Appendix 3: Competence Review workshop – Maintaining competence (December 2012)

Consideration raised (7.9.3)
The current 5 year re-assessment time period. Although the majority of respondents are not unhappy with the current scheme, there were requests for flexibility and or for different options. Some called for annual reassessments for those wishing to be assessed each year. For those who felt that formal re-assessment were too frequent, suggestions such as every 7-10 years and other no formal assessments were needed as with other professions (electricians, mechanics, surgeons, architects etc.).

Recommendation (1)
The recommendation is that the re-assessment time is kept to 5 years. The period is well tested and understood. Recommend that CPD is encouraged on an ongoing basis during the 5 year period.

Suggest a practical method of implementation
Improve communication over availability of CPD events

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
Low

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
All those in the industry to promote it. EU Skills to develop a CPD strategy with industry.

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
Short to medium term

Consideration raised (7.9.3)
Frequent comments were made that re-assessments should concentrate on gas safety changes introduced since the previous assessment undertaken by the candidate and/or those changes made annually (since the previous assessment). Comments also confirmed that core GSIUR 1998 Regulation 26(9) competencies must always be reassessed.

Recommendation (2)
ACS reassessment currently concentrates on changes to normative standards, working practices new technology and the retention of essential safety knowledge & procedures and ensuring that essential gas safety matters including 26(9) requirements can still be demonstrated by operatives, little or no change is required to be made to reassessment criteria.

Suggest a practical method of implementation
No change.

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
None

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
No further action

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
Not applicable**.**

Consideration raised (7.9.3)
There could be a greater correlation between the amounts of gas work in any given area that an engineer carries out and the frequency with which they are reassessed on that competence. This may lead to an increase or a decrease of frequency of assessment either in an individual element or in overall gas competence. This may require the development of a refreshed overall 'risk model' for the monitoring and maintaining of competence.

Recommendation (3)
Probably more of a group competency scheme. No change to the current scheme.

Suggest a practical method of implementation
No action.

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
None

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
None

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
None

Consideration raised (7.9.3)
Validated industry courses that were developed to include measurable practical and/or knowledge and understanding gas safety elements should be added and included into a 'risk model'.

Recommendation (4)
Does not fit in ACS as it does not necessarily demonstrate competence. It could be part of the CPD strategy. A group competency scheme could address this.

Suggest a practical method of implementation
None

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
None

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
None

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
None

Consideration raised (7.9.3)
Industry commented that consideration should be given to different learning styles.

Recommendation (5)
There should be flexibility within the scheme to allow different learning styles which it currently does.

Suggest a practical method of implementation
Acceptable use of IT in assessment need to be reviewed e.g. lap tops etc

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
None

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
None

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
None

Consideration raised (7.9.3)
There is concern that industry is losing competent operatives who cannot adapt to a 'going back to school approach' in classroom style situations.

Recommendation (6)
Centres already have a flexible approach to this

Suggest a practical method of implementation
None.

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
None

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.

None

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
None

Consideration raised (7.9.3)
Greater emphasis on practical assessment compared to theoretical questions/tests.

Recommendation (7)
50% of initial assessment is practical 75-80% is practical on the re-assessment

Suggest a practical method of implementation
No change

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
None

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
None

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
None

Consideration raised (7.9.3)
Internal quality control systems accredited to a recognised standard (e.g. ISO 9000 or any other recognised standard) should be added and included.

Recommendation (8)
The processes are already in place with the Certification Bodies and are linked to the centres for assessment but not training.

Suggest a practical method of implementation
None

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
None

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
None

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
None

Consideration raised (7.9.4)
More flexibility around the frequency of undertaking re-assessments, either upwards or downwards.

Recommendation (9)
Enough scope for flexibility exists in the current 5 year cycle – but not every provider can offer it. Investigate possibility of introducing a little and often option to undergo training/assessment over a 5 year period.

Suggest a practical method of implementation
Introduce a "little and often" option for a first time registrant. Options open to other registrants – not mandatory.

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
Low

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.

EUS – CBs - Training/Assessment providers – Industry - GSR

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)

Short term once concept developed

Consideration raised (7.9.4)

A changed balance; with increased practical focus and less theoretical input.

Recommendation (10)

Reduce theoretical – increase practical methods of assessment.

Introduce more practical methods of assessing knowledge – e.g. meter pressure absorption could be answered by asking questions on the practical outcome such as if the pressure was?? What would you do?

Re-assessment should be available for all units (RS) e.g. CMA1 CESP are cores without re-assessment.

Suggest a practical method of implementation

Allow for development time and SSF/CBs/ACs to prepare.

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)

Low/Neutral

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.

SSF/CBs/ACs

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)

Short once concept developed

Consideration raised (7.9.4)

An increased emphasis on recent changes in matters of gas safety; therefore checking that the individual has kept themselves up to date with recent industry changes.

Recommendation (11)

Change the training/assessment balance in favour of an increased emphasis on recent changes in matters of gas safety – by developing a regulated/GSR recognised training/assessment approach.

Suggest a practical method of implementation
Consultation – Traffic Light System Implement via GCS

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
Low

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
SSF – CBs – T/ACs – GSR - Industry

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
Medium

Consideration raised (7.9.4)
Re-assessments to automatically be as comprehensive and in-depth as the initial assessment – use risk assessment of key gas safety checks (i.e. GSIUR Regulation 26[9] tests) to determine the need for less or more tests/checks to demonstrate competence.

Recommendation (12)
See recommendation 11.

Suggest a practical method of implementation

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)

Consideration raised (7.9.4)
There was discussion about how to create a correlation between the frequency of reassessment on a particular category or appliance and the volume of work undertaken by an engineer

Recommendation (13)
Not a practical proposition to implement and open to miss-use.

Suggest a practical method of implementation

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)

Consideration raised (7.9.4)
There were also discussion around dropping reassessment, if the individual can produce clear evidence of measurable gas safety assessments on the range of activities undertaken, e.g. alternative in-house GCSs.

Recommendation (14)
See recommendation 11 Consider GCS

Suggest a practical method of implementation

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)

Consideration raised (7.9.4)
There were discussions around those' qualified for many years' or 'approaching retirement and removing the requirement to undertake re-assessment

Recommendation (15)
Investigate possibility of introducing a little and often option to undergo training/assessment over a 5 year period. This may allow someone to time their retirement more effectively.

Suggest a practical method of implementation
Allow EUS, GSR and the CB's to consider an approach for shorter re-assessments to be done on an annual basis, would need the JPA to be completed before it could be implemented

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
High to implement, medium to maintain

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
HSE, GSR and EUS

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
Long term

Consideration raised (7.9.5)
Develop a format for individual gas safety competency record to demonstrate maintenance of an individual's on-going gas safety competence.

Recommendation (16)
This consideration is not an option for sole traders as it would prove extremely difficult to implement and manage. But, it could be an option as part of the Group Scheme as larger companies will have the infrastructure to manage this type of approach. However, Gas Safety competence records should still be encouraged in the industry as this would reduce the amount of training an individual would require prior to assessment.

Suggest a practical method of implementation
Companies who participate in the group scheme would implement the activities as part of their procedures.

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
This will dependent on the size of the company's infrastructure and ability to adapt their procedures to the requirements of the group scheme.

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
EU Skills as custodians of the Group scheme and the businesses who take part in the scheme

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
Short term, as the Group scheme is about to be launched.

Consideration raised (7.9.5)
Recognition of any registration inspection processes that have been completed where the business/engineer has been monitored against current standards including RIDDOR adherence, GIUSP adherence, but also any other inspection related history such as on-site complaint investigations.

Recommendation (17)
Recognition is there, at the moment as part of the five year cycle, as a consequence it may stipulate that an engineer visits the centre within a five year cycle but will not extend the period of five years. Therefore we recommend that the inspection regime would need to be increased to accommodate a more flexible approach for re-assessment. However, to use on-site inspections in order to manage the content of the reassessment, the number of inspection would need to be increased and a work management database would need to be introduced.

Suggest a practical method of implementation
Not sure how feasible this is, to increase the number of on-site assessments by Gas Safe Register.

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
High, due to the employment of more inspectors and a supporting admin functions i.e. improved database.

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
Gas Safe Register

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
Long term, business models would need to be changed.

Consideration raised (7.9.5)
Extend re-assessment periods for individuals who have a proven track record of maintaining their competence and have clear records of no justified complaint history regarding unsafe gas work (e.g. consumer complaints, inspections, RIDDOR F2508G[2] etc.).

Recommendation (18)
Introduce criteria to manage a variable reassessment regime, this may extend or reduce the period for reassessment.

Suggest a practical method of implementation
Increase the inspection regime and improve the gas safety competence data and improve access to that data.

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
High, more inspectors and improved management systems

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
Gas Safe Register

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
Long term

Consideration raised (7.9.5)
Include recorded evidence of businesses' internal supervision/quality control procedures that relate specifically to gas safety.

Recommendation (19)
Join a Group Certification Scheme

Suggest a practical method of implementation
Group Certification Scheme

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
Variable, depending on the size and resources available to implement such a scheme

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
EU Skills

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
Short

Consideration raised (7.9.5)
Include validated and approved appliance industry courses that contain gas safety information with a form of recorded assessment for the individual.

Recommendation (20)
Not suitable for independent, impartial assessment

Suggest a practical method of implementation
N/A

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
N/A

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
N/A

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
N/A

Consideration raised (7.9.5)
Develop industry guidance (simplified/practical guidance) for safe gas work to cover all three sectors, Domestic, Commercial and LPG. Engineers feel that this should be produced in a printable/hard copy version for all to use on site.

Recommendation (21)
Industry guidance is already available through Corgi/Viper/CSkills etc. However, access to information could be improved through easier access to Manufactures Instructions. This information would need to include detailed information for all aspects of gas work.

Suggest a practical method of implementation
This would require manufacturers to provide electronic copies of manufacturer's instructions in one central hub.

Estimate likely cost to industry (low, medium, and high)
Medium, as information already exists, but improvement to content would be required.

Agree responsibility e.g. EUS, CB's, Industry etc.
Gas Safe Register

Classify implementation period (short term, medium term, long term)
Medium term