

Health and Safety Executive Board		HSE/10/73	
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Gas Safe Register – Review of first year of operation

Purpose of the paper

1. The Gas Safe Register, the statutory registration scheme for gas engineers which replaced CORGI Gas Registration, was established following the HSE review of domestic gas safety in 2006. The scheme, operated by Capita Gas Registration and Ancillary Services (CGRAS) and covered by a Service Concession Agreement between CGRAS and HSE, completed its first year of operation on 31 March 2010. This paper updates the Board on the operation of the scheme in a number of areas including its performance against the agreed set of KPIs.

Background

2. CGRAS launched the Gas Safe Register on 1 April 2009 with the transfer of over 55,000 gas engineering businesses, and has succeeded in increasing this to over 63,000 registrations to date. During the first year of operation Gas Safe Register undertook a significant campaign to raise consumer awareness of gas safety risks and carbon monoxide dangers, including national TV advertising, coverage on a wide variety of consumer programmes (BBC Watchdog, Rogue Traders, Fake Britain, and This Morning) and national and regional press and radio. They have also developed novel initiatives to raise consumer awareness including a series of events in shopping centres across Great Britain to provide face to face information and advice.
3. Feedback received from engineers and stakeholders has been supportive of the changes in operation and the shift in focus from a Register that serves the industry to one which is primarily concerned with consumer safety. Additional information and engagement from Gas Safe Register also appears to have been well received by consumers.
4. CGRAS have been willing to work proactively outside the terms of the Agreement to support improvements in gas safety and deliver wider Government priorities. An example of this is their work with the Energy Saving Trust (EST), where Gas Safe Register have offered to support EST by picking up the audit and fraud checking requirements for the boiler scrappage scheme alongside their normal inspection processes. This joint working will save Government money by avoiding the need to pay for the audit to be carried out separately and will add value to the EST visits by providing consumers with a safety check of their new installation.

5. The performance of the statutory registration scheme is measured through a set of Key Performance Indicators. HSE and CGRAS agreed the KPIs as part of the Service Concession Agreement (SCA) negotiations, along with the financial and contractual implications for any under or over achievement of them.
6. The results of the KPIs for the first year of operation are now available and included in Annex 1. Whilst the results show that the KPIs were met or exceeded for consumer and stakeholder satisfaction, the targets for consumer awareness of gas safety risks, brand recognition and engineer satisfaction were not achieved. The results represent an underachievement and therefore attract a financial penalty. Within the terms of the Agreement CGRAS is obliged, under the direction of HSE, to invest the financial penalty into improving gas safety.
7. The Board may wish to note that under the terms of the Agreement CGRAS was required to review current investigation and enforcement activities undertaken by all parties involved in the enforcement of gas safety legislation. CGRAS has now completed that review and the initial findings are with HSE for consideration. These highlight the positive potential for more effective joint working between HSE and the Gas Safe Register on investigation and enforcement, whilst also raising issues outside of the regulatory process relating to consumers and the judicial process. We will return to the Board with fuller information on the conclusions and recommendations of this review in December to seek Board agreement on any proposed action.

Argument

8. Taking into account the issues outlined in paragraphs 2 to 4 and the overall balance of the KPIs, we would conclude that the new scheme has made a very good start although there is still room for some improvements. The HSE and CGRAS Joint Management Board has agreed that it would be sensible and beneficial to review the current set of KPIs in order to reflect both experience of the first year's operation and the changes in priorities inevitable as the scheme matures. The Board will be given an update on these discussions at its December meeting.

Action

9. The Board is invited to note the contents of this paper.

Paper clearance

10. This paper was discussed by the SMT on 1 September 2010.

Annex 1

Gas Safe Register – KPI results 2009/10

The results for the five KPIs that were measurable in Year 1 (2009/2010) are;

	Consumer awareness of gas safety risks	Brand Recognition	Consumer satisfaction	Engineer satisfaction	Stakeholder Relationship
	KPI 1	KPI 2	KPI 3	KPI 4	KPI 5
Baseline	79%	N/A	N/A	75%	45%
Year 1 Target	83%	40%	75%	78%	54%
Year 1 Result	81%	33%	75%	74%	75%
Variance	-2%	-7%	0%	-4%	+21%

These results attract a small financial penalty.

It is worth noting that a second in-year survey of KPI 2 demonstrated a far more positive outcome.