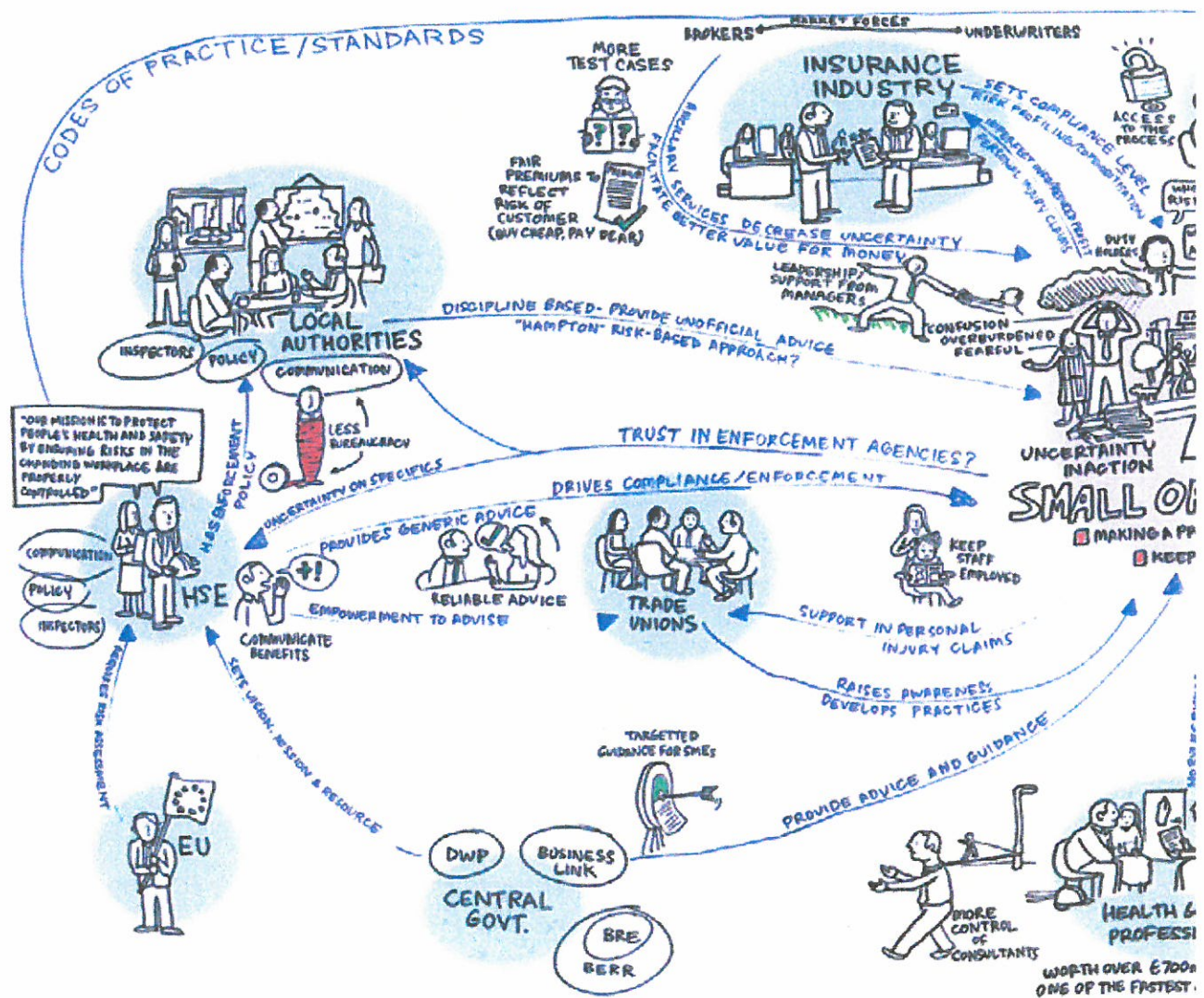
Perhaps we need an H&S equivalent of the Mappa Mundi (a cosmological portrayal of the known world in the 12 century that is housed in Hereford cathedral)! That map put Jerusalem at the centre of course and the whole diagram – a sort of medieval tube map - was overseen by the Messiah!



There can no doubt that we do indeed need a better exposition of all the bodies and forces that work together everyday to ensure that hazards are identified, risks are assessed and controls are in place to save lives, reduce injuries and safeguard health.

**Roger Bibbings**  
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This diagram is a risk landscape – a description of the various risk actors and their influences on small organisations' confidence in applying appropriate H&S practices. This risk landscape is a result of the discussion between the attendees at the workshop we held in October 2008. It is a summary of the attendees' views and other people may have different opinions on how it

should be drawn. The risk landscape shows how the balance between uncertainty about health and safety requirements on the one hand, and competence and confidence on the other, is affected by competing influences from many risk actors. Therefore, the most effective intervention will be one that considers all these influences together.

