

ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE SCOTTISH & NORTHERN IRELAND PLUMBING EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION



Review of the Year

The economic climate has been for many in the industry the worst in living memory. Redundancies and short-term layoffs were all too common and uncertainty over workload and payment meant that many firms "battered down the hatches" and sought to ride out the recession with a much reduced workforce.

The reduction in apprentice recruitment and the cut in the existing workforce will mean that the sector will face workforce challenges when the economy begins to recover and firms must not lose sight of the fact that they will need a skilled and competitive workforce to take advantage when the work situation does improve.

Approved Certifier of Construction (Drainage, Heating and Plumbing)

SNIPEF was appointed by Scottish Ministers in December 2009 to operate an Approved Certifier of Construction Scheme for Drainage, Heating and Plumbing Work. This means that firms which meet the criteria of membership will be able to "self-certify" work which is carried out under a building warrant.

There are benefits to customers who use an Approved Certifier as warrant fees are lower and there are also advantages to the Approved Certifiers themselves as they can

sign off their own work without waiting for a local authority inspection. The Scheme also provides members with a Scottish Government logo which highlights the fact that the business is recognised as a government approved contractor.

Whilst it is early days for the scheme, **SNIPEF** has been encouraged by the number of applications and is confident that this scheme will allow significant work opportunities for member firms.

World Plumbing Day - 11th March 2010

World Plumbing Day was created by the World Plumbing Council and celebrated all across the globe. In Scotland, **SNIPEF** held a seminar in the Scottish Parliament which was hosted by Marilyn Livingstone MSP, the Chair of the Scottish Cross Party Group for Construction. The event was very well attended by prominent members of trade bodies, manufacturers, suppliers and members as well as a number of MSPs.

In Glasgow a number of members distributed information and promotional gifts to the public to make them aware of World Plumbing Day and the importance which plumbing plays in everyone's day to day life.

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Boiler Scrappage Scheme (Scotland)

Following lobbying by **SNIPEF**, which included a Scottish Parliament online E-petition, the Scottish Government announced in early 2010 that a Boiler Scrappage Scheme would apply in Scotland. The Scheme will open for applications on 24 May 2010 and the Government has confirmed that work must be undertaken by properly qualified businesses such as those licensed by **SNIPEF** and CLE. This is a significant achievement for our organisation and should be beneficial to member firms undertaking this type of work.



Renewable Technologies

The installation of micro-generation and other forms of renewable technology has come to the fore over the last number of years. **SNIPEF** has been at the centre of discussions with both Scottish and UK Government Departments over the current system for the registration of businesses which wish to undertake renewable technology installations under the UK Government's Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS).

MCS appears to have been designed by a committee which had no real understanding of how the construction industry operates particularly from a small firm's perspective. **SNIPEF** and others in the sector including SELECT and the HVCA have been lobbying the Scottish Government on a regular basis in an attempt to ensure that a Scottish solution is offered for MCS. In Northern Ireland, ActionRenewables has set up an MCS scheme which is at a reduced rate compared to other equivalent schemes however similar levels of red tape and bureaucracy still apply.

Apprentice Recruitment (Scotland)

The industry experienced a further reduction in the apprentice recruitment down from the 2009 total of 424 recruits. To the period ending 31 March, 2010 a total of 242 apprentices had been recruited into the Scottish plumbing industry through **SNIPEF Training Services Ltd**. The current economic climate suggests that 2010/11 will be a further difficult year for apprentice recruitment and we anticipate a similar level of intake in the training year April 2010 to March 2011.

Plumbing Pensions

In light of the impact of the reduction in employment levels in the industry there continued to be a reduction in contributions to the Plumbing & Mechanical Services (UK) Industry Pension Scheme during the year to 5 April, 2010. However, the fund value saw a significant increase over the same period to £1,230m (2009: £967m.) The Scheme received the results of its triennial actuarial valuation which showed that it had no deficit at 5 April 2009.

Looking ahead 2011

September 2011 will see **SNIPEF** hosting the World Plumbing Conference. The event which will take place from 7-11 September hopes to attract some 300+ representatives of the plumbing industry from all across the globe. Registrations can be made at www.wpc2011.co.uk



GAS SAFE REGISTER

1 April, 2010 saw the introduction of Gas Safe Register into Northern Ireland. Since Gas Safe Register replaced CORGI in the rest of Great Britain in 2009 there has generally been a positive response to the new organisation's work.

WAGE AGREEMENT

The Wage Agreement for the next two years was concluded by the **SNIJIB** at the end of 2009. This will see no increase in 2010 followed by a 2% increase in June 2011.

SNIPEF MEMBERSHIP

It is important that **SNIPEF** has as many plumbing businesses as possible in membership and our aim must be that **SNIPEF** should represent and speak for the "majority" of properly qualified businesses in Scotland and Northern Ireland. A new membership recruitment campaign is underway with the aim of adding a significant number of new firms to our membership.

NEW OFFICES FOR SNIPEF & PLUMBING PENSIONS

June 2010 will see a move for both **SNIPEF** and Plumbing Pensions as both organisations will move to a new office. Bellevue House, which is in located in the east end of Edinburgh, will be the new home for **SNIPEF** and **Plumbing Pensions** with effect from July 2010.



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