Meeting of the CSCS Stakeholders Group, 24 June

I attended the CSCS Stakeholders Group meeting yesterday.

The following points were of interest which I wanted to pass on to you:

Service levels

* CSCS had sought improvements in service from the new CITB chief executive and there had been a real effort to respond with an additional 30 people recruited to the call centres and other roles.
* Call waiting times had averaged just over 20 minutes in the first quarter of 2014 and were now down to 7.5 minutes. The card turn round time had halved to just under 20 days.
* Further improvements were sought with the objective that the call waiting time should match best practices standards of not more than 2 minutes and preferably an average of 1 minute.
* There is a continuing upward trend in the level of traffic, though this probably reflects the expected spike arising from the introduction of the new Green Labourer card on 1 July.

Green Labourer card

* 16 awarding bodies with 200 centres were now on board to provide the one day course so far agreed as a route for obtaining the new Labourer card.
* Mapping of other courses to support the new card continued. Around a dozen courses are being looked at.
* The SSSTS 2 day course has not been accepted for the new card as it is considered there are gaps in what is assessed under the SSSTS course.
* All existing CSO cards remain valid until their expiry date. (CSCS reiterated this as apparently one large civil contractor has adopted a company policy of requiring all those with a CSO card to change to the new Labourer card from 1 July irrespective of the expiry date of the CSO card and it was felt this would create some confusion in the supply chain. So if this comes up at all for you, you can be quite clear that the CSCS policy is to allow existing CSO cards to run their full life.)

Funding for the new Labourer card training course

* There is potential scope for members of other trade associations to benefit from an Employer Ownership of Skills pot of money that the Federation of Master Builders has bid for. Further details are promised. However, this may be a fairly bureaucratic route to obtain a relatively small amount of money.
* Otherwise the normal day rate can be claimed under Training Plans submitted to CITB.
* CSCS is seeking to obtain money through the Skills Funding Agency for Job Centre Plus to make available to the long-term unemployed if they are being recruited as labourers and would need the new card.

Industrial Strategy for Construction

* The Construction Leadership Council which oversees the Strategy is due to decide on whether to approve proposals for a “single card family” for construction at its meeting in the autumn. This would be a CSCS branded family of cards with existing affiliation arrangements to CSCS remaining.

Please let me know if you have any questions on the above.

With best wishes,

John

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