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# Gas Safety Competence in the UK

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## Legislation and Enforcement

- The Health & Safety Executive and Local Authorities have joint enforcement responsibilities
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 aims 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 place responsibilities on a wide range of people, particularly:



## Identified Groups

- Landlords
  - must arrange maintenance for all pipework, appliances and flues, which they own and have provided for their tenants use.
  - Landlords must also arrange for an annual gas safety check to be carried out every 12 months, and
  - must keep a record of the safety check for 2 years and issue a copy to each existing tenant within 28 days of the check being completed and issue a copy to any new tenants before they move in.



## Identified Groups

- Consumers
  - HSE strongly advises that **all** gas consumers should have their gas appliances serviced regularly for safety by a Gas Safe Registered engineer
- Gas Installation Businesses and Engineers
  - Must be a “Member of a class of persons” deemed competent in matters of Gas Safety
- The Gas Safe Register
  - Facilitates this membership



## Gas Safe Register

- Scope is restricted to Gas Safety only
- Anyone undertaking work on gas burning equipment and appliances within the scope of the Regulations must be Registered
- Registration provides a “Licence to Operate” that must be renewed on a five yearly basis
- Registration is based on the assessment of competence in matters of gas safety
- There are a number of “Routes to Registration”



## Routes to Registration

- Full qualification as a Gas Installation and/or Maintenance Engineer
  - Typically used for new entrants to the industry eg. Apprenticeships
  - Programme of learning including workplace experience and theory input leading to assessment of competence
  - Assessments based on UK framework of National Occupational Standards and Vocational Qualifications



## Routes to Registration

- The (S)NVQ qualifications include all aspects of gas safety, but also cover additional elements such as design and quality etc. – **these are not required for Registration purposes**
- This type of qualification facilitates initial five year Registration but has no expiry date. Once the five year period ends, a further assessment of gas safety competence must be undertaken
- The most common mechanism used to achieve this is via the Accredited Certification Scheme (ACS)



## Accredited Certification Scheme

- Limited to matters of gas safety
- Operates across the UK under the ISO17024 standard, accredited by the UK Accreditation Service (UKAS)
- Seven Certification Bodies offer assessments across a wide range of modules including LPG and specialist activities
- ACS has eligibility criteria designed to only allow previously assessed competent people to undertake assessments



## How Effective is the UK model?

- Strengths
  - Backed by Legislation and Enforcement
  - Comprehensive Register
  - Facilitates increased Consumer Awareness
  - Uses common competency standards
- Weaknesses
  - Registration does not guarantee quality
  - No compulsion for appliance maintenance (other than for Landlords)
  - Registration limited to safety issues only



## Is a pan European approach possible?

- Yes, if.....
  - An generic competence standard could be established, based on core aspects such as gas properties, ventilation, removal of products of combustion, testing etc.
  - The mechanisms adopted to assess people against that competence standard operate to a common accord
  - There is a genuine commitment to achieve a truly value adding solution



## More Information

- Energy and Utility Skills is the Sector Skills Council that covers the UK Gas industry
  - Website [www.euskills.co.uk](http://www.euskills.co.uk)
- Gas Safe Register operate the Register, on behalf of the HSE, in Great Britain and the Isle of Man
  - Website [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)
- Much more information may be found on these sites; many thanks for listening.