



Spring 2019

PlumbHeat



Deadly serious

The lethal bugs that lurk in dead ends – and how to avoid them



An inspector calls

Why are inspections so important? And what do they involve?



Prints of wails

The many perils and pitfalls of not reading a contract's small print

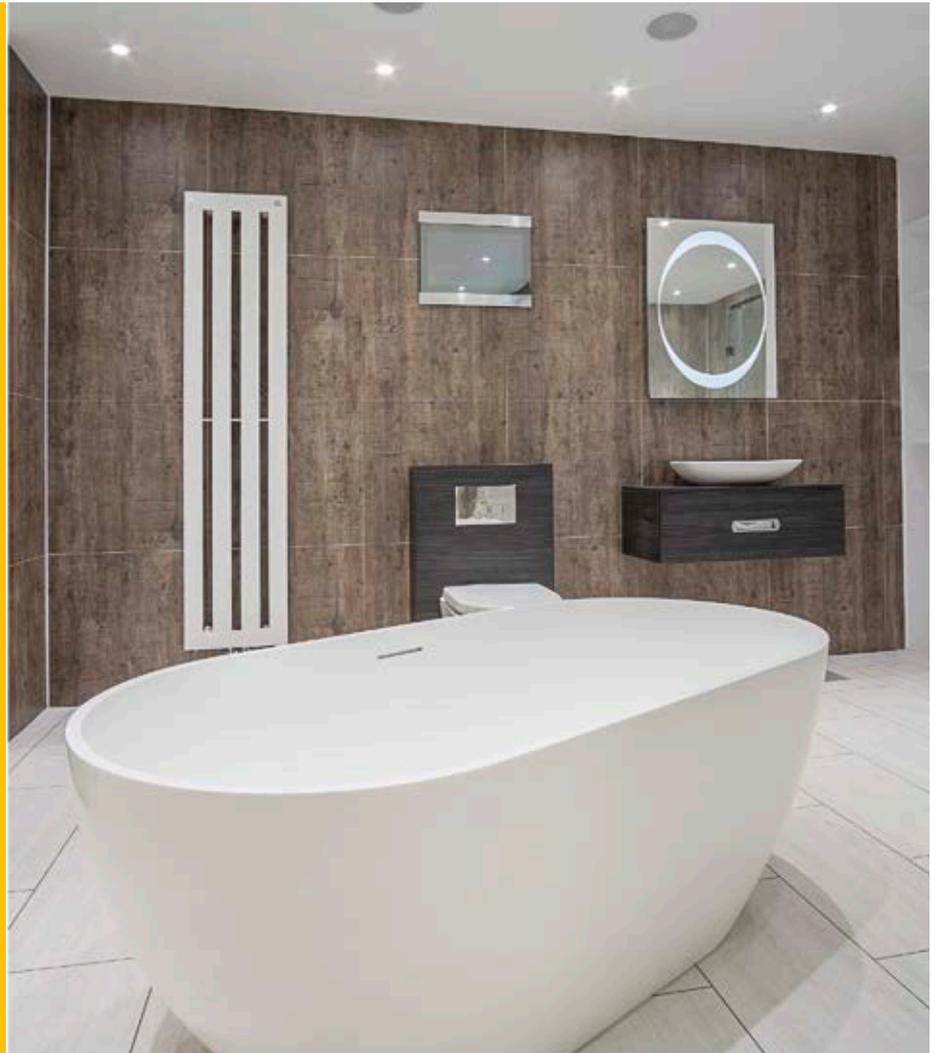
Joist 'n' timber break

How to avoid disaster when notching and drilling wooden supports





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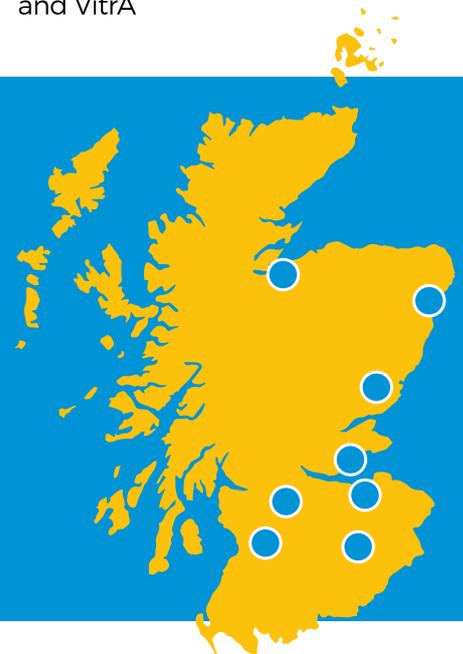
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Published on behalf of SNIPEF by
Connect Publications
Studio 2001, Mile End
12 Seedhill Road, Paisley PA1 1JS

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The views and opinions expressed in PlumbHeat are not necessarily those held by the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation. PlumbHeat is circulated free to plumbing, heating and building contractors who are members of the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation, and also to plumbing merchants, manufacturers, training centres and colleges.

Subscriptions Annual Subscription (4 issues) United Kingdom: £40
Overseas surface mail £30 Airmail (according to destination)

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Comment

FROM FIONA HODGSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SNIPEF

Proper protection is not just for consumers

It is common knowledge that there are many rogue traders operating in the industry and no one would argue against the need for consumer protection. Choosing a plumbing or heating firm that is a SNIPEF member gives consumers peace of mind and the confidence they have chosen a reputable contractor with the right skills and qualifications for the job.

However, it is not just the consumers who need protection; businesses themselves need protection from late and non-payment. In 2016, Lloyds Bank reported that UK SMEs are owed £596 billion in unpaid invoices and the collapse of Carillion resulted in £2 billion of unpaid invoices to its smaller suppliers.

SMEs need protection and they need it now. Poor payment practices not only lead to thousands of insolvencies every year but damage productivity, restrict investment and seriously impact on the mental health of small business owners and their employees. In recent years the Government has undertaken a range of consultations and produced various reports in an effort to tackle poor payment practices, resulting in numerous pieces of regulation.

Sadly, however, the same problems endure and stronger action is required. Until the issues of retention and cash flow are addressed, I believe the problems of late and non-payment will continue. SNIPEF continues

“ It is heartening to see progress being made – however there remains a lot of work to be done”

to work with the Specialist Engineering Contractors (SEC) Group to lobby the Government for change. Following intense lobbying, we were pleased when the Scottish Government this year announced it was lowering the threshold for the use of project bank accounts (PBAs) from £4.1 million to £2 million. Furthermore, the Scottish Government is also stepping up its efforts to encourage all bodies involved in public sector procurement to implement PBAs.

The reduced thresholds announced by the Scottish Government already apply in Northern Ireland and will benefit the supply chain with many more contracts, including maintenance and facilities management, now requiring PBAs. (For more on PBAs, see the news story on page 8 and Rudi Klein's article on pages 36&37)

In Northern Ireland, since January 2013, 32 public sector contracts, with a value of approximately £1.3 billion, have been awarded that include a PBA, according to the Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD). Over the same period, 100 subcontractors have been paid directly from a PBA and, once the funds have been lodged within the PBA by a public sector procurer, sub-contractors have been paid within four days.



**Fiona Hodgson,
Chief Executive,
SNIPEF**

SEC Group continues to work closely with CPD to promote PBAs across the Northern Ireland industry and support SMEs.

Retentions is another issue plaguing SMEs throughout the UK that SNIPEF is actively working to change. At a 2018 Cross Party Construction Meeting, SNIPEF and SEC Group urged the Business Minister, Jamie Hepburn MSP, to act on the issue. Alan Brown, SNP Member of Parliament for Kilmarnock and Loudoun, who has been campaigning in the UK Parliament for reform of the retentions system, wrote to the Minister supporting a review.

We were delighted when, in December, the Minister revealed that cash retentions in the construction industry would be among the issues considered as part of a consultation planned in spring 2019. Earlier this year, SNIPEF President Gordon Matheson attended a roundtable event in the Scottish Government's Glasgow offices to discuss the issues associated with retentions.

Unfortunately, payment abuse is rife within our industry. As part of SEC Group, SNIPEF has been campaigning to end these practices. It is heartening to see progress being made – however, there remains a lot of work to be done before we have a fair playing field across the industry.

Later this year, SNIPEF, together with SEC Group, will be running one-day seminars to help businesses get paid, including what to look for in contract conditions and ways to protect your business from late or non-payers.

Once the dates are finalised, we will share more information but I do strongly encourage our members to attend. ■

We all have a vital part to play

My time as SNIPEF President has provided me with many interesting insights into the industry and ways in which we can keep trying to improve standards. There are many technical and practical aspects we continue to try to improve, but one area our industry could really benefit from is the increased involvement of our members.

While there are many opinions on the best direction for the industry moving forward, one element I see as most critical is the involvement of SNIPEF members. In order to continue to maintain the standard of professionalism in plumbing, we need actively engaged and involved members.

I have come across so many members who take the time to serve on committees and attend plumbing body meetings to help further the industry. Their commitment is to be commended, and SNIPEF members are the beneficiaries of the hard work of these individuals, but we need more members to contribute to these meetings. Spreading the work load and responsibility is of benefit to all, while it also provides the additional value of diversifying opinions, background and industry experience.

Many plumbers only take out of the industry and don't put anything back in unless they are being paid. We need to try and shift this attitude and I encourage all members to become more engaged with their local associations and to have input into the industry.

There are also business benefits to becoming more involved. These meetings provide a platform to meet other members who are always willing to share their knowledge and discuss plumbing issues and industry developments. I have seen first-hand how being more involved and speaking to other members can help a business improve and grow.

As plumbers, we invest so much time and energy into the industry, but it is important we encourage other members to take the time to be more involved. There are so many benefits to the member and plumbing as a whole.



Gordon Matheson,
SNIPEF President

News

LATEST FROM AROUND THE FEDERATION



FROM LEFT: SNIPEF CEO Fiona Hodgson, Installer Managing Director Eoin McManus, Sarah Fitzpatrick from SNIPEF and Installer's Richie Martin

💡 EVENTS

SNIPEF plays a key role as Glasgow welcomes back InstallerSCOTLAND

Premier plumbing and heating trade show returns to SEC in September

SNIPEF and Installer are delighted to announce they have joined forces to co-produce InstallerSCOTLAND at the SEC in Glasgow in September.

This one-day plumbing and heating trade show aims to give Scottish tradespeople

a unique day out with valuable face-to-face interaction with manufacturers from across the industry.

"Installer is delighted to partner with SNIPEF on this event," said Installer Managing Director Eoin McManus.

"SNIPEF is well placed to work with us in shaping a lasting trade show in Scotland. Their insight into this unique market will ensure we develop an event we know Scottish plumbing and heating



Got a story?

Email us on
contact@snipef.org



Deadly serious

How to avoid the lethal consequences of dead legs and dead ends / [Page 18](#)



Leading the way

SNIPEF and BSE Skills are showing the way forward for training / [Page 32](#)



engineers want. When InstallerSCOTLAND last came to the SEC in 2017, 82 per cent said they thought it was worth attending, so clearly installers see the importance of an exhibition like this."

Commenting on the partnership with Installer, SNIPEF CEO Fiona Hodgson said: "While the plumbing and heating industry in Scotland shares many traits with the rest of the UK, it's a unique market and one SNIPEF has been part of for nearly 100 years.

"Installer understands how to create a fantastic trade show that delivers for both exhibitors and attendees alike, so we're

excited to partner with them to create an event tailored for Scotland."

The one-day pop-up plumbing and heating trade show will take place at the SEC in Glasgow on 12 September.

The show will feature many of the industry's top suppliers and leading manufacturers and will offer visitors plenty of opportunities to get hands-on with the latest products and come face-to-face with the people who develop them.

Stay tuned for the latest updates or email membership@snipef.org



GOLF DAY 2019

It's tee time for SNIPEF golfers

Our annual Golf Day will be held at Glenberrie Golf Club on Thursday 16 May. As well as a great day out, it's the ultimate challenge to see which members can translate their plumbing skills on to the golf course.

Teams of four golfers will compete for both individual and team honours with a special added bonus – the chance to win a brand new BMW car if you can land a hole in one!

Entry for a team of four is £266.45, including VAT & booking fee, and is open to SNIPEF members and associate members. This includes:

- Green fees for one round of golf
- Breakfast roll and tea or coffee
- Post-tournament two-course meal.

To book your place, email membership@snipef.org or call **0131 556 0600**, selecting option 1.



Golf Day itinerary

8.00 am: Registration

9.00 am: Tee-off

1.30 pm: Lunch and prizegiving at Glenberrie clubhouse

EVENTS

Making new Connexions with

SNIPEF launches first informal events across Scotland and Northern Ireland

The start of spring saw the launch of SNIPEF's new *Connexions* events in Inverness, Aberdeen and Belfast.

The informal events brought together SNIPEF staff, members and associate members, along with college lecturers to discuss issues affecting the industry, including whether there is an appetite for a mandatory licensing scheme and ideas on how such a scheme could effectively be implemented.

Held in the evening to fit around members' busy work schedules, the free-to-attend events took place at Inverness College UHI on Tuesday 26 March, North East Scotland College on Wednesday 27 March and Beggs

& Partners, Belfast, on Thursday 4 April.

With several SNIPEF associate members attending each event, members had the chance to be introduced to a range of products and see how they could be beneficial to their businesses. In Aberdeen, the college lecturers also gave a few attendees a tour of the facilities used to teach the plumbing apprentices.

SNIPEF Membership and Communications Manager, Sarah Fitzpatrick, said: "We wanted to provide an easy opportunity for members to connect with our staff, other members and associate members – that's the whole purpose of these events.



Got a story?
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"There was certainly a wide range of conversations taking place at each event, from mandatory licensing and the availability of products direct to the public, to apprenticeships and training and the best way to tackle certain jobs.

"Given the spread of our members across the whole of Scotland and Northern Ireland, it can be difficult for members to meet SNIPEF staff face-to-face



PAYMENTS

Praise for Scottish Government as it lowers PBA threshold

A leading industry body has welcomed the Scottish Government's decision to reduce the threshold for project bank accounts (PBAs) from £4.1 million to £2 million.

PBAs have been mandated for use by Scottish Government bodies since 31 October 2016. From 19 March 2019, public bodies must now include a PBA in

tender documents for public works contracts with an estimated value of more than or equal to £2 million, or £5 million for civil engineering projects.

The action has been praised by the Specialist Engineering Contractors' (SEC) Group Scotland, the leading representative body in Scotland's construction industry, of

which SNIPEF is a member. Speaking on behalf of the Group, its National Executive Officer Alan Wilson said that he was delighted with February's announcement. He said: "We have been pressing the Scottish Government for some time to reduce the threshold to £2 million. Clearly the Government has

friends



and participate in activities, with many taking place in Scotland's Central Belt.

"While technology has made it easy to communicate online, websites and social media can't replace meeting people face-to-face, putting a face to names and building a personal relationship.

"It was fantastic to get out, meet our members in person and enjoy a conversation over a bite to eat. We're delighted with how the events went and encourage our members to come along to future events."

Sarah added: "We'd like to thank our event hosts Inverness College UHI, North East Scotland College and Beggs & Partners, and associate members Fernox, Maincor, RA Tech, Clark Thomson, Picote Solutions and Yorkshire Copper Tube for their support."

INDUSTRY SURVEY

Perfect storm for engineering services in final quarter of 2018

SNIEPF, SELECT, ECA and BESA study shows a slowdown in growth, along with increased material and labour costs

Some 26 per cent of businesses reported increased turnover in Q4 of 2018, but another 26 per cent said turnover fell from the previous quarter.

The findings come in the latest sector-wide Building Engineering Business Survey, run in partnership with SNIEPF, SELECT, the ECA and BESA, and sponsored by Scolmore.

Outlook for the first quarter of 2019 is also subdued, with three in four respondents (74 per cent) saying they expect their turnover to stay the same or fall compared to Q4 2018.

In addition, nearly two thirds (61 per cent) of engineering services organisations have seen their material costs rise in Q4 2018, compared to Q3, while almost half (48 per cent) of respondents reported increased labour costs during the final quarter of 2018.

SNIEPF CEO Fiona Hodgson said: "These results reflect the challenging environment businesses are operating in, combining payment issues with the uncertainty of Brexit, increased labour and material costs, and difficulties finding qualified staff.

"It highlights the urgent need for action to address the ongoing payment issues within the industry. The payment terms our members must accept would be unheard of in other industries, yet

remain the norm for this sector causing undue pressure for businesses."

Payment and retentions remain a challenge. Almost three in four respondents (77 per cent) said they are typically paid more than 30 days after a public sector project, and more than eight in ten (83 per cent) are paid more than 30 days after a commercial project.

Almost two thirds (58 per cent) said that up to 10 per cent of their organisation's turnover was tied up in retentions in Q4 2018 – a 6 per cent increase on Q3 2018.

The survey received a total of 403 responses from companies across the multi-billion-pound industry, mainly regarding their performance in Q4 2018 (1 October to 31 December 2018), and expectations for Q1 2019.

Keep an eye on your inbox – the Building Engineering Business Survey for Q1 will be sent out in April. Take a moment to complete the survey – we rely on your participation to ensure we have accurate data for our industry in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

been listening and industry SMEs will be the prime beneficiaries of this lowering of the threshold."

Scottish public bodies responsible for a total of £1 billion of projects have either used a PBA, included a PBA in their invitations to tender or indicated their intent to use a PBA.

The Scottish Government is also stepping up its efforts to encourage all bodies involved in public sector

procurement to implement PBAs. A PBA enables all construction project participants to be paid from 'one pot', rather than payments having to cascade down to the supply chain through the different contractual layers. The payments are ring-fenced to protect them from upstream insolvencies and payments can be made to all parties within 12-15 days.

The Scottish Government's updated guidance can be found at bit.ly/PBAconstruction





SNIEPF CEO Fiona Hodgson and President Gordon Matheson at the Glasgow event with local association presidents



SNIEPF CEO Fiona Hodgson with local association presidents and partners in Dundee

The Woodlands Hotel in Broughty Ferry, Dundee, was the host of this year's annual SNIEPF Dundee & District Dinner Dance.

The event on Friday 1 March was well attended, with more than 110 people from all aspects of the plumbing industry enjoying a fantastic night. SNIEPF CEO Fiona Hodgson and SNIEPF Vice President Neil Hadden were also in attendance.



ABERDEEN & DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

Equipment gift means students are all tooled up



Memorable evenings on the menu

An annual highlight for attendees, the SNIPEF Glasgow & West of Scotland Association dinner this year raised an incredible £3,854.60 for the Children's Hospices Across Scotland (CHAS) charity.

Held at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Glasgow on 11 January, the 300 attendees enjoyed a great night out with a variety of

guest speakers keeping them entertained.

The funds generated from the evening will help CHAS care for children throughout Scotland who have a life-shortening condition, helping make a difference to families.

The money raised at this year's event brings the total raised for CHAS down the years to over £62,000.



The Edinburgh & District committee

SNIPEF Edinburgh & District held their annual dinner on 29 March at the Waterside Club in Longstone.

A fantastic night saw the 50 guests entertained by speakers Bobby Dee and John McKelvie. A sum of £200 was also given to two female members with breast cancer to donate to their chosen charity.

North East Scotland College are delighted to have been donated two flue gas analysers and a press fit tool from SNIPEF Aberdeen & District.

Bruce Will, President of SNIPEF Aberdeen &

District, said: "We are pleased to help North East College Scotland by donating this equipment to assist students studying towards their Modern Apprenticeship in Domestic Plumbing & Heating."

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Upcoming events

Keep an eye out for the following member events:

Event

SNIPEF Golf Day 16 May,
Glenbervie Golf Club

SkillPLUMB 21 June,
West College Scotland Paisley

SNIPEF Clay Pigeon Shooting Event
21 August, County Clays, Dunkeld

SNIPEF Angling Event 29 August,
Lake of Menteith, Stirling

InstallerSCOTLAND 12 September,
SEC Glasgow

16
May



+ **Out & About**
Our Membership Officer and Technical Inspector hit the road / [Page 16](#)

+ **An inspector calls**
We reveal exactly what happens during a SNIPEF inspection / [Page 22](#)

+ **Read the small print**
Len Bunton discusses the importance of studying your contract / [Page 39](#)

Upcoming training

The following training courses are now open:

Course

Water Byelaws Tuesday 21 May,
William Wilson, Altens Industrial Estate,
Aberdeen

Approved Certifier of Construction Building Standards Wednesday 22 May,
William Wilson, Altens Industrial Estate,
Aberdeen

Water Byelaws Tuesday 4 June,
SNIPEF Office, Edinburgh

Approved Certifier of Construction Building Standards Thursday 6 June,
SNIPEF Office, Edinburgh

Meet a member

In our latest personal profile we catch up with **Michael Cairns**, Managing Director at Celsius Plumbing and Heating

HI MICHAEL. WHAT DOES YOUR COMPANY DO?

We're a planned and reactive plumbing and heating contractor based in Portobello, Edinburgh. We specialise in facilities management and work quite heavily in the short-term rental sector, so it's vital that we are responsive. At 4pm on a Friday, when holiday guests are checking in and most tradesmen are checking out, our team is fully prepared for the phone to ring with reactive maintenance requests.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

I'm the company director and I set up the company in 2007. Like most start-ups, I was made redundant during the recession.

WHAT ROLE DOES SOFTWARE PLAY IN YOUR BUSINESS?

We're proud to have partnered with BigChange, an amazing tech company based in Leeds, who have streamlined the way we do business. Their software now helps us plan, manage, schedule and track our engineers on the road.

CAN YOU GIVE US AN EXAMPLE?

Our company now runs on what we call Workflows, which ensures our engineer photographic job reports

are consistent every time. Our customers are also able to receive real-time information from site meaning, no more sitting manually typing job reports in the back office. We are very proud of our Uber-style 'track our engineer' function, which recently featured in the *Financial Times* talking about how the software has a wider benefit to the economy. We were offering this before British Gas released it, and it allows our customers to receive alerts when our engineer is en route and they can track them right to the front door. Our customers have told us they are able to go about their daily lives, rather than sitting in all day wondering when an engineer is going to show.

WHAT IMPACT HAS TECHNOLOGY HAD ON YOUR BUSINESS?

Our business before was quite paper-orientated, whereas now it's very automated and totally systemised, and the customer is getting the information before our engineer leaves site. It completely transformed the business because it shredded hours of manual



QUICK FACTS

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0131 258 0848

WEBSITE:
www.celsiusplumbers.com

+
SPOTLIGHT ON BIGCHANGE
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Michael's quick-fire questions

Coffee or tea?

Coffee

Sweet or savoury?

Savoury

Favourite film?

The Departed

Last thing you read?

The Advantage by Patrick Lencioni

Which superpower would you like?

Time travel

Morning person or night owl?

Night owl

Favourite holiday destination?

North of Scotland

Dream car?

Driverless

processes and paperwork overnight. I'd previously have to finish work, then do hours of paperwork and emails at home, but this is no longer the case. It also increased our USP in a very competitive market.

HOW HAVE YOUR STAFF RESPONDED?

Amazingly. We encourage staff to come up with ideas that would improve our software, and they've come up with some really good ones, I suppose involving the team breeds a culture of 'your opinion matters'. We're an employer that believes strongly in developing our staff, because we believe that if we develop our staff they will not only thrive in the business, but ultimately serve our customers better. We have one staff member in particular who started as a service engineer back in 2015 and who is now currently working towards a qualification in business management



through Skills Development Scotland. We've realised that, without our team, the business is nothing. We're very lucky to have a fantastic team here at Celsius, that has a clear vision where the company wants to be.

HOW IS TECHNOLOGY BEING UTILISED IN THE INDUSTRY?

More and more companies are embracing technology in the last five years – you just have to look at Twitter, for example, to see the brilliant companies across the UK that are doing it. Any way that we can systemise our business, we will continue to champion technology through the power of BigChange.

WHAT ELSE HAS EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY DONE FOR YOU?

Fundamentally it's allowing our company to grow year-on-year. We now have a software system based on processes, procedures and consistency, that through the correct training and support

has allowed me to take time away from the business to work on other things. I used to be the typical tradesperson – working 16-hour days, weekends not my own, phone constantly ringing – but those days are long gone thanks to BigChange. Following the *Financial Times* article I've been approached by various UK companies that want help in developing their own processes and systems to transform their business. A lot of companies can get the work and win contracts, but don't necessarily have the correct systems in place to deliver that work. I've been able to help companies plan, manage and schedule their work better and make them think about how they manage their people. Getting the basics right, by writing down their processes and procedures that are sometimes not in place. I'm happy to speak to anyone that wants to grow their business or perhaps talk to an already established business that wants to streamline how they currently work. ■

New members

SCOTLAND

- C Hanlon Ltd
- Derek Mitchell Electrical Ltd
- Mike Gowans Plumbing & Heating

- Ember Energy Ltd
- JMR Plumbing Services
- MPH
- ND Plumbing & Heating Services Ltd
- SSE Contracting Ltd
- Watson & Lyall Ltd

- Premier Gas & Mechanical Solutions Ltd

NORTHERN IRELAND

- FG Mechanical Building Services Ltd

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

- Heating & Hotwater Industry Council (HHIC)
- Kibosh Ltd
- Maincor Ltd



CONTACT

For more about membership, call 0131 556 0600 or email membership@snipef.org

PlumbHeat goes behind the scenes with SNIPEF member firm **Hanton Heating Services**, who are currently working on an impressive year-long project to transform a five-star hotel into a set of luxury flats

Checking in for a long

Situated in Great King Street in the heart of Edinburgh, The Howard Hotel was sold in 2017.

Set across three of Edinburgh's iconic Georgian terraces, work is now well under way to convert it into nine separate apartments.

It is an impressive transformation, even for experienced plumber Neil Ferrier who is running the plumbing part of the project for Hanton Heating Services. He said: "The idea is to make them luxury apartments, so they're going to be very nice once they're completed.

"The original hotel was an impressive building, and the location is in a really nice area of Edinburgh right in the heart

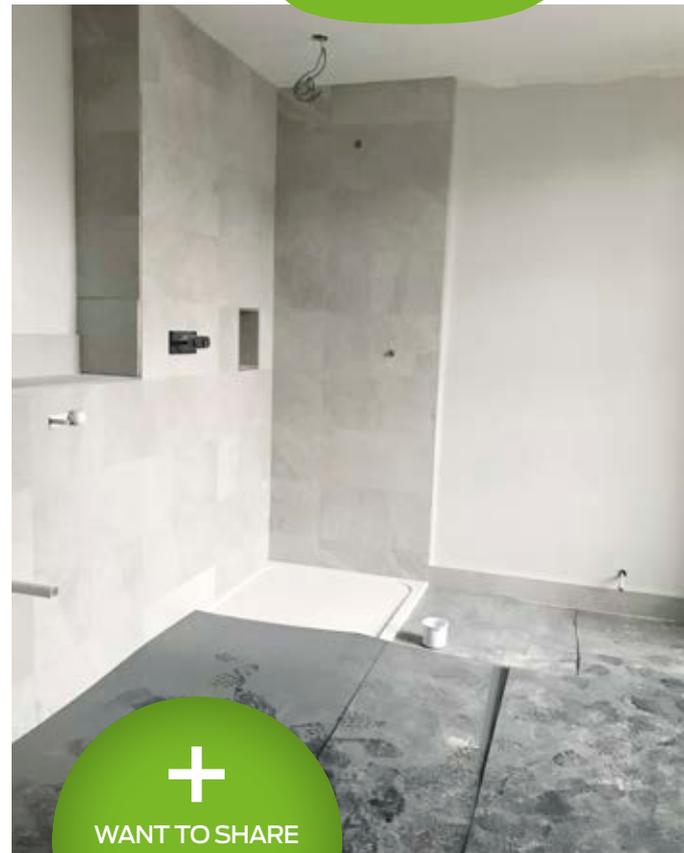
of the city, so I imagine they'll be sold at the very top end of the market."

He added that all of the nine flats were different sizes, with some even set over multiple levels, but all of the plumbing work carried out was the same.

"Within the original hotel building, there are a variety of different property types, each with a different number of bedrooms, and some over multiple storeys," he said. "All of the plumbing work we will do in each apartment will be the same, so from that perspective, it makes things easy."

Making the job even more enjoyable for Neil is the ease at which the old hotel has been able to be converted for residential use.

He revealed: "It's been a really straightforward conversion for us which has been good. We've been able to use standard methods of installation with no issues so far. Even though we're converting an older building, it's essentially been like a new build. All of the plumbing has been taken right back to the bones and been done brand new, plus the water mains supply to the flats was



WANT TO SHARE
YOUR WORK?
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Hanton on SNIPEF

Ross Hanton, Director
at Hanton Heating Services
Ltd, on SNIPEF membership:
"SNIPEF have been great since
we joined over a year ago. They
have wonderful benefits which

ABOVE AND
LEFT: Hanton
took all the
plumbing back
to the bare bones
and installed new
boilers throughout





stay

upgraded to the flats too."

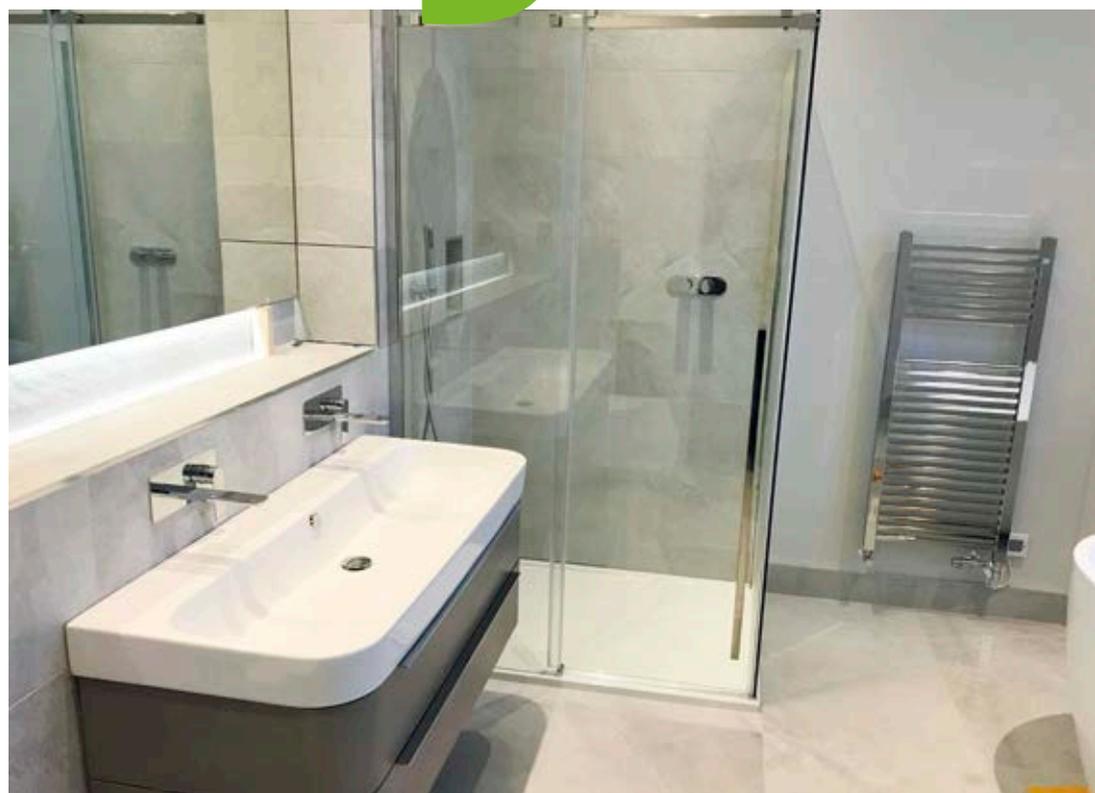
SNIPEF Technical Inspector John Somerville was also impressed on his visit to the site after being shown around the project by Neil.

He said: "Due to the previous use of the building, the new flats are required to have the building services upgraded.

"Neil was involved with coordinating the new services so that each flat had a separate water and gas supply. All internal original plumbing from distribution supplies and drainage was removed from the building and renewed by Hanton.

"Due to limited space around the site, they also converted a small section in the basement to accommodate washing facilities for staff working on-site.

we have taken advantage of. Their staff have been very helpful as well whenever we have required them. I would highly recommend becoming a member, and we are looking forward to continuing to work alongside them in the future."



"The building itself has high ceilings and nice staircases which will give the modern flats that Georgian feel but still make it feel like a brand-new property."

While Neil is the only Hanton plumber permanently on site, he has had help from other company employees at different stages of the conversion.

ABOVE: Each flat in the conversion now boasts premium fixtures and fittings, as well as a separate water and gas supply

And with the project due to be completed in around a year, Neil said they're already seeing the progress of what the finished product will look like.

He said: "We've almost got the first block kitted and the water and gas is going in at the moment. We're completing one flat at a time, with potential buyers to look through the building in the next few weeks." ■

We hit the road once more with our Membership Officer and Technical Inspector to discover what they've been up to and what the future holds...

In my five years with SNIPEF, I've spent many hours on the phone making appointments with our members. I use this time to keep them updated with any recent changes in benefits and services, gathering important feedback and arranging visits.

With a membership of more than 750 firms, it would be impossible for me to visit everybody in the same year, however, the members I do visit generally find they benefit from the services SNIPEF offer.

Often there are benefits members are not fully aware of that would be useful to them. I also have a nice range of SNIPEF merchandise to hand out in the boot of my car! Please get in touch if you would like a visit, particularly if you're unsure of how to get the most from your SNIPEF membership.

TRADE MORNINGS

In the last three months, I've held trade mornings with Graham the Plumbers Merchant and City Plumbing Supplies across the Central Belt and Inverness-shire. I'm booked up with trade mornings until June, with more to come in the second half of the year.

These mornings are great for members and non-members in the area to have a quick catch-up while they are out and about. If there are any merchants out there who would like me to hold any mornings at their branches, please get in touch. As always, a big



By Andy Furnevel,
Membership Officer, SNIPEF

thank you to the merchants I currently visit for all your help and support.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

This is something I ask myself quite often and I'm still searching for answers. On a serious note, there has been a lot happening, particularly in the world of member events. We launched our new *Connexions* member events in Inverness, Aberdeen and Belfast. These free events were a chance for members to talk about industry issues with SNIPEF staff and meet some of our associate members.

We had great feedback and it was good for SNIPEF staff to meet members from these areas. Keep an eye out for more *Connexions* events in the future.

ARE YOU ON THE MAILING LIST?

What do you think of *PlumbHeat*? Are you on the mailing list? If you're not, would you like to be? Get in touch and I can arrange this – either email me on andy.furnevel@snipef.org or call **07801 741 346**.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHT

As always, there's too many to mention, but one does stick out in particular – I've been inundated with enquiries from manufacturers looking to become associate members. This is great news, particularly with our new website coming soon, with a dedicated space for associate members. I hope to see these new associate members get involved with the events I've mentioned as well as InstallerSCOTLAND on 12 September.

WE'RE GOOD SPORTS

The sporting events for 2019 are now lined up, so if you're a keen golfer, fine fisherman or like a bit of clay pigeon shooting, get in touch with Membership to get involved. I'll be in attendance at the golf and the clay pigeon events and hope to see you there.

KEY:

- Andy visit
- △ John visit

OUT



PIPE PERFECTION

On my travels, I see a variety of installations and different techniques in ways to join pipes. The tidiest I have come across in the last month is the press-fit systems, which seem to make assembly easier and neater.

I visited a site in Dundee



where Dave Timmons from Alliance Electrical Services and his engineer were using one such system – you can see the results for yourself here.

Although I was there to inspect the standard of work, we're also eager to pass on praise and give any support that is required, especially in an industry where it may not happen all that often.

It's great to get back in the swing of things after the festive period. SNIPEF has some great events lined up this year and I'm looking forward to working alongside my colleagues to make these experiences the best for our members.

I attended the new SNIPEF event, *Connexions*, at Beggs & Partners in Belfast, on 4 April with Andy and Sarah from the Membership team.

It was a great opportunity for me to meet some of our Northern Ireland members in a more relaxed setting, away from job sites.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

This year, at least 75% of my inspections have taken place on new build sites, which vary from large developments right down to one-off builds.

These new builds come with various renewable installations;

one that I come across often is the air source heat pumps from various manufacturers.

I recently met Greig from Malcolm McArthur and Sons on a Springfield site in a new village near Perth called Bertha Park. On this site, Greig and his team were installing air-source/gas hybrid units.

These units are packed with technology and will advance in the years to come to make them smaller and possibly be able to be accessed remotely allowing installers to diagnose faults or set parameters from a smart device. Who would have thought 10 years ago that this would be possible!



By John Somerville, Technical Inspector, SNIPEF

& ABOUT

DEADLY SERIOUS

Dead legs and dead ends can both have deadly consequences – so to avoid the risk of bugs like legionella it's vital to ensure your pipework has no loose ends

Hot and cold water systems are required to be designed in a way that avoids redundant sections of pipework or sections that are infrequently used. This is to avoid the build-up of stagnant water which promotes the growth of microbiological organisms such as legionella.

The design of systems has to be considered on new installations, alterations, upgrades and monitoring of water systems. When designing a new system, the possibility of creating a dead leg or dead end needs to be considered.

A dead leg is a section of pipework supplying an appliance where the appliance is used infrequently or does not achieve the required temperature within a stated time. A blind or dead end is a section of pipework that has been permanently capped where a flow of water cannot be achieved.

DEAD LEGS

Dead legs tend to be calculated in time. There is a rule of thumb guidance available for pipe diameter and maximum lengths, but both the hot and cold supply still need to be supplied to a terminal fitting at specific water temperatures within a specific time.

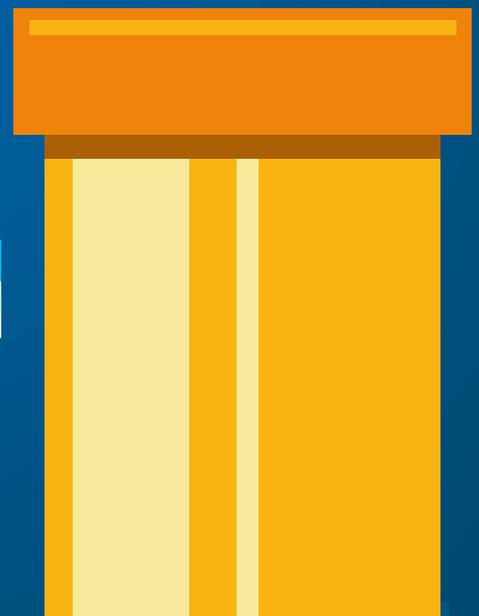
Hot water terminating at an appliance should achieve 50°C (55°C in healthcare facilities) within one minute of turning the tap on, while cold water should reach 20°C or below within two minutes of the tap being turned on. If this is not achieved, the pipe is to be classed as a dead leg and a solution would need to be determined to rectify the temperatures. This may just be the application of suitable insulation, or the system may need to be upgraded and a



By Martyn Raine,
Technical
Manager,
SNIPEF

secondary return introduced. An in-depth investigation would be required to identify a solution.

This is not just an issue in large non-domestic buildings. Excessively long pipe runs on hot and cold water pipework



in domestic properties can also pose a significant risk.

A simple inspection of a system with temperature and time checks can be used to establish if the pipe is a dead leg. Other dead legs could be caused by pipework being excessively long, feeding a central heating filling loop or expansion vessel.

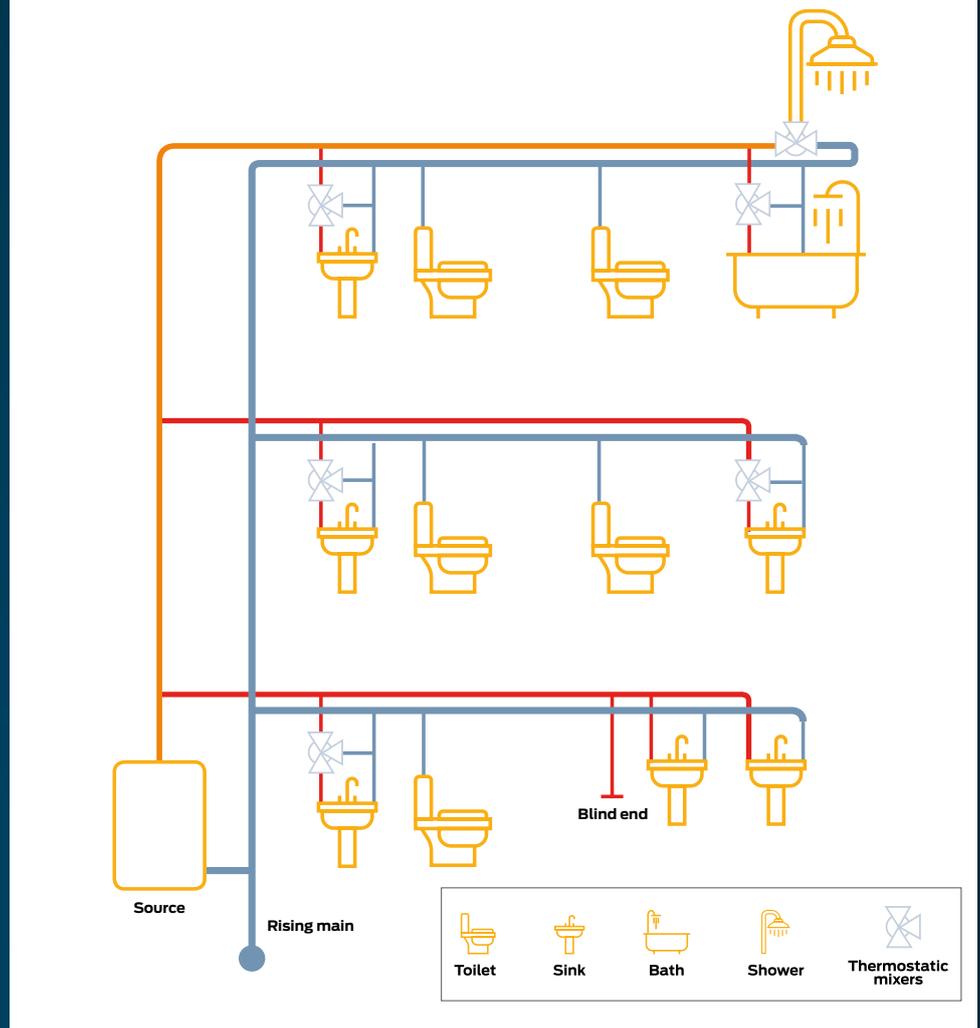
If any appliances and components are identified that are not being frequently used, it may be that they can be removed from the system permanently to avoid any risk to the water system.

If they are removed, consideration needs to be made to how the supply pipework is capped (blind ends). If it is decided that the appliances cannot be removed from the installation, a solution will need to be agreed to flush the pipework and fitting on a regular basis.

This can be achieved through the use of a self-flushing fitting or adding the flushing to a regular inspection and monitoring regime for an identified person (responsible person) to carry out. This can be included in other checks of the water system that are required in the building. The frequency of flushing required can be established through the use of a risk assessment as different buildings will require different solutions.

“...it is crucial that the plumber establishes if there are any risks present in the system design”

Diagram courtesy of the Health and Safety Executive



BLIND OR DEAD END

A blind or dead end is the term used to describe branches of the pipework that have been cut off and capped permanently. For example, if an appliance were to be removed from the system, it will be required to cap the supply pipes feeding it. If any appliances are to be permanently removed from a plumbing system, the water supplies to the appliance must be cut back. This needs to be done as close as possible to the source supply pipework, along with complete removal of the branch tee pieces feeding the appliance.

If this is not possible, the pipe should be cut back

ABOVE:
Diagram of a system with a blind end

as closely as possible to the supply pipes and the branches capped. The branch should be left no more than 50% of the diameter of the pipe – however, the removal of the tee pieces is the preferred solution.

Blind ends are similar to dead legs but probably pose a greater risk as there will never be a water flow through the section of pipework and therefore will promote water stagnation.

Regardless of whether a system is being designed, altered or monitored, it is crucial that the plumber establishes if there are any risks present in the system design that creates dead legs or sections of system pipework that are permanently redundant. ■

FURTHER GUIDANCE CAN BE FOUND IN THE HSE DOCUMENT HSG274 PART 2 AT BIT.LY/LD_GUIDE

Notching and drilling joists might seem like an everyday task, but doing your homework properly beforehand is vital if it's to be done safely and prevent mishaps

Always stick the

Most plumbers should be familiar with notching and drilling joists, but it's far from simple. The notch or hole will likely take place in a part of a building's main structure so care must be taken to avoid weakening any part which could lead to massive failure in its structural integrity.

This means it's extremely important to correctly calculate the size and locations of notches and holes in joists.

NOTCHING JOISTS

Notching can be made to either the upper or lower section of a solid timber joist to accommodate pipework or components to allow flooring or ceiling materials to be installed. It is required that notching is carried out in parts of the joist that will not pose a risk to the structure.

Notching of new timber joists will prove simpler than carrying out work on existing joists. It is essential that, prior to carrying out any notching on an existing building joist, you establish if any part of the joist has been notched in the past. If there are notches in prohibited areas, you may need to get the opinion of a structural engineer.

Notches within joists have to be positioned at a maximum of $0.25L$, measured from the inside of the wall finish. This is calculated by measuring the span between the two points the joist is supported on (structural support) and dividing by four.

A notch can be no closer to the wall finish than $0.07L$. This is determined by measuring the span, dividing by 100 and multiplying by seven. Notching in solid joists can only be made within the zones stated to a depth of no more than $1/8$ of the joist depth expressed as $\max D/8$.

Notching should never be made in any modern eco or 'I' type joists without the explicit permission of the manufacturer/structural engineer. These modern joists leave a suitable area to pass pipework or have designated zones

that can be cut out for pipework. Note: The Northern Ireland Building Regulations do have a variation for notching. For more information, refer to Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 Technical Booklet D.

DRILLING JOISTS

Drilling of solid wooden joists is another acceptable method to pass pipework through the structure of a building. As with notching, there are limitations to the locations of drilled holes within a structural joist.

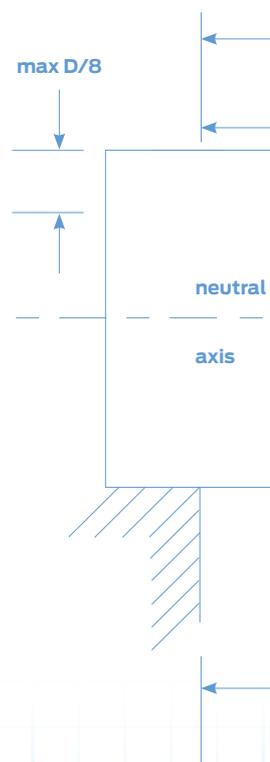
Any drilling is required to take place on the neutral axis (central line) as the centre of the joist has the least stress exerted on it. The holes should not be any closer to the wall than $0.25L$ (span) and drilling should not take place any further than $0.4L$ ($2/5$) of the span from the wall finish. Holes can be drilled at a maximum diameter of $1/4$ of the joist depth, (hole dia $\max D/4$). Holes should not be drilled any closer to other holes than $3x$ the diameter of the hole. Notches and holes should be no closer to each other horizontally than 100mm.

DRILLING STUDS

When drilling stud work members, it is essential that the stud is drilled in the correct location. Holes should be drilled no more than $0.4H$ ($2/5$) of the height from either the top or bottom of the stud and no less than $0.25H$ ($1/4$) from the top or bottom of the cripple stud being drilled. The hole diameter can be a $1/4$ of the depth of the stud member and no closer than 300mm to any other hole within that stud. As with joists,

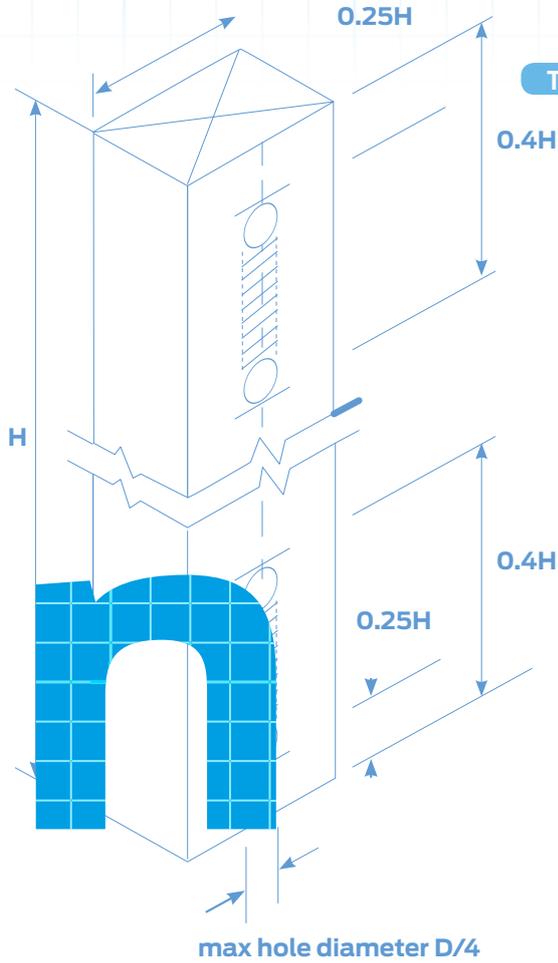


By Martyn Raine,
Technical
Manager,
SNIPEF



to

plan



TECHNICAL

holes on centreline only
hole diameter not greater than 0.25 F and not closer than 300mm

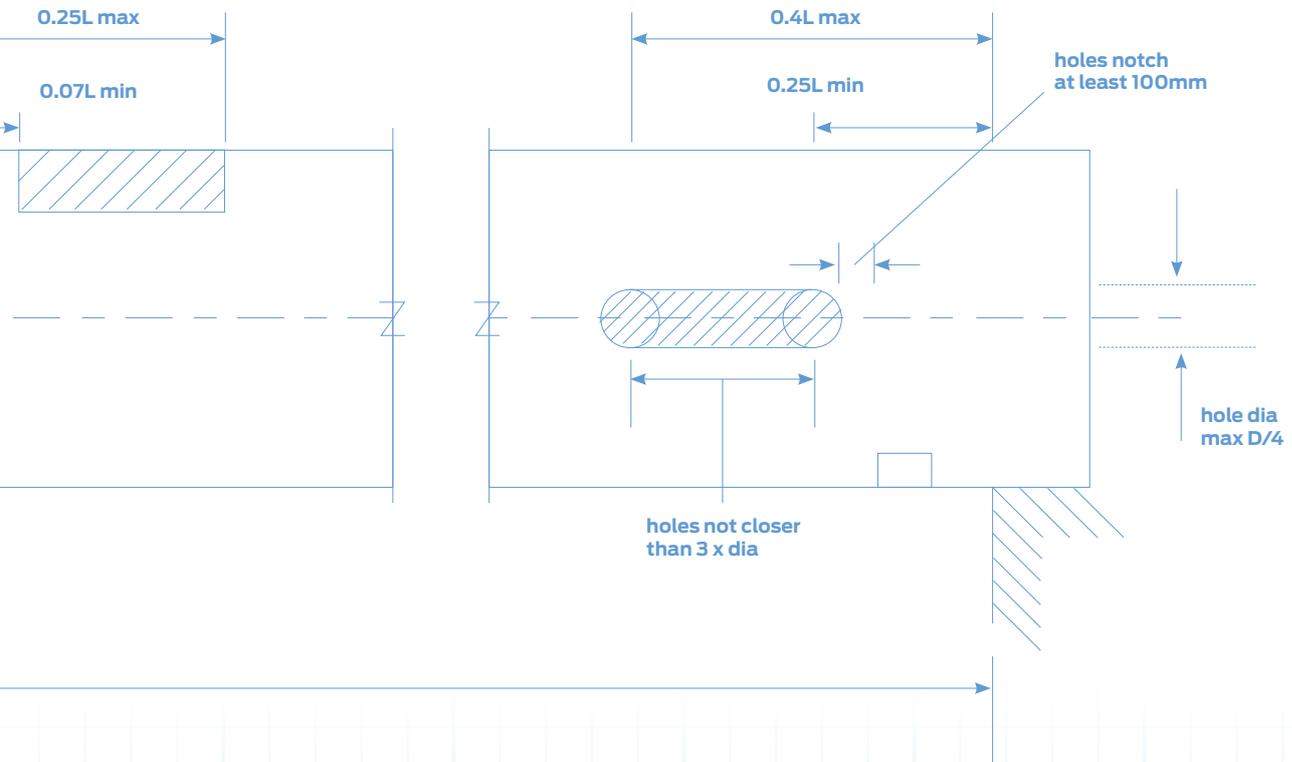
these studs have to be drilled on the neutral axis. Notches of any type are not permissible in any cripple stud. If there is any doubt to the type of stud work, the plumber should liaise with a structural engineer or other qualified person. Notching of any stud member is not permissible.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

The guidance provided in this article is intended for small buildings such as dwellings. Larger buildings tend to use different

methods of construction for structures due to compartmentation. If timber joists are in place in larger buildings, expert advice will be required if structure is to be notched or bored. Further guidance can be found in the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 Technical Booklet D Structure and The Building Regulations (Scotland) 2004 Technical Handbook section 1 BS 8103-3: 2009. ■

Diagrams printed with permission from the Small Buildings Structural Guidance.



When an inspector

Inspections are a key part of SNIPEF membership. But why are they so important? Our man with the clipboard answers some of the most commonly asked questions...

Although I have nearly two decades of experience under my belt, there's always something new to learn – and plenty to read too!

I'm not ashamed to say I don't know everything and it's always a pleasure to listen to our members when I meet them on site to learn from their experiences. With that in mind, here are some of the most common questions I get asked about inspections:

WHY DOES SNIPEF CARRY OUT INSPECTIONS?

Technical inspections are required as part of the SNIPEF membership and the various schemes it operates – e.g. Plumbing Industry Licensing Scheme (PILS) and Approved Certifier of Construction (ACCS) – to ensure the standard of work is to a professional level and complies with regulations. It also provides the public with confidence the work of SNIPEF members has been inspected and is to a high standard. Inspections aren't meant to be an intimidating ordeal – they're a friendly way for SNIPEF to help members.

HOW DOES AN INSPECTION GET ORGANISED?

I usually make contact with a member via email or phone. I offer them the chance to book through the digital booking form, allowing the member to choose a date and time that is suitable to their routine. I also make sure the job site I will be visiting will deliver a sufficient amount of work to examine.

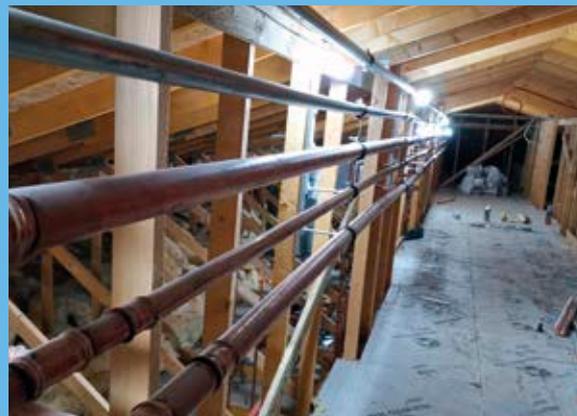
HOW LONG DOES AN INSPECTION TAKE?

All inspections are different. Sometimes the initial meeting is at the member's place of business and then we travel to the installation. The timescales can range from one to three



By John Somerville, Technical Inspector, SNIPEF

BELOW: Retrofit of an LPG central heating system in a property that previously had electric storage heaters



hours, depending on the situation. I try and allow for a maximum of two hours from first meeting to leaving.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SNIPEF MEMBER INSPECTION AND PILS AND ACCS INSPECTIONS?

SNIPEF member inspections and PILS and ACCS inspections are the same in terms of what I look at from a technical aspect. However, with the ACCS inspections, I also have to look at the member's log book, their certificates of construction and checklists.

WHAT ARE THE FIRST THINGS YOU DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE?

I always like to have a chat, as the word 'inspection' can often sound daunting to members. I like to make them feel relaxed as we're there to help their professional development, and so creating a relaxed environment helps. If it's an ACCS inspection, I'll start by looking at their documents. Usually, the member asks what documents I'd like to see as the exact paperwork can sometimes be confusing for the members.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR DURING THE INSPECTION?

I advise the member to take me around their installation and talk about it as if they were showing a client. During this

time, I have a look to make sure the installation complies with the Water Byelaws, building regulations and other relevant associated standards. I also always check that the overall quality of work is of a high standard.

WHAT TYPE OF INSTALLATION DO YOU NEED TO SEE FOR AN INSPECTION?

The type of installation that is preferred is one that involves a sufficient quantity of work to evaluate. This can be anything from mains supply installation,

calls

DO YOU OFFER ADVICE DURING THE INSPECTION?

If there are any contraventions to regulations, I discuss them with the member during the walk-around and advise if any rectification work is needed. Most of the time the rectification work will be carried out within a couple of weeks, with the member given 28 days to send in confirmation of rectification by photo evidence. Sometimes I've even had it done on the spot! As SNIPEF isn't a governing body, we can't force the rectification work, we can only advise. However, if there's been no communication or confirmation of rectification in 28 days, the work will be referred to the relevant regulatory body and the plumber may be removed from the scheme or membership.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE INSPECTION IS COMPLETED?

After the walk-around is done, an inspection form will be filled out with detailed information that was gathered. During this time, I also talk to the member about any other plumbing matters and also have a chat to see if SNIPEF can help them or their business in any other way. Any information the member has requested over and above their inspection is passed to the relevant department within SNIPEF.

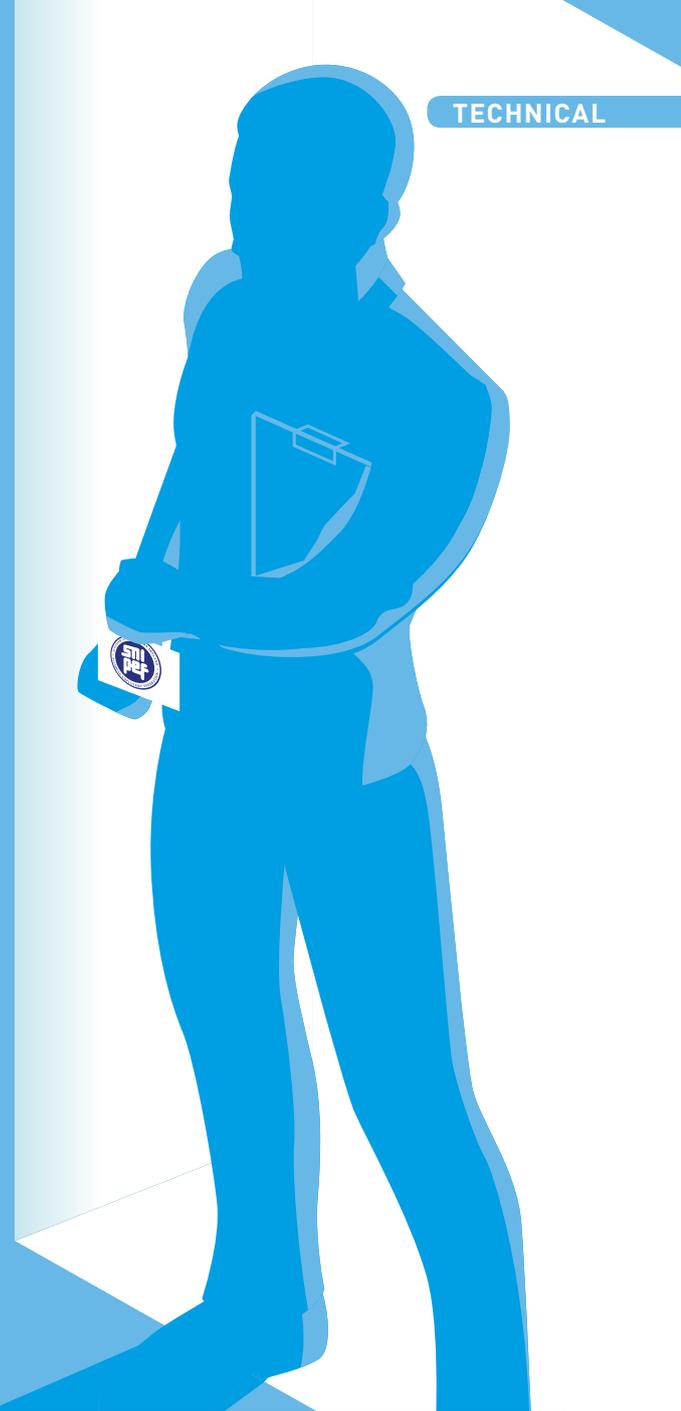
bathroom installation or unvented cylinder. For ACCS inspections, ideally it will be an installation that the company is going to use the scheme to sign off their work on, but the installations stated above are welcome too.

CAN MEMBERS REQUEST AN INSPECTION?

Absolutely. If the member is part of ACCS it's compulsory to be inspected once every three years. This is where the online booking form may be easier for companies to book a date that's more suitable to them. At the moment you can book a date up to six months in the future. For companies not part of ACCS, an inspection can still be requested.

BEYOND MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF SNIPEF MEMBERSHIP AND RELEVANT SCHEMES, HOW IS AN INSPECTION BENEFICIAL TO MEMBERS?

An inspection is primarily to verify the standard of work members carry out, but they're also great for professional development. Members can present their work, receive constructive feedback and ensure they have an up-to-date understanding of the regulations. Furthermore, inspections give members the chance to get advice and



“ Inspections aren't an intimidating ordeal – they're a friendly way for SNIPEF to help members”

support from the SNIPEF technical team. There have been instances when a company wasn't aware of the services we can provide, or they prefer to discuss matters face-to-face. We work alongside the water authorities and learn from them, allowing us to pass on our knowledge to members during visits, using installations to explain advice more effectively than via a document or phone call. ■

Round-up of latest WaterSafe® activities and events

New call for more female plumbers to take up the tools

With less than 1% of UK plumbers being female, WaterSafe is calling for more women to take up the tools.

Despite plumbing being a great career choice that combines instant



Zoe Hume

job satisfaction, a decent wage and skills that are always in demand, the number of women in the trade remains very low.

The UK register of approved plumbers'

better time to be a female in the industry.

Glasgow-based SNIPEF apprentice Zoe Hume said: "A lot of people have an old-fashioned view

of what it's like for a female plumber, but it's no different really from any other job. My experience has been

good from the start – although male colleagues are often surprised to see a female plumber, they haven't treated me any differently.

"Through hard work, I've proved that I'm as capable of doing the job as anyone else, which has earned me respect."

WaterSafe is now asking plumbers to use the #GetGirlsPlumbing hashtag to support the campaign on social media – please follow it on
 @WaterSafeRegister
 @WatersafeUK and
 /watersafe for updates

Get Girls Plumbing campaign encourages women not to be put off by the outdated stereotype that plumbing is a job better suited to men.

With a skills shortage across the UK leading to a higher demand for competent plumbers, there's never been a

To mark World Plumbing Day on 11 March, SNIPEF's Membership and Communications Manager Sarah Fitzpatrick wrote a guest blog on the importance of encouraging women to become plumbers. Have a read at watersafe.org/blog



Did you know?

As a member of SNIPEF you can join WaterSafe and get listed in its online directory for homeowners – one of the largest for approved plumbers in the UK.

You'll gain water industry endorsement for your business and give peace of mind to your customers that you're trained to work safely with their drinking water. Visit watersafe.org.uk for more information.

➤ For more information and advice about how you can benefit from your membership of WaterSafe, remember to please visit the website at www.watersafe.org.uk

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Scotland's best head West

SkillPLUMB apprentice competition returns to West College Scotland in June



The annual SNIPEF SkillPLUMB apprentice competition returns to West College Scotland's Paisley Campus on 21 June.

The competition showcases the skills of plumbing apprentices from colleges and training centres across Scotland. Up to 36 participants will compete in either the copper pipework or lead work competition, with four hours to complete a practical task that demonstrates their knowledge, technique and skill. Their completed work will be assessed and marked by a panel of technical experts.

A series of activities to support professional development and networking will run alongside for lecturers and employers, including a chance to get up-to-date with the latest developments from leading manufacturers.

Fiona Hodgson, SNIPEF CEO, said: "We have consistently seen an extremely high standard of skill and competence demonstrated by Scottish apprentices. In 2018, we had five copper competitors go on



Catch the video of all the action from SkillPLUMB 2018 here: bit.ly/SkillPLUMB2018

to compete at the national competition in Birmingham with one taking the overall title. This is a reflection of the quality education and training apprentices receive from their lecturers and employers, and the dedication they put into their studies.

"We are excited to return to West College Scotland and look forward to seeing the level of skill on display."

Tommy Campbell, Head of Construction & Building Services, West College Scotland said: "We are delighted to host this exciting competition for the second year

in a row. It provides a first-class showcase of talent from across Scotland and we are eager to see what this year's competitors have to offer!"

The highest scoring copper competitors from the six UK-wide heats will be invited to take part in the UK final at WorldSkillsUK LIVE, the nation's largest skills, apprenticeships and careers event, which will be held at the NEC Birmingham from 21-23 November. ■



The competition provides a first-class showcase of talent... we can't wait to see what this year's competitors have to offer!"

From left: project engineer Dean with new James Frew recruits Stuart and Callum



Duo make a fresh start

SNIFEPE helps Callum and Stuart find a new home at **James Frew Ltd** after company appeals for apprentices

Two new recruits from Edinburgh have been offered the opportunity to complete their apprenticeship with James Frew Ltd – thanks to a little help from SNIFEPE.

The company approached SNIFEPE to ask if they knew of any candidates who were unable to be kept on after their course or had been made redundant halfway through their apprenticeship.

After receiving a number of names and holding interviews for the positions, the company offered Callum Wilson and Stuart Thompson the positions.

Callum, who has just turned 26, joined James Frew as a second-year plumbing apprentice. He will now be placed at Apple Apartments in Edinburgh, carrying out plumbing installations under

the guidance of foreman plumber David Logan.

Callum said: "I really appreciate the opportunity James Frew have given me to carry on my apprenticeship, which wasn't possible in my last job.

"I've moved from working in houses to big sites and although most of it's new to me, I can't wait to get started and learn everything they have to offer."

Stuart, 20, has also joined the company as a third-year plumbing apprentice and will be working at Granton Harbour in Edinburgh, carrying out plumbing installations under the tutelage of experienced foreman plumber Eric Liddell.

Stuart said: "I was so pleased and thankful when I found out I had passed the interview

+

For more information about taking on a plumbing apprentice, contact the SNIFEPE Training team on **0131 556 0600** or email training@snipef.org

and been given this unique opportunity. I am very excited to finish my apprenticeship with such a big company."

The latest recruits are aspiring to achieve the same path as their new colleague Dean Little, who started as an apprentice before moving on to tradesman, foreman and now project engineer.

Their arrival also means that more than 25% of James Frew's 303 staff members have completed or are currently undertaking a Modern Apprenticeship.

Roddy Frew, Managing Director at James Frew, said: "We wanted to give an opportunity to an established apprentice with a positive progress review to complete their apprenticeship with the company."

Dale Thomson, SNIFEPE Training Manager, said: "It's great to see employers like James Frew looking to take on apprentices, like Callum and Stuart, who weren't able to finish their apprenticeships with their original employer.

"It allows the apprentices to complete their training and begin their career, while providing the employer with apprentices that already have established knowledge about the trade." ■



FROM LEFT: Plumbers Natalie Wood from Alexander Thomson Plumbing & Heating, Emily Rosier of Highland Rose Plumbing & Heating, and apprentice Connie McNaughton from Robert Walker Plumbing & Heating Engineers

Gender on the agenda

SNIFE Training teams up with Skills Development Scotland to organise Women Into Plumbing events as part of Scottish Apprenticeship Week

As the managing agent and training provider for plumbing apprenticeships in Scotland, SNIFE Training is a strong believer in the positive impact apprenticeships can have on someone's life and the benefits they have for both employers and the wider economy.

It is with pride for the achievements of our apprentices that we celebrate Scottish Apprenticeship Week (4-8 March), a time dedicated to celebrating apprentices and everyone who plays a part in their success.

As well as celebrating apprentices past and present, the week is about sharing stories to encourage people to begin their own apprenticeship journey and employers to take on apprentices.

This year, SNIFE Training partnered with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to hold two Women Into Plumbing events to encourage women into a career in the plumbing and heating industry.

The free-to-attend events took place at South Lanarkshire College on Tuesday 5 March and at Perth College UHI on Thursday 7 March. Attendees were given the chance to learn more about the Modern Apprenticeship in

Domestic Plumbing and Heating, hear female apprentices talk about their experiences, and speak with employers from local plumbing businesses.

With Scottish Apprenticeship Week coinciding with International Women's Day, it was a timely opportunity to highlight the importance of apprenticeships and the need to encourage people to consider a career in plumbing. It was also a good opportunity to focus on increasing the number of women entering the industry.

Unfortunately, the number of women entering the industry is still low. Last year, SNIFE Training welcomed more than 300 new apprentices onto the Modern Apprenticeship in Domestic Plumbing and Heating, but of them, only four were women.

SNIFE CEO Fiona Hodgson said: "The construction industry is a place for everyone and we need to promote equality and diversity to attract more people to pursue careers within it.

"We need to encourage women to see plumbing as a viable and interesting career option, full of opportunities to learn and develop. Equally, we need employers to be open to taking on female apprentices." ■

Andrew's in full flow



Andrew delivers his talk to apprentices

Advisor helps apprentices brush up on their Water Byelaws during presentation in Glasgow



Second-year SNIPEF apprentices recently extended their Water Byelaws knowledge, receiving an awareness talk from Andrew Porter, Scottish Water Technical Support Advisor.

The presentation, held at Glasgow Kelvin College, was part of a series of national awareness talks on Water Byelaws. The initiative is being rolled out across all second-year plumbing apprentices in Scotland who

attend SNIPEF-affiliated colleges, in addition to the training they receive in class. The talk's topics ranged from contamination risks to the effects of poor plumbing and the way the byelaws are enforced and regulated.

Andrew demonstrated a number of scenarios students may come across when they are qualified, including examples of water contamination risks

and a video showing how easily backflow and back pressure can occur if plumbing is not installed correctly.

The programme received positive feedback from students. Kieran Hannaway said: "It was a really useful and enjoyable session that I'm sure I'll be able to apply in practice."

Vanessa Santi, SNIPEF Regional Training Officer, said: "It was great to get

so much positive feedback from students and hear that they found the initiative beneficial."

Andrew said: "The importance of the training apprentice plumbers receive is key in ensuring plumbing is carried out in accordance with Water Byelaws.

"The engagement and questions raised at the talks so far have been great. I look forward to seeing the rest of the apprentices in the coming months." ■



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Pointing a new way

As one of the key players in BSE Skills Ltd, SNIPEF now helps to set the standard on skills and training, and has already helped the new joint venture complete its first contract

The new venture between SNIPEF, the Building Engineering Services Association (BESA) and SELECT is already pointing the way ahead for skills development.

BSE Skills Ltd has been appointed to manage and develop apprenticeships, qualifications and National Occupational Standards (NOS) for the building services engineering sector across the UK.

After completing its first contract, the venture is breaking new ground as it's the first time trade bodies have received a government commission to carry out this work.

Until 2017, the managing body was the government-sponsored sector skills council, SummitSkills. Now Skills Development Scotland (SDS) – which has the responsibility on behalf of the UK to maintain and update NOS – has awarded BSE Skills a contract as a delivery partner to oversee and manage the review and updating of the

“ We’ve received some good feedback on the work done so far ”

Fiona Harper, SELECT

sector’s occupational standards, on which sector qualifications are based.

These NOS will be used by devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as the Westminster government, and BSE Skills is responsible for making sure there’s a secure future for vocational training in these crucial sectors.

A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP

During the bidding process, the associations demonstrated close links with employers, as well as UK-wide capacity through an established network of key partners, including the Electrical Contractors’ Association and the Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors.

Duncan Wilson, Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Training at SNIPEF, said: “We have a long-established working relationship with SELECT and BESA and are able to benefit from the greater reach and experience that working collectively on skills brings.

“It seemed sensible to build on that relationship and good for the sector to work with employers to make sure occupational standards, the related qualifications and apprenticeship frameworks continue to meet their needs and those of people working

in the sector.”

CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Regulators are keen to see consistent standards across the UK. Likewise, SNIPEF, SELECT and BESA have identified a need to establish mutual recognition and transportability of all BSE qualifications across the UK and to recognise the needs of each industry and each region.

Accordingly, BSE Skills has been specifically designed to be a lean organisation. That’s why it has just three directors – one from each body – and employs Alan McDonald as an Operations Manager on a consultancy basis.

Among other things, Alan has the task of preparing BSE Skills documentation, leading

SELECT’s Fiona Harper with Duncan Wilson from SNIPEF

forward

“BSE Skills is working well... it has a very good structure”

Duncan Wilson, SNIPEF

the review and development work and interfacing with government departments, such as the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), SDS, Qualifications Wales and the Northern Ireland Department for the Economy.

He said: “The main thing is to make sure industry has its say. The best people to ask about the qualifications are the users, that is the employers, apprentices and providers

who know these things more intimately than most. During our work we’ve communicated directly with more than 250 separate organisations across the UK. We wouldn’t have been able to do that without the partnerships we have.

“We keep a very tight grip on project control and are very focused on NOS, qualifications and the apprenticeships frameworks.”

BSE Skills received its first contract on 31 August 2018 to review 44 national occupational standards to make sure they were up to date, accurate and complete in accordance with the requirements of industry. This work was successfully completed on schedule on 31 March 2019.

Fiona Harper, Head of Employment Affairs at SELECT, emphasised that the next challenge for the organisation is to win the follow-up contract. This will move things on, looking at qualifications and is likely to focus specifically on the devolved nations – Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

“We think we have a good chance to win this contract,” she said. “We have been receiving good feedback on the work that we have done so far.”

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT

Duncan added: “BSE Skills is working well, it has a very good structure for employer engagement and key stakeholder involvement covering all four administrations of the UK.

“This enables it to piggyback on existing meetings and employer engagement structures, making it much

easier for our members to contribute.

“It has a long-term future as the guardian of NOS and their related qualifications and apprenticeship frameworks with the sector as a whole across the UK, built on employer and key stakeholder engagement.”

Iain McCaskey, Head of BESA Scotland and Northern Ireland, added: “We are grateful to the UK governments for recognising the value that industry bodies can bring to vocational training. It has been extremely heartening to see three complementary bodies working closely together to address the skills shortages in our industry.”

Significantly, employers who are not members of the three trade bodies regularly have the opportunity, through the industry training providers, to provide comment and feedback on issues relating to skills and apprenticeships.

This approach means BSE Skills has access to all relevant employers across the UK who have an interest in the NOS, qualifications and apprenticeship frameworks.

There is general agreement that establishing BSE Skills was a wise move. “It serves the industry well,” said Duncan. “It has a good structure for employer engagement and key stakeholder involvement.

“In the long run, our members are going to be more engaged. We all want to develop standards, qualifications and apprenticeships that deliver the type of skilled people employers are looking for and that the industry will need in the future.” ■



Finding the perfect fit

When a job becomes available in your business, how can you make sure you hire the right person?

THE ISSUE

Mark's business had grown to the point where he needed to employ another plumber to help manage the workload.

It was critical to the growth of his business that Mark hired the right candidate, however he was unsure of the correct recruitment process.

THE SOLUTION

The first step for Mark was to write a detailed list of what the role would entail and then convert it into a job description.

Mark summarised the job description to create a job specification which he then used to advertise the role online. This job spec included:

- Title
- Responsibilities
- Grade, qualifications and skills required
- Summary of the company culture and work environment
- Wage and benefits, e.g. pension contribution.

After receiving a number of promising applications, Mark created a shortlist of candidates and invited them for an interview. He also organised for David, one of the managers at his company, to sit in on the interviews with him to get another opinion.

Prior to the interview, Mark developed some questions to ask the applicants to help him make sure they were a good fit for the company and the role. These questions were a combination of technical plumbing questions related to their experience and skills, as well as some questions that helped get an understanding of their personality.

At the interviews, Mark and David asked to see each candidate's grading card and qualifications. During the interviews they both made notes and afterwards discussed which applicant would be best suited to the job. Mark and David then decided to offer the position

By Stephanie Lowe, SNIPEF's in-house expert on industrial relations

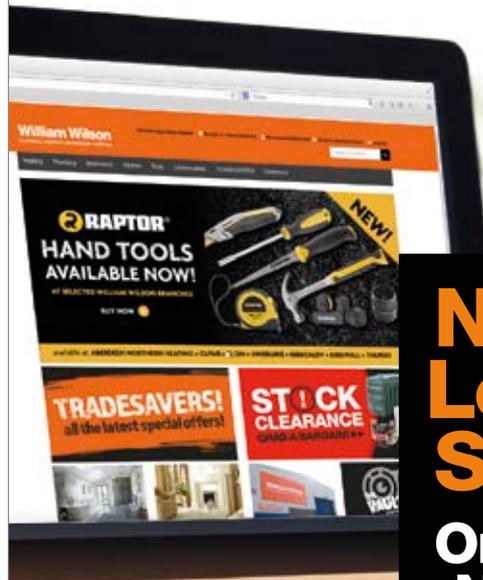
to a candidate called James.

Mark contacted James and told him he was offering him the position on the condition that his references came back positive and that James was eligible to work in the UK. To do this, he checked James's passport, making sure it was still valid, for his full name and photograph. He also





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checked a utility bill as proof of address.

When James's references came back positive, Mark provided a starting date, a new employee starter form and terms and conditions of employment for his new member of staff to complete and sign.

THE RESULT

As Mark had followed a thorough recruitment process, and made clear what he expected from James, his new employee fitted into the role well.

Both Mark and David also explained the company procedures to James. In addition, in order to help him continue to perform well, Mark met James every month during his probationary period to talk about what he could improve on and what he was doing well.

James continues to work for Mark and is a competent and hard worker. ■

What are project bank accounts? And how could they help SNIPEF member firms? Here, we outline their benefits and explain how they can help with all-important cash flow

Payments you can bank on

It is increasingly likely that, as a SNIPEF member firm, you will come across project bank accounts (PBAs) at some point and will be asked to agree to use them to receive your payments.

PBAs are mandated for Scottish Government bodies – e.g. covering hospitals, transport and prisons – where the main contract is over £2 million. This threshold was recently reduced from £4.1 million to encompass smaller businesses in the supply chain. Some councils such as Edinburgh City and Clackmannanshire are also either currently using or planning to use PBAs.

WHAT IS A PBA?

PBAs were devised to provide a measure of cash flow security for firms who are part of construction supply chains.

Once monies are certified as payable by the client, they are paid by the client into a PBA, which is a ring-fenced bank account.

The monies in the account are protected by the imposition of a trust; this means that the monies are secure in the event of the insolvency of the main contractor.

A trust is rather like garlic

to Dracula, the latter being the insolvency practitioner appointed to the main contractor. Sub-contractors on many Carillion projects where there was a PBA in place did not lose money.

HOW DO PBAs WORK?

PBAs do not disrupt the usual contractual structures. The Tier 1 contractor submits its application to the client as usual; the application is, of course, the aggregated amount of the sub-contractors' applications.

Once the client has agreed the application the monies are deposited in the PBA. Within five days, the monies are paid out simultaneously to the



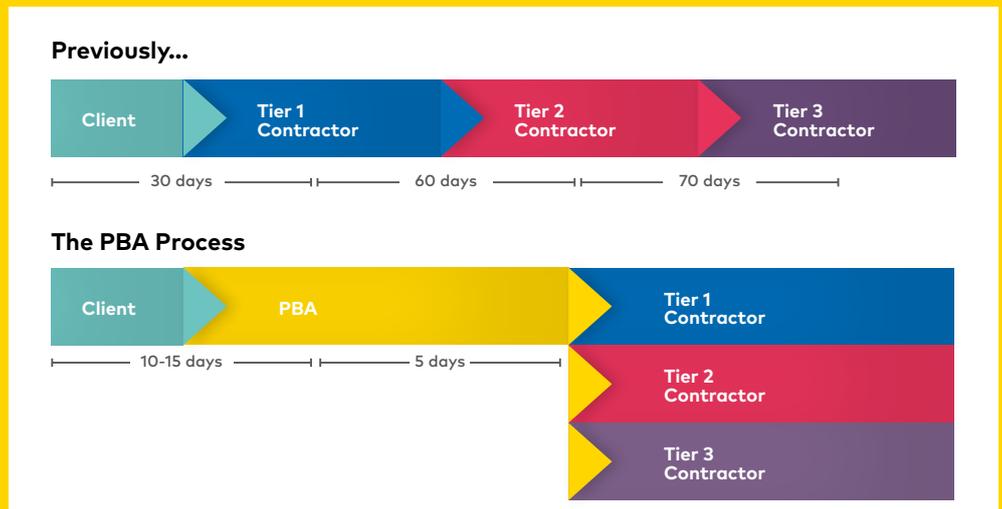
Rudi Klein, Barrister and SEC Group CEO

Tier 1 contractor and its sub-contractors.

If the client hasn't agreed the full amount of the application, there will be a shortfall in the PBA. It's important to note that a PBA is not a pay-when-paid arrangement, which would, in any event, be unlawful under the Construction Act. The Tier 1 contractor is still bound to pay its sub-contractors sums which are properly due to them.

The PBA process cuts down the time taken for monies to cascade down through the layers of sub-contracting.

Down south, Highways



Who is Rudi Klein?

Rudi Klein is CEO of the Specialist Engineering Contractors' (SEC) Group, which represents the UK's premier trade associations in the specialist engineering sector. A barrister in construction law and President of the NEC Users' Group, Rudi is acknowledged as a driving force behind the changes to improve payment performance in the UK construction industry. He helped draft the Construction Contracts Act in Ireland which was added to the Irish Statute Book in July 2013, and is the author of two legal publications and countless legal articles in the construction press and academic journals. In October 2016, Rudi was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by SELECT. He was presented with the Merit Award for outstanding contribution to the plumbing industry from SNIPEF in November 2016. SEC Group was awarded the 2018 Gold Award at the H&V News Awards and Rudi was appointed to the Carillion Task Force chaired by the Secretary of State for Business in January 2018.

England is currently the most prolific user of PBAs. By 2020 more than £20 billion worth of Highways England projects will have been paid for using PBAs. It means all sub-contractors are being paid within 18 days of the assessment date (valuation date) under the Tier 1 contract.

PBA FORMALITIES

The formalities for setting up and operating a PBA are fairly minimal. Under Scots law there has to be in place a trust deed. This has to be signed by the client and Tier 1 contractor as trustees of the monies in the PBA and by the beneficiaries of these monies, i.e. the Tiers 1, 2 and 3 contractors.

A late appointed sub-contractor can sign a joining or accession deed. The trust deed simply confirms that the monies held in the PBA are trust monies intended for payment to the named beneficiaries.

Again, under the Scots law of trusts, both the client and Tier 1 contractor have to enter into a bank mandate or agreement with the bank. The account holders are then responsible for issuing the instructions to the bank to make the necessary payments. The bank has to be made aware that the monies in the PBA are subject to trust status.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?

PBAs are the most effective method for achieving cash flow certainty. They ensure that the monies are secure in the event of upstream insolvencies and that regular payments are made within a period that is far less than 30 days. ■

Have you had direct experience of PBAs? If so, please let Rudi know by emailing him on rudi.klein@secgroup.org.uk

Additionally, if you have had experience of any recurrent contractual issues which could be the subject of an article in *PlumbHeat* please contact the editor. Please note that the author is not able to deal with individual contract inquiries or disputes.

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ALWAYS READ THE small print



Len Bunton considers the implications of entering into construction contracts with onerous obligations – and reveals why a magnifying glass could be your best friend

You may wonder what the relevance of the magnifying glass is. It's not because my eyesight is failing, but rather because I had to purchase one recently in order to read a set of conditions of contract that had been sent by a contractor to a client of mine.

The magnifying glass was required so I could actually read the text as the document had been printed out in an unreadable format. Now I'm no cynic, but part of me questions whether this was deliberate in the hope that the reader would give up trying to understand the terms and conditions they were entering into.

So in this special feature, I'll be looking at an issue that I encounter frequently when advising contractors and sub-contractors about their contractual obligations.

IMPORTANCE OF THE CONTRACT

When somebody phones up asking for a piece of advice, the first thing I do is to request to see a copy of the contract conditions. The responses are many and varied: "We don't have one." "We have one but we don't know where it is." "We were intending to sign but it's still sitting on my desk." "We raised a number of issues with the contractor and they haven't come back to us, and that was six months ago." Or, even better: "Contracts? I don't believe in contracts. We just agreed a price and shook hands."

It goes without saying that, for every project, it's absolutely essential to have a properly formulated contract that sets out each party's rights and obligations.

I fully appreciate that when contractors are tendering for work, their objective is to secure the work

package at a decent price, then go off and do the work properly, get paid on time, make a reasonable profit, and hope to have created the opportunity for future work from the same sources.

But in my experience it's not been a priority to carefully look at the contract, consider the terms and conditions, and determine whether they are onerous and might cause difficulties at a later date.

On the many occasions when I've raised this issue the response has been: "Look, we need the work and we have a labour force to keep fully employed. We keep multiple fingers crossed and hope that there will be no contractual issues at a later date."

I can understand that securing work is a contractor's priority in life. But what I would like to do is to set

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➤ Continued on from 39

out some of the risks hidden in contracts – and what you can do to negotiate them, or at least mitigate some of the obligations you might have undertaken.

MAIN CONTRACT PROVISIONS

So what types of provisions should you be wary of? More often than not, contractors will say that the terms and conditions of the main contract will apply to the sub-contractors too, and that the conditions of the main contract are available for inspection at the contractor's offices. You will be deemed to have had notice of these in formulating your sub-contract price.

This is a difficult one because few sub-contractors have the time and resource to go off and spend a couple of hours looking through an encyclopaedia of contractual clauses that might cause a nightmare later.

So I suggest you take into consideration the size of the sub-contract you're entering into and look at particular provisions that could impact on your sub-contract, e.g. payment provisions, retention periods and levels of liquidated and ascertained damages.

Also, if the main contract has been let using one of the Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) or Scottish Building Contract Committee (SBCC) forms and the employer has inserted amendments, it's useful to check if these amendments are in tracked changes so you can understand any modifications to the main form.

There's no doubt that this is a risky area for sub-contractors, and in a complex project it's certainly worth spending a few hundred pounds getting somebody to have a quick run-through the main contract to see if there are any potential problems lurking.

In relation to sub-contracts, many contractors use the family of contracts published



“ It's essential to have a properly formulated contract that sets out each party's obligations ”

by JCT and SBCC in Edinburgh. Many sub-contractors I come across are not up to date with the latest version of these forms, but luckily the SBCC's online subscription service is designed to help your organisation keep fully up to speed with developments.

FORM AMENDMENTS

If standard forms are used, contractors will often insert amendments which can be very complicated to work through. These may relate to a whole series of different matters by adding and omitting certain words, and it really is hard work to read through them to understand the changes.

Following discussions between SEC Group Scotland, SBCC and the Scottish Futures Trust – who have published recommendations into new Scottish procurement guidelines – we have recommended that changes to the standard forms should be kept to the absolute



By Len Bunton
Immediate past
chair, SBCC,
FRICS, FCI Arb

minimum. They should be in a tracked change version, with an explanation as to why a clause has been changed, which appears to me to be a very sensible approach in the public sector to ensure that everybody understands the contractual obligations that they're signing up for.

Contractors will also have the choice of either deciding not to tender, or trying to negotiate onerous provisions out of these contracts.

PAYMENT PROVISIONS

So what contractual provisions are likely to cause difficulties? The first, and probably the most important, relates to payment provisions. JCT and SBCC represent cross-industry interests; they've drawn up a set of payment provisions that are fair and reasonable and provide the essential certainty to contractors in relation to time periods for payment, what they're going to be paid and



when they'll receive their cash. This has to be reflected along the whole of the construction supply chain.

So the first thing to look at in relation to a new contract is: What are the payment provisions? Have they been varied from the standard forms? Are you clear what this means to your organisation? And if the payment provisions are too onerous, can you negotiate an improved position?

The ultimate position might be that the cash flow implications of the contract are just so onerous that you're not able to take on the project – and believe me, I've seen that happen.

One of the difficulties that sub-contractors face is that retention release is often tied into the date of practical completion of the main contract. So, for example, if you're a sub-contractor involved in the early stages of a project, you might have to wait a considerable period of time

for retention release. I quite often see contractors and sub-contractors agreeing an earlier date of retention release within a commercial agreement, reached on amounts that are due to the contractor for the work they have carried out. It's certainly an area worth looking at.

Moreover, the Construction Act now outlaws provisions that make sub-contract retention release conditional on some events under the main contract, such as the issue of a Certificate of Making Good.

Another very onerous provision relates to the deduction of liquidated and ascertained damages, where the damages figure in the main contract applies also to the sub-contract.

In a major project, this can be a very onerous obligation for a sub-contractor to take

on, and most certainly needs to be considered at tender stage. This is often completely disproportionate to the value of the sub-contractor's package of work.

IN CONCLUSION

I close by coming back to a point I made earlier in this article – work is short in the industry, margins are tight, sub-contractors need workflow to keep their organisations going, and more often than not they are prepared to take on the risk of some of the issues raised.

Of course, this is a matter of commercial judgement for sub-contractors to consider when tendering for, or securing, attractive work packages.

But sadly, I am sure my magnifying glass will come to good use in the days and months that lie ahead. ■

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will bring back the most up to date methods and information gained from their training course.

THEY'RE ENTHUSIASTIC –

Apprentices are generally keen to get stuck in, prove themselves and learn as much as possible, bringing fresh enthusiasm to the business.

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

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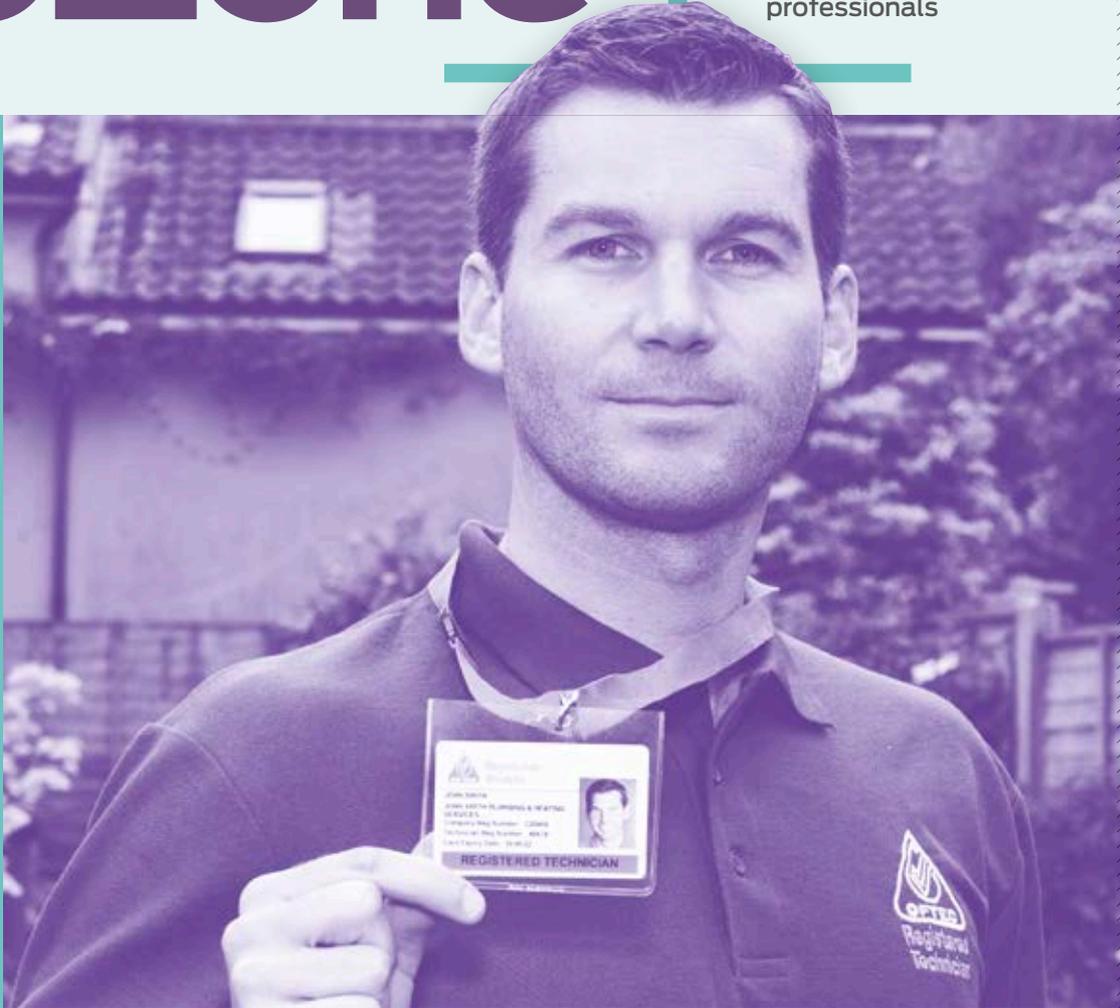
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Safe and sound

Range of low surface temperature radiators are easy on the eye and provide peace of mind

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Team effort pays off

There are many benefits to working with a trusted partner when you're installing a bathroom

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Looking for a warm fleece or the latest safety shoes? Snickers Workwear has got it all covered

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Pipeline progress

Safety is to the fore in new product that has a second polyethylene outer cover to prevent gas escapes

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‘Safe to touch’ heating – sorted

Stelrad offers a range of low surface radiators combining protection and peace of mind with aesthetically-pleasing design

There are responsibilities that many people have for providing a safe environment. And safe heating is often one of those responsibilities.

LST (low surface temperature) radiators are key where there is a need to meet NHS Guidance for ‘Safe Hot Water and surface temperature’ in hospitals, care and nursing homes, as well as sheltered housing, schools and nurseries and in an increasing amount of general needs housing that may be used by vulnerable people during that home’s lifetime.

They are also highly relevant in sports centres and other public

service buildings where the owners want to take all the risk out of the building.

When asking whether LST radiators are needed, you only need to consider the risk of, in particular, older people falling and injuring themselves on a radiator along with potential dangers from those with a visual impairment bumping into or brushing against radiators.

LST radiators need to be designed to ensure they offer as much protection as possible to those for whom they are designed to provide heating – as well as to ensure the casing never exceeds

43°C, they need to include rounded corners and edges to the design to avoid damage from sharp edges.

Remembering that LST radiators are in the main installed in buildings to offer protection to older people, additional benefits such as safety grilles, easy to operate heating controls and even arthritic adaptors for people who are unable to grip controls easily, can be incorporated to provide a user friendly ‘package’ for those they seek to help.

Radiators are still responsible for sharing the heat in more than 90% of domestic heating systems installed in the UK and a surprisingly high percentage of commercial properties, so the age of the radiator is still very much with us. Stelrad is going the extra mile to ensure radiators continue to be an aesthetic choice as well as a common sense one, with a wide range of designs, an easy to install philosophy and the widest range of sizes to ensure there is a radiator for pretty much every application that can be imagined.

While traditionally, LSTs have tended to have flat-fronted casings, Stelrad has recently released two new additions to its already extensive range by adding an LST Standard Deco and LST iPlus Deco design – both featuring its popular Deco horizontal lined fascia to make the casings for the radiators more aesthetically pleasing. ■



By Chris Harvey,
Head of
Marketing,
Stelrad Radiators



To see the huge range of styles and options available from Stelrad, head for the Stelrad website at www.stelrad.com or call for brochures and information on 0844 543 6200.



Working together



Extend your business offer with CPS to maximise profitability

As homeowners continue to improve rather than move – 54% of homeowners are either currently undertaking a bathroom update or planning one for the future¹ – there is a real opportunity for plumbers to maximise their profitability by extending the services they can provide.

Kevin Dermidy is Regional Director for Scotland at City Plumbing, which includes state-of-the-art bathroom showrooms in 22 of its Scottish branches. In this article he looks at the advantages of working with a trusted partner to offer additional expertise to customers.

SAVING TIME FOR YOU

We know that when you're self-employed, time is literally money, so anything that helps with time management, to fit in extra jobs or work more efficiently is a bonus. Our dedicated showroom managers will liaise with your customers on your behalf, talking through the options either in store or on a home visit before preparing a full quotation so you don't have to. And when it comes to delivery, most of our products are available within 48 hours, so your project won't suffer any unexpected delays and when it's finished you can move swiftly on to the next job.

PROVIDING INSPIRATION FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS

Despite the rise in online shopping, when it comes to making a significant financial

investment such as a new bathroom, many people still want to see what they're buying before they commit. The Bathroom Showroom has a wide variety of room layouts set up showcasing everything from space saving showers to luxurious slipper baths. Stocking a broad range of products from brands your customers know and trust, options including heating, tiles and accessories are available to view. For initial ideas and inspiration, point your customers towards the user-friendly website the-bathroom-showroom.co.uk where they can view the ranges available and book their first appointment.

EXPERT KNOWLEDGE

With an experienced showroom manager on hand to guide your customers through their product selection, any questions can be answered swiftly and you can have confidence that your customers will get the best products for their space and

to meet their needs. The free 3D design service allows your customers to see just what their completed bathroom will look like before it's fitted and provides you with everything you need from floor plans to a full spec. So you just have to do what you do best – fit it!

CONVENIENCE

With 36 City Plumbing branches across Scotland – 22 of which have a Bathroom Showroom – you're never far away from getting everything you need.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

With advice and inspiration at their fingertips via online forums and websites, customers often have high expectations when it comes to bathroom design and style. Your customers will have access to another safe pair of hands, who can field their questions, arrange consultations and provide on-the-spot advice. This means your customers get the responsive service they expect, without taking you away from the day-to-day running of your business.

Being able to give customers more support not only makes for more satisfied customers but is also likely to encourage recommendations and repeat business. And as it's five times easier to retain an existing client than get a new one, that can only be good for your bottom line. ■



To find your nearest City Plumbing branch visit www.cityplumbing.co.uk/branch-locator

¹https://www.hiscox.co.uk/sites/uk/files/documents/2018-03/Hiscox_renovations_extensions_report_2018.pdf



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www.tracpipe.co.uk

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Snickers' climate control fleece provides a hot look at a cool price

The new 37.5[®] Technology Fleeces from Snickers Workwear deliver all-round work warmth and cooling comfort. Not only will you stay warm, you'll look and feel cool too.

With styles for both professional tradesmen and women, they excel at ventilation and moisture transport to keep you working comfortably, wherever you are on site.

The quick-drying

material captures and releases moisture vapour – like your sweat – for superior coolness and dry working comfort.

So to make sure you get the right protection, visibility, flexibility, durability and ventilation, check out the new Snickers Workwear 37.5[®] Technology Fleeces to fit your work day.

For more information, visit www.snickersworkwear.co.uk



Solid Gear Ocean safety shoe can put you one step ahead

Solid Gear continues to modernise Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) footwear with a safety shoe that looks and feels more like a trainer.

Combining a lightweight athletic look and superb safety features, the new Ocean safety shoe is ideal for workers on the move.

The shoe's midsole is made of a poured Polyurethane (PU) rather than a traditional injected PU to give a more cushioned feel underfoot, while the thick rubber outsole provides a high level of anti-slip protection and durability.

With an eye-catching style, Boa[®] comfort fastening delivers a better overall fit, making it easy to take the shoe on and off. The shoe's fibreglass toecap and ballistic midsole combine with the other protection features and anti-static properties to deliver S3 protection.

For more information, please visit www.solidgearfootwear.com or call the helpline on 01484 854 788.

Snickers
WORKWEAR



Safer results are now in the pipeline

TracPipeCC[®] is the original TracPipe[®] but has a second polyethylene outer cover over the length of the product.

TracPipeCC[®] is designed to overcome the need to install an additional secondary containment sleeve, as the product is produced with the secondary containment already in place.

The second outer cover includes ridges on the internal surface which form channels between the first and second covers. In the unlikely event of a gas escape, the design allows for a passage to be formed for any escaping gas to move freely along the space formed to a safe and ventilated location at each end of the pipe.

TracPipeCC[®] also overcomes issues around vertical runs as the ridges on the internal surface offer support to the internal pipe, while also maintaining the channels for free movement of gas should there be an escape. TracPipeCC[®] is available



in sizes DN22, DN28 and DN32 as standard and DN15, DN40 and DN50 are available upon request. TracPipeCC[®] is supplied on reels of varying standard lengths with longer lengths available as special orders.

THE MANY ADVANTAGES OF USING TRACPIPECC[®]

- TracPipeCC[®] negates the need to install a secondary containment sleeve through unventilated voids
- TracPipeCC[®] can be used on horizontal and, importantly, also on vertical runs as the ridges on the internal surface offer support to the internal pipe while also maintaining the channels for free movement of gas should there be an escape

- TracPipeCC[®] is suitable for use in fire protected areas such as protected shafts, escape corridors and lobbies when installed in continuous lengths without joints

- TracPipeCC[®] still bends by hand with no specialist tools or hot work required

- TracPipeCC[®] is still faster to install than rigid material such as copper and steel

- TracPipeCC[®] can be supported with standard clips or brackets as well as on cable trays or baskets.

For more information about TracPipeCC[®] please visit www.tracpipe.co.uk

TracPipeCC[®]
Flexible Gas Piping by Original Pipe • Complete Containment

Why OFTEC registration counts

Even with major advances in technology, the basic need for heating and hot water will remain – and so will the important role of heating technicians. A career in the heating sector has always offered job security. This won't change, but in an evolving market there are fantastic opportunities for heating technicians willing to continue learning and adapt to new technologies.

There is plenty of work out there, just not enough qualified technicians to do it and the issue could be further exacerbated if EU migration is restricted post-Brexit.

Encouraging fresh, new talent into the industry is vital and apprenticeships could provide part of the solution, offering an excellent way for businesses to upskill and expand at low cost.

To further support businesses, the Apprenticeship Levy scheme helps make apprenticeships

affordable for all. Employers in Northern Ireland however, still need to access the funding available through existing Apprenticeships NI or Higher Level Apprenticeships programmes.

Heating businesses should seriously consider this valuable opportunity and, as additional support, OFTEC is offering free registration for the first year to newly qualified apprentices. They should have completed training up to Level 3 and be employed with an OFTEC registered business.

CONSUMER REASSURANCE

Consumers often find it difficult to find tradespeople they can trust. With



To find out more about OFTEC's work, please visit www.oftec.org.uk

To find out more about OFTEC registration and to apply, visit www.joinoftec.com

*Citizens Advice Scotland



half of people in Scotland having been the victim of a scam* and almost 40% of adults in Ireland concerned about falling foul of a scammer, it's more important than ever for technicians to use their OFTEC badge to reassure customers.

It's all too easy when busy to forget to promote your skills and quality of service but showing ID and using the OFTEC logo on paperwork and advertising reinforces professional credentials and can often be a deciding factor in winning new business.

NEW SOLID FUEL TRAINING

OFTEC has launched a new registration scope and associated training course for the service and maintenance of solid fuel appliances. Once completed (or an equivalent course) you can add OFT18-108(S) to your registration and start offering this additional service. You will also receive free listing on OFTEC's Find a Technician database, helping you attract new customers. ■

A complete registration service for heating technicians



OFTEC competent person registration provides a range of benefits:

- Free technical support via phone, fax or email and regular updates
- Free listing on OFTEC's popular online 'find a technician' search facility
- Free marketing material to help you win more customers
- Low cost business insurance, discounted website design and fuel card service
- Discounts on equipment and publications from our OFTEC Direct shop.



Visit www.joinoftec.com or contact our registration team today:

T: 01473 626 298

E: registration@oftec.org

W: joinoftec.com

Energy efficiency has been designated a national infrastructure priority by the Scottish Government since 2015 and through the new Energy Efficient Scotland Programme there will be a concerted effort to encourage people to improve the efficiency of their properties. It is estimated that up to £12 billion could be invested over the programme's lifetime which is likely to result in an increase in demand and opportunities for Scotland's energy efficiency and renewable suppliers, including heating contractors.

WHAT IS ENERGY EFFICIENT SCOTLAND?

It's the Scottish Government's flagship programme for:

- reducing carbon emissions from buildings (which account for around 20% of all emissions in Scotland)
- eradicating fuel poverty, and
- growing the Scottish economy in an inclusive way.

The Scottish Government's vision is for all our homes and buildings to be warmer, greener and more efficient by 2040. They published a Routemap outlining how this will be achieved in May 2018. This includes the setting of minimum energy efficiency standards for buildings based on Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs). While these standards for social housing have been in place for some time (EPC band D and in some circumstances band C), new standards will be phased in from 2020 covering all buildings, starting with the privately rented sector.

From 1 April 2020, all private rented properties will need to achieve an EPC band E when there is a change in tenancy. By March 2022, all private rented properties will need to achieve band E, regardless of tenancy change. The owner-occupier sector will also be phased in and all domestic properties will need to achieve EPC band C by 2040.

THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

To help ascertain what will



Working towards a greener future

New Energy Efficient Scotland Programme will present big opportunities for contractors



By Ian Cuthbert,
Sustainable
Energy
Supply Chain
Programme
Manager, Energy
Saving Trust

**energy
saving
trust**

You can find out more about the programme and subscribe to be kept up-to-date with more information at bit.ly/SupplyChainScotland

be expected from suppliers taking part in the programme, the Scottish Government is consulting on a number of areas, including a need for:

- The development of quality assurance criteria which will detail the key requirements for suppliers wishing to participate in the programme.
- Robust vetting and verification requirements that must not place undue administrative or financial burdens on SMEs (particularly micro-businesses).
- Independent inspections of installations, to ensure quality standards are consistently met.
- Energy Efficient Scotland installations to be based on robust skills and competencies.

The Scottish Government is seeking suppliers' views on how potential changes to the programme would impact them – e.g. if they changed the target date from 2040 to 2030. Read more about the consultation at www.consult.gov.scot

HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

This is an exciting time for energy efficiency and the Energy Saving Trust's Sustainable Energy Supply Chain team will be working closely with the Scottish Government and SNIPEF to get contractors' views on the Energy Efficient Scotland programme.

To assist with this, we're organising free consultation workshops in Stirling and Inverness later in the Spring for suppliers to attend. If you are interested in attending one of these workshops please email supplychainscotland@est.org.uk

THE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SUPPLY CHAIN PROGRAMME

We engage with contractors working in the energy efficiency and renewable sectors in Scotland to help them benefit from potential business opportunities and ensure they have the skills and certifications needed to take part in the energy efficiency and renewable markets. ■

Going Digital with BigChange JobWatch

BigChange is the paperless way to plan, manage, schedule and track mobile operations.

Ideal for plumbing, heating and other HVAC services, the all-in-one JobWatch platform combines back office software, mobile apps, fleet management and vehicle tracking in one simple to use system.

The software handles the entire business process from handling initial service requests through to invoicing.

Field staff use smartphones or tablets to replace all paperwork, including certifications, risk

assessments, inspections and job sheets with customer sign-off on the device for immediate invoicing.

JobWatch is synchronised in real-time with BigChange booking, job scheduling and CRM software, and can integrate with accounts packages and other software.

Cloud-based and suitable for everyone, JobWatch is already in use with companies such as Celsius Plumbing and Heating (see pages 12&13), Impr-Gas, SES Home Services, GasTech and Woods Building Services.

See www.bigchange.com

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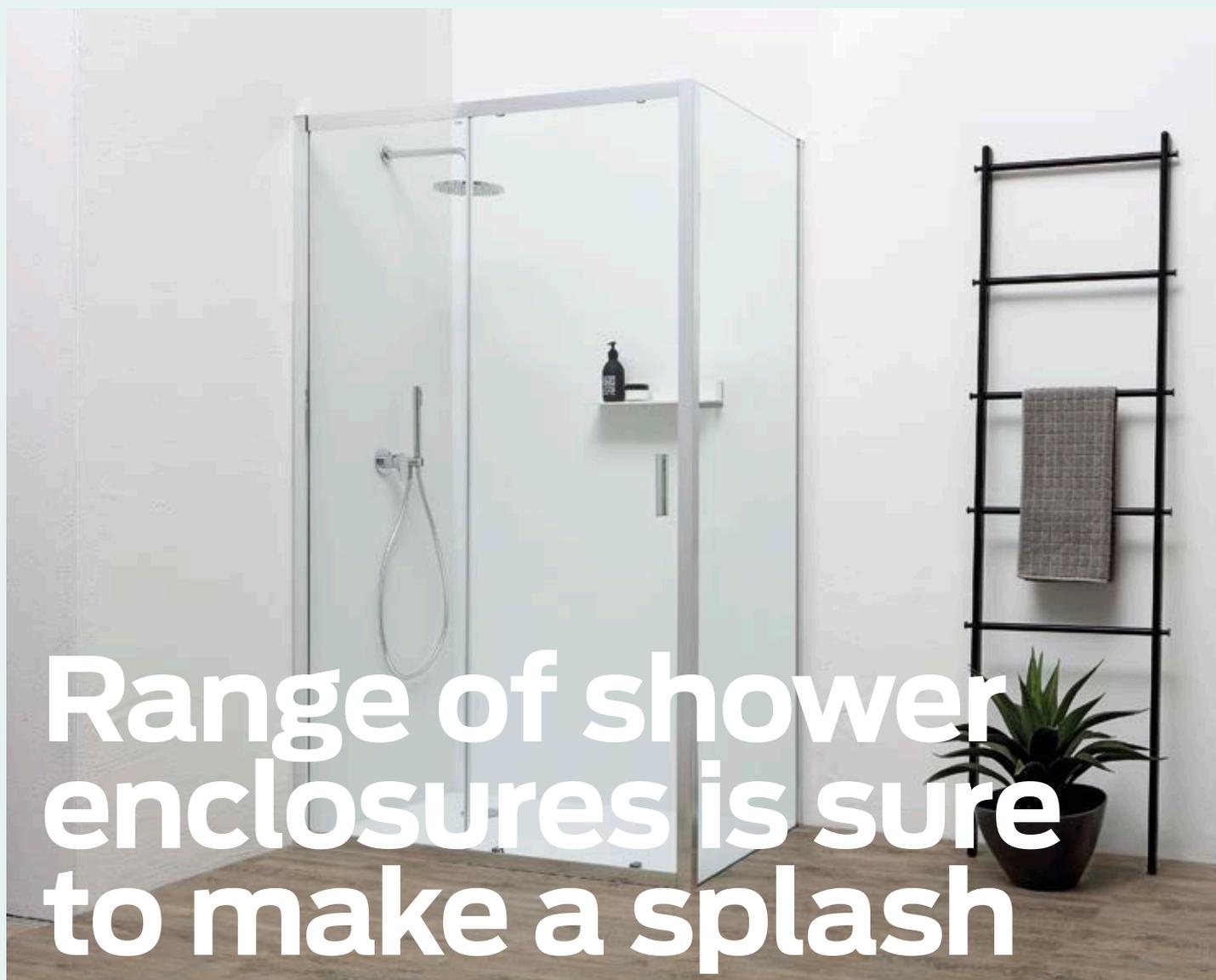


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Range of shower enclosures is sure to make a splash

Designed to appeal to the contracts sector, a new range of Kinedo shower enclosures has been added to the portfolio of showering products by Saniflo.

Fast 2000 – named as such because of the 2000mm high profiles and the rapidity of installation – is a collection of enclosures designed to suit every size and shape of bathroom.

Offering exceptional value for money, the collection includes:

- Pivot doors: 700-1200mm
- Sliding doors: 1000-1700mm
- Corner entry sliding doors: 700-1200mm
- Quads with sliding doors: 800 or 900mm
- Fixed panels: 700-900mm

As is synonymous with the Kinedo range, the Fast 2000 is quick and easy to install and manufactured using quality

Saniflo's latest high quality products provide simplicity and elegance in the bathroom, and as well as being easy to install they offer exceptional value for money

components throughout. Interlocking aluminium profiles ensure the frame is very simple to assemble while easy release rollers can be fixed to the door profiles without any tools.

Handles are attached using pre-supplied screws and fixings for the glass panels and slot neatly and securely into place. The whole job is easily completed by one person.

The design of the Fast 2000 range is both contemporary and high quality; providing an elegant shower space for new build and renovation projects alike.

For further information on the new range please visit www.kinedo.co.uk or call the Saniflo team for a brochure on 020 8842 0033

Features include:

- 20-40mm of adjustment for ease of fitting
- Top and bottom rollers on slider doors for ease of release and cleaning and excellent stability
- Anti-limescale treatment as standard for an easy clean solution
- Reversible glass panels
- Quick release rollers on slider doors
- 2m height enclosure with 6mm glass
- Easy fit profile covers and concealed fixings for a neat finish. ■

SANIFLO®

[READY TO TAKE ON ANYTHING.]



From attic en-suites to tight-fit utility rooms, you'll always find a way with Saniflo.

We're constantly enhancing our extensive product range with clever innovations, like easy-access panels and vibration-reducing suspension, so you know you can 'get it done' whatever 'it' may be.

Anything's possible. Visit saniflo.co.uk to see how.

SANIFLO[®]

PLUMBING THE POSSIBILITIES