

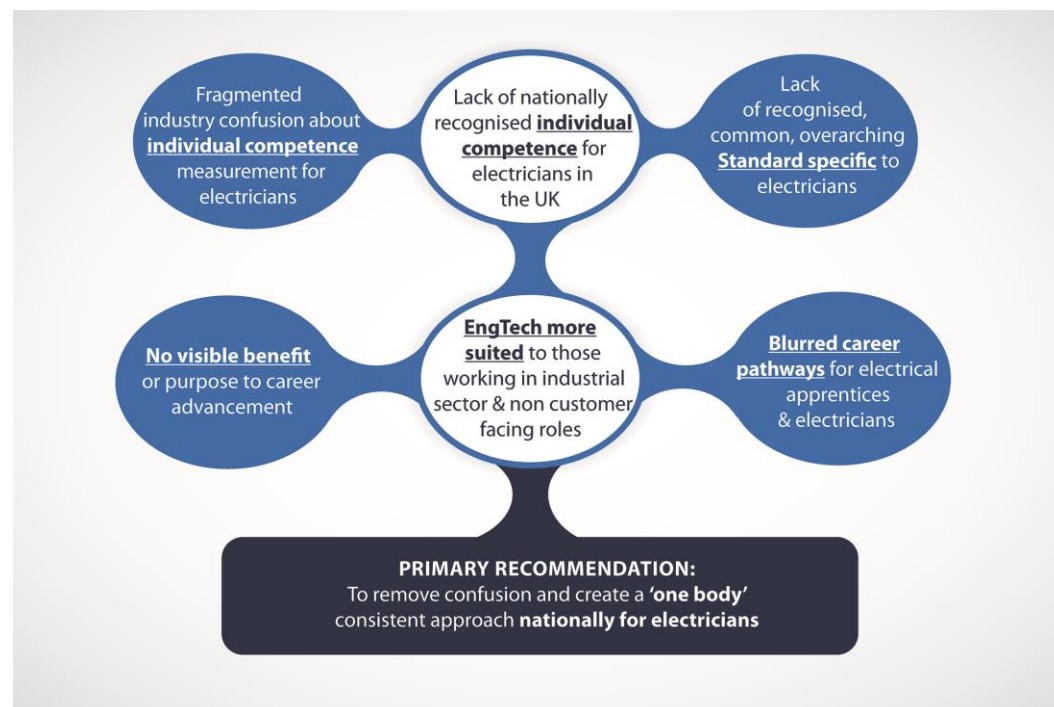
IET-Employer Leeds workshop: individual competence and accountability

More than 45 technical professionals from local authorities, housing associations and electrical contractors joined the IET and the Engineering Council (regulator of the engineering profession) in April this year for a discussion workshop that focused on the individual competence and accountability of electricians.

Background

In summer 2013, the IET commissioned national research with electricians and employers, which provided key findings and insight.

These findings were discussed at the 2014 Leeds IET-Employer workshop and included:



Summary feedback from the initial 2014 Leeds IET-Employer workshop concluded the need for the introduction of:

- a national, rigorously applied Standard for electricians;
- a public register for electricians that includes:
 - Electrician Professional Award entry to the register;
 - professional competence regulated by the Engineering Council; and
 - current competence annual return to the IET that is audited.
- a protected title for electricians awarded as a mark of:
 - individual competence differentiation;
 - electrician professional recognition;
 - peer reviewed competence assessment; and
 - national public awareness of a competent electrician.

In March 2014, the [Communities and Local Government Select Committee published a report, *Building Regulations certification of domestic electrical work*](#). This report raised concerns about the competence of those actually carrying out electrical works in domestic premises. Their recommendation emphasised the need to raise the competence and qualifications of those persons carrying out the work.

The April 2015 IET-Employer workshop

At the April 2015 IET-Employer workshop, local authorities, housing associations and other representatives discussed the findings from the 2014 workshop and shared their concerns about the competence of the individuals actually undertaking electrical installation, maintenance and remedial works in UK properties (highlighting the need for a stronger focus on individual competence), accountability and annual continuous professional development (CPD) recording and monitoring by electricians.

Many noted that the continual increase in rework and unplanned costs are a main concern, some of which relates to individual competence of those undertaking the actual work. Some of the representatives have already taken part in the Communities and Local Government Select Committee ongoing investigation.

Ryan Dempsey, Electrical Service Manager, Leeds City Council, was instrumental in co-ordinating the 2014 and 2015 IET-Employer workshops. He is passionate about the competence of electricians as well as annual CPD that is audited by a recognised body. After the April workshop, Ryan said:

"We're taking positive steps towards a register that not only provides a higher level of assurance to employers, but also gives our industry and those aspiring to be an electrical engineer the ability to continuously develop their skills, knowledge, experience and overall professional development."

"The recent workshop in Leeds confirmed that there are various levels of competence and that this creates ambiguities when managing the lifecycle of electrical installations. Every Landlord should be confident that the work being carried out in and around their asset is of a guaranteed level of quality. I believe peer reviewed individual competence and professional recognition is something that would help achieve this".

The Engineering Council's CEO, Jon Prichard, attended the April 2015 workshop and provided further information about the role of the regulator, as well as further understanding about individual competence, peer reviewed assessment for professional registration qualification(s) and the Engineering Council's competence framework UK SPEC. The group welcomed the involvement of the regulator at the workshop.

Next steps

The IET will be collating further insight from electricians (qualified to NVQ Level 3 or equivalent with +3 years on the job experience) and employers of electricians during 2015 to further address the key points raised at the 2015 workshop. A key focus for the ongoing work relates to the individual competence and accountability of electricians.

The employer group, led by Ryan Dempsey and Michelle Richmond, Director of Membership and Professional Development at the IET, will continue with the ongoing work, with a view to introducing specific professional recognition for electricians.





How can you get involved?

The IET is planning further research this year about individual competence of electricians. If you would like to take part, please register your interest by emailing: electechs@theiet.org



The Institution of Engineering and Technology is registered as a Charity in England and Wales (No. 211014) and Scotland (No. SCO38698). Michael Faraday House, Six Hills Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 2AY, United Kingdom.