

**Water Regulations Advisory Committee  
Plumbing Working Group  
24<sup>th</sup> June 2002  
Room 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Ashdown House**

Those present

**Members**

Geoff Marsh (Chair)	Terry Stephenson	John Roy
Linda Dulieu	John Swaffield	

**Observers and Co-opts**

Margaret Lovett	Head of Quality Schemes, DTI
Steve Tuckwell	Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS)
Mike Johnson	ODPM/Building Regulations Division
Ian Drummond	ODPM/Building Regulations Division
Tony Pillai	ODPM/Building Regulations Division

**Secretariat**

Peter Jiggins	Nicola Clarke	Grant Gahagan
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Apologies

Bernard Bateman (WRAC member)  
Rob Mynard (Secretariat)  
Patrick Bonnett (Department for Education and Skills)

**Item 2 – Setting the Scene**

1. Members were reminded that the Plumbing Working Group (PWG) had been established to take forward Recommendation 4 (Approved Contractors) of WRAC's enforcement report and to jointly take forward Recommendation 9 (Role of WRAS) with the Enforcement Working Group. It was explained that the purpose of the meeting was to establish the approach and set the agenda for the PWG with a view to reaching a common purpose in preparation for the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July to discuss Approved Contractor schemes. There was a discussion about the current status of schemes and the commonality of the entrance requirements. A draft paper was circulated to members, summarising the 8 schemes as they stood at present. This would be tabled at the meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> July.

**Item 3 - Training Requirements of the Plumbing Industry**

2. The members noted that a new Sector Skills Council may include the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations as part of the NVQ in Plumbing. There followed a brief discussion about additional training requirements for the industry and with this in mind, it was agreed that a representative from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (Patrick Bonnett) would be invited to attend future meetings of the PWG.

**Item 4 – Establishing common minimum entrance requirements for Approved Contractor Schemes**

3. Members acknowledged that BPEC and WRAS had a joint training manual and test in the Regulations whilst City & Guilds offered several different tests to cater for various subgroups in the industry, such as inspectors and plumbers. C&G tests are administered by the WTI. The third qualifying route in the Regulations was a test administered by some water companies independently. There was some discussion over the differences in Regulations test requirements. Members agreed to direct any information about the tests to the Secretariat.

**Action: PWG Members**

4. Members discussed the merits of a national Approved Contractor scheme in comparison with a national model for schemes. It was suggested that a common, minimum level of entrance would provide automatic benefits to participants and allow members to transfer more easily between different organisations if needed. Members agreed that the schemes were already close to having common entrance requirements, with all eight now requiring some form of entrance test in the Regulations.
5. It was acknowledged that WRAS and the WIAPS scheme were funded and controlled independently of each other by the participating water companies. Members were reminded that whilst there was no controlling body overseeing the implementation of other, independent water company schemes, non-water company schemes required the approval of the Secretary of State. Members discussed the suggestion that a single accrediting body could potentially oversee the approval of all schemes.
6. The members were briefed on the progress of the Quality Mark scheme and there followed a discussion about its success and implementation across the construction industry. There was consideration of the similarities with Approved Contractor schemes and whether there was scope for the two to be more closely linked.

**Item 5 – Benefits and incentives for joining**

7. Members discussed the costs and relative value of various publicity methods. There was some consideration of the benefits in developing a recognised branding that could be associated nationally with all Approved Contractor schemes.

**Item 6 – Strengthening the role of WRAS (Recommendation 9)**

8. Members agreed that WRAS should act as a channel of communication and as such, it was felt there was a need for a rapid return of views from water companies to the wider industry. There followed a brief discussion as to how this might be achieved.

**Item 7 – Agree Agenda for the next meeting**

9. The Group discussed its aims for the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July, at which representatives from all Approved Contractor schemes would be present. The Secretariat agreed to circulate a report of this meeting and to collate relevant information in preparation.

**Action: Secretariat**

**Item 8 – AOB**

10. Members discussed notification in relation to Approved Contractors and the need for consumer and public knowledge of the Regulations in relation to DIY issues.

**WRAC Secretariat  
June 2002**