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THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REGISTRATION OF GAS SAFETY COMPETENCE IN GREAT BRITAIN

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Abstract

Energy & Utility Skills

Energy & Utility Skills is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the Gas, Power, Water and Waste Management industries. Licensed by the Secretary of State, its remit extends across the whole of the UK to undertake a wide range of activities including employer engagement, research, development of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and skills project delivery.

Energy & Utility Skills, in collaboration with SummitSkills as the SSC for Building Services, will in future undertake the competence standard setting function for the new Gas Safe Register, under an agreement with Capita, the scheme operator. This activity aligns well with the regular processes already in place for the development of NOS and will ensure that all routes to registration are linked to the appropriate industry standard.

Background to the GB Arrangements

In the United Kingdom, the responsibility for ensuring that people undertaking work on gas burning appliances and equipment are competent and safe, lies jointly with the Health and Safety Executive, a Government Agency and Local Authorities, who are elected to oversee arrangements in their constituencies.

UK Gas health and safety law aims to ensure the safe installation, maintenance and use of gas in domestic and business premises.

HSE and local authorities have joint enforcement responsibilities under the The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to aim to prevent injury to consumers and the public from either carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning or fire and explosion.

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 requires that anyone intending to carry out work within scope of the Regulations, must be a “member of a class of persons” deemed competent in matters of gas safety.

Gas Safe Register

Since April 2009 the register, previously operated by CORGI, has been managed by **Gas Safe Register** and monitors the competency of businesses and their operatives to undertake gas work safely and to investigate complaints against registered engineers.

All individual gas engineers or gas installation businesses are required to be Gas Safe Registered. Anyone carrying out work on gas appliances or fittings as part of their business must be competent and a Gas Safe Registered engineer.

The competence requirements for registration on the Gas Safe Register will, in future be established independently from the Registrar, by the two licensed Sector Skills Councils, via

a process of industry and stakeholder consultation and subsequent specification development.

Routes to Registration

There are a number of existing routes to registration, for both new entrants to the industry and people wishing to extend their skills from other related trades, such as plumbing. The two most often used are (i) the National Vocational Qualification route, which includes all aspects of skills, knowledge and understanding needed by a competent engineer, and (ii) the Accredited Certification Scheme (ACS), which is limited to the assessment of matters of gas safety.

Registration, via either of these routes, has a five year expiry period, and gas safety competence must be re-assessed to achieve another five year registration, which may therefore be seen as a “Licence to Operate”

Effectiveness of the UK Arrangements

The mechanism operated in the UK is well established and has some clear identified benefits, which the presentation will outline. There are however, some inherent weaknesses with the current scheme, which future planned changes will seek to address.

A Pan European Approach?

Establishing frameworks that ensure gas engineer competence and consumer safety are delivered to consumers is a common challenge facing all EU countries. The fundamental skills, knowledge and understanding requirements for engineers installing and maintaining gas burning appliances and equipment are also common across the European Community, although some specific technical differences will occur from country to country.

Provided that agreement on the high level Occupational Standard can be made, and this seems achievable, then a mechanism that applied across the EU is perfectly possible.

Note:

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