

Plant Sector Representative Organisation (PSRO)

Certification Bodies Standing Sub-Group

Notes of a meeting held 12th May 2021

A meeting of the Plant Sector Representative Organisation's Certification Bodies Standing Sub-Group was held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday 12th May 2021 by Zoom.

In Attendance

Peter Brown (PSRO) (Chair)
Kevin Minton (PSRO)
Phillip Renner (CMPE)
John Robinson (CMPE)
Aaron Davies (NPORS)
Adam Smith (AITT)
Tom Wakefield (ALLMI)
Giles Council (IPAF)
Stephanie Craig (LANTRA)
Alec Hands (LANTRA)
Patrick Bowles (MPQC)
Patrick Bowring (Qualified Contractors Ltd)
Graham Hasting-Evans (NOCN – CPCS)
Carl Hassel (NOCN – CPCS)
Laura Nelson (RTITB)
Grahame Tobin (BRITTOp)
Huw Jones (NPORS)

Support

Nick Gooderson (PSRO - Consultant)

Item 1 – Welcome and introductions.

1.1. Peter Brown welcomed everybody and explained that the primary purpose of the meeting was to bring members up to-date with the progress being made to formalise the establishment of the PSRO. This would include a recap on its purpose and work programme.

Item 2 – Recap on the Role of the PSRO.

2.1. Peter Brown reminded members of the history and chronology to the formation of the PSRO. The main driver came through feedback received through the review of certification scheme meetings held with CPA members and others from the sector during 2018. There was a strong call for better engagement between employers and training providers, certification schemes and others involved with plant training and certification. The introduction of the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) Requirements also required the establishment of a Sector Representative Body (SRO) to act as a single employer voice to guide CSCS, and CITB in its role as the Standard Setting Body, in agreeing suitable standards and qualifications.

2.2. July 2019 saw the first PSRO formation meeting held between participating federations and associations. A series of employer consultation meetings followed during November 2019 with the purpose of gaining wider sector support. November 2019 also saw the first exploratory meeting of the Certification Bodies Standing Sub-Group being held with the purpose of gauging the level of support for the establishment of the PSRO. Following a PSRO board meeting held in February 2020 the pandemic hit and caused an understandable delay.

2.3. February 2021 saw the PSRO Board convene a ‘re-start’ meeting where it was agreed to continue the formalisation of the PSRO as set out in the previously agreed ToR. This included establishing the PSRO Technical and Certification Bodies Standing Sub-Groups.

2.4. Kevin Minton explained that the PSRO Board had reconsidered the need for the PSRO and realised that the reasoning for its formation has remained the same. The plant sector is large with possibly circa 250,000 plant operators working on construction related projects, it is important to the UK economy, and it is vital that suitable up to-date standards are in place to ensure operator competence. Now that CPCS has moved from CITB to a private company it was essential that the wider industry remains able to input and influence standards for training and qualifications.

2.5. Kevin Minton further explained that CPA is often faced with questions over careers, training, assessment, apprenticeships, and overall competence as well as other matters such as drugs and alcohol. The PSRO will provide an opportunity not only to support the CLC and its ambitions but also to look more broadly at matters impacting the wider sector landscape. An example of this being the work being carried out post-Grenfell to develop sector-specific competence frameworks and strengthen certification arrangements.

Item 3 – Update on the PSRO Establishment, Programme of Work and Priorities.

3.1. Peter Brown reminded members of the PSRO governance arrangements that included the establishment of the Technical and Certification Bodies Standing Sub-Groups. The roles of these groups were explained, and it was confirmed they were both now being set up and being formalised, hence this meeting taking place.

3.2. The immediate priority is to formalise the PSRO as a Ltd company and make it fully operational, including its standing sub-groups. Work will then commence producing a competence framework, reviewing CSCS Partner Scheme applications and determining which categories of plant should be recognised through the new Apprenticeship Standards for plant related occupations.

3.3. Kevin Minton urged members to contact either himself or Peter should they have any questions following the meeting.

Item 4 – Competence Framework

4.1. Peter Brown explained the purpose of the competence framework for plant occupations and demonstrated the draft work carried out to-date. This was being developed in four parts as follows:

Part A is the principles of competency as outlined in many previous documents including the 2014 Pye Tait Competency in Construction report. This is being reinforced within the latest BSI overarching framework for building safety – competency of individuals guidance.

Part B is the principles for certification and details the learning journey stages and compliance requirements by employers and certification bodies.

Part C is a specification for compliance for certification bodies.

Part D is the compliance/guidance requirements for employers.

4.2. The framework will provide a consistent benchmark for individuals, employers and certification schemes.

Item 5 – CSCS Partner Card applications

5.1. Nick Gooderson reminded members of the CLC Requirements for CSCS logoed card schemes. Any future application to become a recognised CSCS Partner Card Scheme for plant related occupations will require the formal support of the PSRO. The PSRO will use its competence framework to consider such applications. There are pending applications to become

CSCS Plant Partner Card Schemes waiting for consideration by the PSRO. These will be dealt with once the competence framework has been fully developed and agreed by the PSRO board.

5.2. Clarification was provided over the situation with completed Apprenticeship Standards. The CLC has agreed that completion of a recognised apprenticeship should allow the award of a skilled/competence card. It will still be necessary for any additional scheme requirements such as proof of a pass in a recognised independent HSE test.

Item 6 – Open Forum

6.1. Several questions were asked, and responses provided as follows:

Q - What is the timescale for completion of the competence framework?

A – It is not possible to provide a definitive date at this precise point in time, particularly due to the ongoing updates to the overarching framework for building safety competence of individuals which will form the template for the sector specific versions, but it is hoped it will be completed within the next two to three months.

Q – What will the framework demand by way of CPD?

A – This is still to be fully determined but the plant operator schemes are ahead of most sectors in demanding proof of ongoing technical competence. The overarching framework development being carried out is looking at this in some detail.

Q – How will the PSRO approve certification schemes, and will it only deal with those operating within construction?

A – The PSRO will not be approving certification schemes. It has a role in providing schemes with support with applications to the CLC/CSCS for CSCS Partner Card. Industries outside of construction are not in scope, although they will be encouraged to look to construction as an exemplar.

Q – What is the distinction between the PSRO and CITB?

A – CITB is the recognised Standard Setting Body for construction occupations including construction plant. In developing and agreeing any standards it must consult and gain agreement of employers and their representative bodies. The PSRO will act as the single employer voice (SRO) in guiding and advising the CITB over the necessary standards and qualifications required for the plant sector, and provide the technical input. The PSRO will have the employer authority to veto any proposed standards that are not deemed to be suitable.

Q – How often will the PSRO review application by certification schemes to become CSCS Partner Card Schemes for plant occupations?

A – This was a matter still to be worked out. Priority will be given to the applications that are currently waiting.

Q – Who will be responsible for providing the necessary support (or not) required by certification schemes to become CSCS Partner Card Schemes?

A – It will be the collective PSRO membership that will consider providing the necessary support required. This will be achieved through the PSRO Technical Standing Sub-Group considering the applications, mapped against the framework, and followed by ratification by the PSRO board.

Q – How many other SROs are in existence and working with CSCS and CLC?

A – There are 38 CSCS Partner Card Schemes and each has a recognised SRO. In some instances, this may be a single Federation/Association and in others a collective similar to the PSRO.

Q – If a scheme is successfully mapped against the PSRO competence framework and endorsed accordingly, will they be accepted as a CSCS Partner Card Scheme, given that other exist in the footprint?

A – *It is for CLC/CSCS to approve applications for CSCS Partner Card status. The role of the PSRO is to provide the wider sector support that is required and which it will do by mapping the scheme requirements against the PSRO framework.*

Q – Should there be common classification coding across all CSCS Plant Partner Card Schemes?

A – *This is not currently a requirement, but it is something that the PSRO can investigate should it be considered beneficial. What may be more likely as a task is the terminology or category description which should be discussed when the training standards are developed.*

Q – Will it be necessary for completing apprenticeships to have to duplicate effort in attaining a card?

A – *CLC has agreed that an apprenticeship can be used in lieu of the NVQ/SVQ requirement. The PSRO will determine what apprenticeships apply to the plant occupations. The award of a card cannot be built into the apprenticeship standard, so the apprentice/employer will have to apply for a card separately and in doing so meet any additional scheme requirements, such as passing an independent health and safety test such as the CITB HSE test as well as any other scheme requirements.*

Item 7 – Any Other Business

7.1. Kevin Minton wished to raise awareness of the intention of the PSRO to consider what can be done to address the issue of drugs and alcohol. It might be possible for the PSRO to co-ordinate cross industry action and agree to some form of information sharing and issuing of penalty points with those who are found to have positive results from testing. It was a complex and sensitive area and would not be solved easily.

7.2. It was suggested that the CLC should consider introducing a requirement for CSCS-logged card schemes to have strategies for dealing with drug and alcohol use.

Item 8 – Date of Next Meeting

8.1. To be arranged. **Action: Peter Brown**