



Annual Review 2020

Improving standards
and safety on UK
construction sites



Chairman's Introduction

It is self-evident that we are living through challenging times and many are struggling with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our businesses and our personal lives.



Carolyn Uphill, Chairman

This Annual Review shows how CSCS took decisive action to minimise the impact of the pandemic on the industry. Temporary measures were introduced to remove barriers to workers gaining access to site, and the swift actions of CSCS and other card schemes displaying the CSCS logo have helped to keep construction open. Further details on these measures can be found on [page 5](#) of this review.

The end of 2020 marks a major milestone for all card schemes working towards the Construction Leadership Council's (CLC) "One Industry Logo Action." The CSCS Board has ensured that the strategic direction of the scheme remains focused on compliance with the CLC's requirements by consistently placing the achievement of recognised qualifications at the heart of everything we do.

Further steps towards this goal include the withdrawal of the Construction Site Visitor card and the introduction of new rules for cards issued via Industry Accreditation. Further details on both these developments can be found on [page 6](#) of this review.

The Board's other key priority this year has been the continued development of the online application service. Online applications are quicker and more convenient than any other means of application and they have greatly improved the service that CSCS is offering our customers.

Online applications went live in late 2019 and throughout the year the executive team have listened to feedback from those using the service with further improvements introduced. Information on these developments can be found of [page 5](#).

I am pleased to welcome our newest board member, Stephen Beechey (Public Sector Director - Wates Group), who will be representing Build UK. Stephen will play a key role in communicating the views of Build UK and its members to help drive the strategic direction of CSCS.

Stephen takes over from Ian Dickerson who held the position on the CSCS Board for 10 years. On behalf of the entire Board I would like to extend our thanks and gratitude for the positive contribution Ian has made to the scheme.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members for their hard work as well as our industry stakeholders for their continued support. It is their determination to qualify the workforce that is improving standards and safety on UK construction sites.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the CSCS executive team for their hard work and dedication, particularly the introduction of our new online service in challenging circumstances. Online applications have revolutionised the way in which card applications are made and our customers are now benefiting from a world class service.

I look forward to working with the CSCS Board and executive team to further strengthen the scheme and play our part in delivering a fully trained and qualified workforce.

Stay safe.

Carolyn Uphill, Chairman

The end of 2020 marks a major milestone for all card schemes working towards the Construction Leadership Council's 'One Industry Logo Action.'

Governance

CSCS is owned by the construction industry for the construction industry.

CSCS is a not for profit organisation which is registered as a company limited by guarantee and has no shareholders.

CSCS is owned by 3 employer organisations and 2 unions representing the breadth of the construction industry.

CSCS is managed by CSCS Limited whose 7 non-executive Directors are nominated from the following owner organisations:

- Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA)
- Federation of Master Builders (FMB)
- GMB Union
- Build UK
- UNITE the Union

Also represented on the Board, but not nominated by the owner organisations, are 2 independent non-executive Directors nominated by:

- The Construction Clients Group (CCG)
- The Construction Industry Council (CIC)

The Chairman provides leadership to the Board and is appointed by the Board members.

CSCS Board Director responsibilities include:

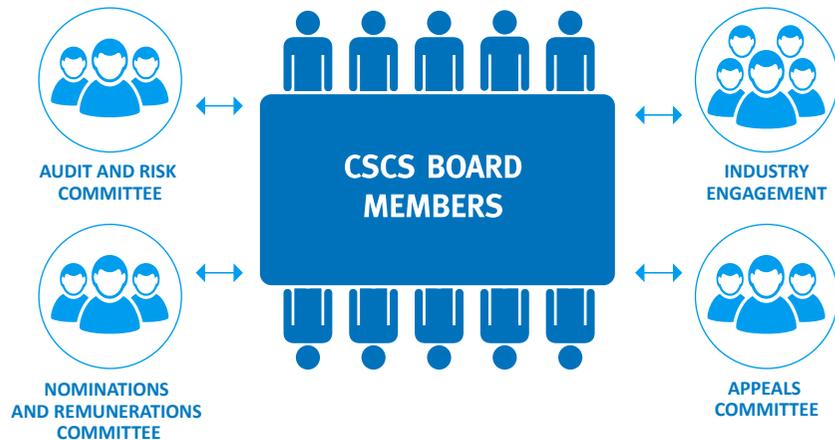
- Management of the scheme, providing leadership and setting CSCS's strategic direction and policies
- Ensuring the necessary resources are available to meet CSCS's objectives and review performance

- Participation in a number of key committees which ensure appropriate governance of the scheme.

The CSCS Board also works with other card schemes and organisations not represented on the CSCS Board to share ideas that help drive the scheme forward to meet the wider needs of industry.

CSCS has a Chief Executive and a small directly employed team based in London responsible for running the scheme.

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Board Directors



Carolyn Uphill:
Independent Chairman

Carolyn has 30 years' experience running a Construction Equipment Manufacturing, Sales and Plant Hire Company. She has also chaired a leading Trade Association whose stated objectives are to improve standards and encourage training towards accreditation.



Jerry Swain:
Unite the Union

Jerry joined the Board in 2017 following the merger of Unite and UCATT. Unite has around 50,000 members in building, construction and allied trades.



Kevin Bennett:
Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA)

Kevin joined the Board in 2010. CECA members deliver, upgrade and maintain the country's infrastructure. Its members carry out around 75% of all civil engineering activity across the UK.



John Allott:
Unite the Union

John joined the Board in 2010. Unite has around 50,000 members in building, construction and allied trades.



David Barnes:
Federation of Master Builders (FMB)

David joined the Board in 2015. The FMB represents the interests of small and medium sized building firms across the UK. The FMB is the largest trade association in the building industry representing over 9,000 companies.



Suzannah Nichol:
Build UK

Suzannah Nichol is the Chief Executive of Build UK, and joined the Board of CSCS in 2008. Build UK is the leading representative organisation for the UK construction industry.

A passionate advocate for construction, Suzannah was awarded an MBE in 2005 and is widely recognised and respected for her work with government, media, and key industry stakeholders.



Steve Kemp:
GMB Union (GMB)

Steve joined the Board in 2019. GMB is a general trade union with over 630,000 members, of which many work in the construction sector.



Steve Beechey:
Build UK

Steve joined the Board in 2020. Build UK provides a strong collective voice for the contracting supply chain in construction. It brings together 27 of the industry's largest main contractors and 40 leading trade associations representing over 11,500 specialist contractors.



David Watson:
Construction Industry Council (CIC)

David joined the Board in 2010. CIC represents professional bodies, research organisations and specialist business associations. Its members include 500,000 individual professionals and 25,000 firms of construction consultants.



Gren Tipper:
Construction Clients Group (CCG)

Gren joined the Board in 2006. The CCG works to improve value for money and best practice on construction projects. Its members include government and organisations across a wide range of sectors.

Highlights and Accomplishments

Responding to the pandemic, improvements to the online service and the introduction of the virtual card are just some of the highlights during 2020.

Responding to the pandemic

The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted CSCS's ability to issue cards to first-time applicants or those wishing to renew their card prior to expiry.

A key requirement for all applications (new or renewal) is proof that the applicant has passed the relevant CITB Health, safety and environment (HS&E) test within the last 2 years.

Early in the pandemic CSCS and the Partner Card Schemes recognised that some construction workers would face delays in obtaining a card as availability of the CITB test would be impacted.

Working with CITB and the Partner card schemes the following temporary measures were introduced:

- 1 Employers and those responsible for site access and card checking procedures were asked to use their discretion towards workers whose cards had expired since March 2020 onward. With the caveat that a worker must always hold the correct card for the job they do on site.
- 2 The grace period for card renewals was extended from 6 months after the card expires to 12 months. This means that the card can be renewed, once the CITB HS&E test has been passed, up to one year from the card's expiry date.

These measures were introduced to assist those applicants struggling to find availability to sit the test and renew their card. Feedback from the industry was overwhelmingly positive with acknowledgment that the swift actions of the card schemes displaying the CSCS logo took a burden of the industry and helped sites to continue to operate.

Improving the service

The new application service went live in December 2019 and CSCS are pleased to report that throughout 2020 applicants have been enjoying the benefits of the online service.

Applying for a card online is considerably quicker and more convenient than any other means of application. The service is now open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round.

Throughout 2020 we listened to feedback from those using the service and several improvements were introduced.

CSCS is pleased to report that these improvements have made a real difference with over 80% of all applications now taking place online and the average turnaround time for an application having fallen to 2 days.

Late 2020 saw the introduction of two exciting technological developments for this scheme.

My CSCS is the new app that works alongside the online application service. This is a significant step forward as it marks the introduction of the virtual card.

The virtual card is the same as the plastic CSCS card but stored electronically in the My CSCS app. As soon as an application is approved and payment is taken the virtual card can be downloaded. The virtual card will reduce the card delivery time to just a few moments.

My CSCS is available on Android and Apple devices via the Google Play and Apple Stores.

Applying for a card online is considerably quicker and more convenient than any other means of application. The service is now open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round.



Highlights and Accomplishments (cont.)

Qualifying the workforce: 2020

The end of 2020 marks a major milestone for all card schemes displaying the CSCS logo.

In 2015 the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) announced (via the Industrial Strategy: Construction 2025) that industry should specify and promote card schemes carrying the CSCS logo with no equivalents accepted. In order to qualify for the CSCS logo all card schemes (including CSCS) must develop plans by 2020 to meet the CLC's requirements including:

- Agreeing appropriate qualifications for each occupation
- Setting a minimum standard for skilled occupations at NVQ level 2
- Introducing smart technology by 2020.

Independent audits carried out through the year have allowed us to ensure that all Partner Card Schemes certify appropriate qualifications for each occupation, with minimum standards for skilled occupations set at NVQ Level 2 (or an approved equivalent).

In 2020 two additional schemes (PASMA and FASET) took up the challenge of meeting the CLC's requirements. PASMA became a partner in November and FASET will go live in early 2021, bringing the total number of cards displaying the logo to 38.

Industry Accreditation

In January 2020 CSCS introduced new rules for those cards issued under Industry Accreditation (IA). Also known as Grandfather Rights, IA allowed workers to obtain CSCS cards on the strength of an employers' recommendation rather than the achievement of a recognised qualification.

To meet the requirements of the CLC, CSCS has developed plans in conjunction with our industry stakeholders to move all IA cardholders to a recognised qualification.

From 1st January 2020 all cards renewed under IA will expire on 31st December 2024 and CSCS will stop issuing the card from 30th June 2024. What each card holder needs to do next depends on their occupation and any qualifications they may already hold. Further details are available on [page 7](#).

Visitor card

The end of February 2020 saw the last Construction Site Visitor (CSV) cards issued. Originally introduced for workers who visited construction sites to perform non-construction work, the CSV card was one of the last CSCS card types which did not require applicants to either hold or be working towards a recognised construction related qualification.

CSCS stopped issuing the CSV card at the end of February 2020, with all CSV cards issued since the beginning of September 2018 expiring at the end of August 2020. The withdrawal of the CSV card marks another milestone in CSCS' progress towards a fully qualified workforce.

To meet the requirements of the CLC CSCS has developed plans in conjunction with our industry stakeholders, to move all IA cardholders to a recognised qualification.



Priorities for 2021

2021 is shaping up to be another busy year. Managing the pandemic, meeting the requirements of the Construction Leadership Council and delivering the Grenfell Tower enquiry recommendations are just some of the priorities that lie ahead.

Managing the pandemic

The Coronavirus pandemic is expected to continue into at least the first quarter of 2021. Depending on how the pandemic develops, and how national and regional governments respond, this may impact the availability of the Construction Industry Training Board's (CITB) Health, safety and environment (HS&E) test in one, some or all four home nations.

CSCS will work with CITB to ensure the industry has the most up to date information on the restrictions introduced across the UK and the availability of the test. If required CSCS will also review the current 6-month extension to card renewals to ensure that cardholders are not impacted by a lack of testing capacity.

Qualifying the workforce

CSCS will continue to work with the industry to find a solution to the Construction Leadership Council's (CLC) requirement that all Industry Accreditation (IA) card holders have plans in place to achieve a recognised qualification by the end of 2024.

For those IA cardholders who have achieved the appropriate qualification for their occupation or become members of CSCS approved professional bodies it will be a simple process to move onto the appropriate CSCS card.

For those without qualifications, CSCS is working with the industry to find ways to support these individuals in achieving the recognised qualification for their occupation. What that support looks like is uncertain, but one option to be explored is the delivery of an on-site assessment rather than the completion of a full NVQ.

The removal of IA is one of the most complex steps to be taken in helping to create the fully qualified workforce the industry desires. There will not be one single solution to all the challenges the removal of IA creates. It is likely that each occupation and sector will need to agree their own solutions, and these may take some time to develop. This work will continue as a priority throughout 2021.

Smart Card technology

In December the CLC confirmed that all cards schemes displaying the CSCS logo have until March 2022 to *"... use smart technology which has the capability to electronically check agreed information relevant to a cardholder, using a common interface, without the need to manually enter data."*

The key aim here is to ensure that all cards can be electronically checked at the site gates using one system that is compatible will all cards displaying the CSCS logo.

The CLC have requested that CSCS act as the facilitator in benchmarking the current status of each card scheme and we look forward to collaborating with our partners to find a solution to the card checking issue.

The key aim here is to ensure that all cards can be electronically checked at the site gates using one system that is compatible will all cards displaying the CSCS logo.



Priorities for 2021 (cont.)

Improving the service

CSCS are in discussions with several Awarding Organisations regarding the introduction of automated qualification checks. When an application is submitted online the CSCS system would instantly retrieve the applicant's qualification certificate and run a check against the associated Awarding Body's database. The check will confirm the validity of the qualification or flag up any irregularities.

Automated qualification checks will be a major development for the scheme, not only speeding up the application service but also preventing fraudulent certificates from passing the application process.

Setting the Bar

Over the past two years the Grenfell Competence Steering Group (CSG) has established a blueprint to improve competence for those working on higher-risk buildings. The CSG was set up to tackle competence shortcomings identified in the 2018 Hackitt Review Building a Safer Future, published in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017.

Setting the Bar is the second and final report from the Competence Steering Group and is an update to the Interim Report Raising the Bar, published in August 2019.

CSCS recognises the importance of the work carried out by the CSG and we see a number of areas where CSCS can play its part in helping to deliver the recommendations from Setting the Bar.

The recommendations include the introduction of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and ensuring the workforce hold the correct qualifications for the job they do on site. Two areas that not only complement but also enhance the strategic direction of CSCS.

Setting the Bar has the capability of driving change throughout the whole industry and not just the work carried out on higher-risk buildings.

CSCS looks forward to working with the CSG and the associated working groups to drive the necessary changes that will lead to improved standards and safety across construction.

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CEO Closing Statement

2020 has been a challenging year for the business as the pandemic continues to impact CSCS's ability to issue cards in some areas of the UK.



Graham Wren, Chief Executive

At the peak of the pandemic card sales fell by 80% and several changes to the way in which we operated the scheme were required.

My thanks go to our delivery partners (Teleperformance, ICREON and APS) for continuing to deliver to very high standards during this incredibly challenging year.

The ongoing efforts by colleagues in the industry to keep construction at the heart of the government's economic recovery have undoubtedly helped CSCS to weather the storm. Construction has largely remained open and over the course of the year card applications have recovered to more normal levels.

Despite the pandemic I can report excellent progress was made with the new online service. This is a completely new application system and as with many IT projects not everything went smoothly in the early days. However constructive feedback from our many stakeholders enabled us to introduce a number of improvements throughout 2020. Over 1 million CSCS customers are now benefiting from a modern 24-hour service where the vast majority are able to apply, pay and receive their card within 48 hours. The My CSCS app introduced in late 2020 also marks the introduction of the CSCS virtual card.

Away from the pandemic there are some underlying issues that have not gone away.

The withdrawal of cards issued under Industry Accreditation (IA) ensures we remain focused on our principal objective of only certifying those applicants who hold (or are in the process of achieving) a nationally recognised, construction related qualification. A solution needs to be found to support IA cardholders and we remain committed to keeping the industry updated as progress is made.

One of the biggest challenges facing all card schemes is related to the Construction Leadership Council's (CLC) requirement that all cards can be electronically checked at the site gates using one system that is compatible with all cards displaying the CSCS logo.

Initial discussions with CSCS's Partner Cards Schemes have been positive but there is a lot of work to be completed if all 38 card schemes are to meet the CLC's March 2022 deadline.

The need to thoroughly verify training and qualifications has been highlighted by the tragic events of the Grenfell Tower Fire. Many of the recommendations highlighted in the "Setting the Bar" report, such as the introduction of CPD, are to be welcomed and the next logical step would be to extend these beyond the work carried out on higher-risk buildings. This is a move that would be supported by CSCS.

CSCS looks forward to working with the industry to drive the necessary changes that will lead to improved standards and safety across construction.

My thanks are extended to the CSCS Board, whose strong support and guidance has helped CSCS to establish the new service and the other changes highlighted in this annual review.

And a big thank you to my fellow executive team members who worked throughout 2020 to implement a truly modern service that is delivering benefits to our applicants and the wider construction industry.

Stay safe.

Graham Wren, Chief Executive

CSCS looks forward to working with the industry to drive the necessary changes that will lead to improved standards and safety across construction.



**Construction Skills
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