

**for gas safety competence**

## **AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE TO RE-CERTIFICATION OF COMPETENCE..... HAVE YOUR VIEWS HEARD AND CONSIDERED**

All readers of Registered Gas Engineer are invited to comment on the proposal to introduce an alternative route to re-certification of competence, and to participate in the finalising of the operational requirements of Companies and Awarding Bodies participating in an alternative scheme to ACS.

### **What options do we have now?**

It is a requirement that all Gas Safe registered gas engineers are re-assessed on their professed competencies (with respect to gas safety) at a maximum of 5 yearly intervals. The ACS system contains competence assessments for all mainstream work and for many aspects of more specialised work. Some elements of more specialised work are covered by ACoP but the only existing route to demonstrate continued competence for mainstream work is ACS.

### **What alternative is being proposed?**

This is not a proposal to replace ACS, but rather introduce an alternative whereby a Company that fulfils strict conditions can undertake continuous training and assessment of its employees. This would be with a view to confirming their competence to its Awarding Body, at the same 5 yearly intervals as for ACS. The Scheme is provisionally titled 'Nationally Accredited Group Certification Scheme for Gas Fitting Operatives' (GCS). Similar Competence Management Schemes (CMS) already operate successfully in other industries.

The objectivity and impartiality of GCS is designed to give confidence that any individual awarded a certificate through the Scheme is competent to carry out gas work safely in the area of certificated competence.

At present, GCS is intended only for competencies already certificated. So, a company employing an engineer who possesses, say, CCN1 and CKR1, may put that employee through GCS for re-assessment of the criteria for those categories. If the same employee was required to add, say, HTR1, GCS could not be used as this would be an initial assessment, not re-assessment, and ACS would continue to be the appropriate route.

### **Who would use the GCS route?**

No party would be disqualified from applying to be certificated to adopt GCS. However, as can be seen from the Consultation Document (see below), there are strict and testing conditions that apply in terms of such as a recognised, certificated Quality System; designated and suitably qualified personnel; training and assessment facilities; etc. It is anticipated that the majority of smaller companies would not choose to use GCS rather than ACS. As intimated by the term 'Group' in the Scheme title, GCS is not suitable for individuals. So, it is anticipated that the majority of organisations that would be interested in GCS would be companies that would realise added value in adapting their current assets and operational procedures to fulfil the conditions of certification of their 'product' to the GCS certification requirements.

### **What are the draft GCS Operational Procedures?**

There is currently a set of Operational Procedures for ACS (with a set of Guidance Notes to aid compliance) applied to Certification Bodies and Assessment Centres. The draft GCS Operational Procedures are written in a similar style, but clearly there are numerous significant differences in how the two Schemes would run, notably in the requirements placed upon Awarding Bodies and Employers.

**Who should comment?**

In short, anyone who has an interest and a view. Whether you are an employee, an employer, a sole trader, a trade association, a learned body, a Government department (central or local), a contractor, a Regulator, or a customer, your views will be welcomed and considered by the Strategic Management Board for Gas Safety Competence, and its Committees.

**How should comments be made?**

The draft PDF Consultation document is available at [www.euskills.co.uk/gas/consultations/](http://www.euskills.co.uk/gas/consultations/) from where it can be downloaded. Also at the same address is a WORD Comment Form which can be downloaded and returned completed via email or it can be printed and posted. All contact details are provided on the Form. Comments not submitted on the form are liable to be rejected, so please use the Form.

The deadline for Comments is Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May.