

READERS LETTERS

CSCS CARDS

The following Open letter was sent to the chief executive of UK heavy equipment rental association CPA and highlights an issue that several others have raised - in one case an accredited, highly skilled crane operator of almost 40 years - who was told that to obtain a new card he would have to be tested for competency. When he pushed back he was told that it would involve an interview to judge his competency at a cost of £160, although when he asked one training provider to organise it, he was told £270! One wonders who would be conducting the interview? He was also told at that point that as he did not have an NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) and would require one before the deadline of December 2024.

Dear Kevin,

I hope you and all at the CPA team are keeping well.

I recently wrote to my Wakefield MP Simon Lightwood on my concerns with the renewal of CSCS cards for those with no formal qualifications who have previously relied upon industry accreditation, (IA). The response from minister of state, Nusrat Ghani MP, is attached for your perusal.

The Minister mentions in the response that:

"The CSCS is working with the industry to find ways to support individuals in achieving recognised qualifications. The details of that support are yet to be confirmed, but two options to be explored are the delivery of an on-site assessment and professional discussions for the achievement of the NVQ/SVQ. Both these options are likely to be relatively straightforward for an experienced worker (IA card holder) to complete."

Meanwhile whilst the CLC and CSCS flounder to make an 'executive decision' hundreds of highly skilled artisans a week are exiting the industry because they feel their years of experience and some of their historic qualifications are not being recognised and they depart for early retirement or a different job, never to return. Good people are being driven away.

If an eleventh hour on-site assessment/professional discussion will save the mass exodus of skilled workers only time will tell. Meanwhile the NVQ providers (who have provided nothing toward the debate) will sit quietly biding their time until a CSCS website indicates the traps are open for another NVQ gravy boat to leap aboard.

I feel the CLC and the CSCS must bear the main responsibility for the early departure from the workplace of so many UK skilled workers, their inability to appreciate the seriousness of their actions is shameful. Additionally I feel the CITB could have done far more to mitigate the situation.

Regards

Mick Norton

THE CHALLENGES OF ELECTRIFICATION

The following letters were received in response to last month's comment and an article we carried on electrification - page 43.

Hi Leigh

Very interesting article from Nationwide about the electricity supplies and electric vehicles. Just shows that the infrastructure seriously needs looking at by the utility companies. Can I capture, print it off, to show others, please, or do you have an electronic copy for me to print.

It makes one wonder how many underground fires or breaks there will be.

Regards

Alan Wickens

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We were happy for this to be circulated.



Good afternoon,

Having eventually found time to read the October issue of Crane & Access.

I'm afraid the rush for the electrification of all vehicles, not just cars, is so very 'cart before the horse' retro pie in the sky first year Uni student guff.

Take, for example, what is happening in poor benighted Ukraine, where all their electrical infrastructure, including power stations, have been laid to waste by Russian missiles etc. I'm not saying good ol' Blighty is next in line for Rusky missiles but, if this Government or the one in waiting, keep plugging (No pun intended) that all things must be electrically powered by 2050 we will be in a similar position.

We haven't got enough existing power stations as it is, and while the current mob in power might have, at long last, given the thumbs up to Sizewell C, sadly, you can't pop along to Machine Mart and buy one off the shelf. However, the Royal Navy has been using SNR's (Small nuclear reactors) for many years in submarines. And there has been talk until quite recently that companies such as Rolls Royce should be given government funding (Tax payers dosh in other words) to increase production and have them installed to the National Grid in remote parts of the UK, providing electricity to local communities with the surplus fed back into the Grid.

We have, beneath our feet, pretty hot water - all we have to do is drill down and use it in geothermal power stations. For some obscure reason, that has only happened in a few places in the UK and other parts of the World. For example, parts of Cornwall and Southampton, Iceland, New Zealand, some states in the US, Russia and China.

My comments might seem like I am a screaming anti renewables advocate - absolutely not! In fact, I had dealings back in the mid 1990's with onshore wind farms and hydro schemes, there is nothing wrong with them, except for their limited life span and the fact they are only successful in areas where there is a lot of wind and fast running water..... so, we need at least the same ability to maintain electricity being produced by other means, and a hell of a lot of it!

In January/February 1986, the UK had continuous sub-zero temperatures, day and night. There was no wind, and the country was covered in thick, low cloud. Tides were slack, no wind = no waves. Therefore, no wind or solar power. Just think if that happens again IF we had nothing but electricity from renewables. An article in the press about changing weather patterns highlight lots of rain but exceptionally dry, hot summers, which is partly because the winds we need for wind farms are decreasing, so also not moving clouds so highlighting the potential dangers of a reliance on solar and wind.

We need other forms of energy production for vehicles, the most obvious being hydrogen. It is plainly obvious that the Government is in the pocket of electrical energy providers. While some companies like JCB and Ineos are spending their own money to crack on with factories to produce it, car manufacturers seem hell bent on making nothing but Duracell cars. We have a country with lots of fuel stations, the underground tanks need reinforcing for liquid hydrogen, easily done. It has been proven that most modern car engines can be retuned to take hydrogen, just as engines were tuned to take unleaded petrol in the 1980s.

Diesel has been refined to be cleaner than electricity. So why must we all use electric vehicles and equipment? We haven't got the capability to produce enough, or the infrastructure to get it round the country. I jokingly enlightened a friend a few months ago, after reading, that there can be no more housing built to the west of London because there isn't enough power and that work had stopped at Popham, west of London, because of lack of utilities - both power and water. We are both in the Construction Industry.... so much for 300,000 more houses a year, built somewhere with a power source!

Have a good evening.

Paul Keld, Romsey, Hampshire