

**Minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> WIRS Advisory Group Meeting  
Lloyd's Register EMEA, Coventry on 7 July 2009**

**Attendees:**

Jane Torris – United Utilities Water  
Dave Manning – Bristol Water  
John Nicholson – Severn Trent Water  
Perry James – Welsh Water  
Bill Reid – South Staffordshire Water Co  
  
Ken Marsh - Intoto  
Louise Boccaccini - Veolia  
  
Claire Allard – EU Skills  
  
Martyn Speight – LR EMEA (Chair)  
Mark Whitehouse – LR EMEA

**Apologies:**

Steve Burley – Anglian Water – Chairman  
Andrew Walker – Ofwat  
Peter Jamison – Essex and Suffolk Water  
Richard Heightington – Yorkshire Water  
Mike Scowcroft – Core

**Minutes of Meeting**

**1. Review of minutes of meeting dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

In accordance with the accepted process the minutes of the last meeting were deemed approved once they had been issued to the WIRSAP members and an agreed 2 week period had elapsed during which no comments had been received.

**2. Actions from previous meeting (not otherwise covered by agenda items)**

**a) Water company representation on WIRSAP**

John Nicholson (of Severn Trent Water) announced that he is moving to a new role and therefore will no longer be a member of the WIRSAP group. John was thanked for serving, and the contribution he has made on WIRSAP. In addition, Richard Heighton (of Yorkshire Water) has moved to a new role. This will create two new vacancies – though both companies may suggest names of replacements to Steve Burley.

**3. Energy and Utility Skills Related Matters**

**a) Arrangements for extending NCO(W) applications.**

As discussed at the WIRS Forum UCPs wish to extend the previously set deadlines for NCO(W) registrations. The requested deferral reflects the difficulties that are being encountered by UCPs in securing suitable work for building NVQ evidence portfolios, allows time for water companies to close the gap that currently exists between qualifications held by those doing self-lay work and direct labour/contractors employed directly by water companies and to allow training providers to better gear up to deliver the NCO(W) qualification.

It was proposed;

- the date for requiring UCP's to fully hold NCO(W) be deferred until 31 December 2010

- the date for accepting ‘experienced worker’/grandfather rights’ entry be deferred until June 2010
- the situation be reviewed in Spring 2010 and a decision taken whether to confirm/extend these

**Action: MS to draft proposal for EU Skills (via Claire Allard) to confirm the working arrangements, including those for renewal of ‘experienced worker’ registrations, before information issued to UCPs.**

#### **b) Clarification of NCO(W) registration for mains >400mm where ductile iron is being laid**

There is uncertainty about whether the NCO(W) registration category for mains above 400mm covers both PE and ductile iron mains.

Linked to this EUS are in the process of developing a set of National Occupational Standards (NOS) for gas and water which are structured to facilitate multi-utility working. However the proposed standards have not been widely circulated and EUS agreed to do this.

**Actions: EUS to circulate proposed NOS and set time period for review**

**All to review NOS and provide feedback to EUS, checking that the standards cover a range of material types.**

#### **c. Designer Qualification**

EU Skills reported that the standards had been approved for the NVQ designer qualification. The resultant qualification for the NVQ Level 3 from CABWI is now imminent. It was noted that a UCP had raised at the WIRS Forum concerns with regards to designer UCPs being able to meet the evidence criteria of the NVQ qualification to enable this to be awarded to them. EUS stated that the evidence now required to be demonstrated for the NVQ level 3 is such that designer UCPs will be able to meet the criteria.

It is not yet possible to consider introducing the designer NVQ as a WIRS requirement. This will only be done when the NVQ is established and take-up amongst water company designers is known.

#### **4. Safe Control of Connections (SCC) Project Update**

Claire Allard updated the group on progress of the on-going project and the outcome of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009. The current common description for the making of routine in-line outline connections is Safe Control of Operations (SCO), this is seen as abroad description for what is being developed therefore the suggestion of using a description of ‘Safe Control of Connections (SCC)’ was tabled.

The requirements of, and signing off, the competent person(s) Technical Advisor, Supervisor and Operative were discussed. It was proposed that the competency training sign-off should be at a single level across all roles and the sign-off should lead to a EUS registration category. A qualification for the competent person should it be required to be developed, needs to undertaken as soon as possible to enable CABWI to develop this, and for training providers to gear up to deliver training.

**Action: Claire Allard to circulate updated proposals (following the meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> June) covering SCC activities by end July**

**EU Skills will continue to develop the necessary standards for competent person(s).**

**Following circulation of the updated proposals LR will draft proposals for the WIRS scope covering SCC work so that this can be discussed by WIRSAP at the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

## 5. Update on Current Status of WIRS And Scheme Related Issues

The current situation regarding WIRS accreditations is that:

29 UCPs hold Full accreditation (increase of 4 since last meeting)

15 UCPs hold Partial accreditation (increase of 1 since last meeting)

5 UCPs are working towards Partial accreditation (decrease of 4 since as last meeting)

No issues were raised by WIRSAP concerning the scheme or UCP accreditations.

LR reminded WIRSAP that the WIRS fee structure were due for revision. The proposed increase of 3% was accepted.

## 6. Feedback from WIRS UCP Forum held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009

The WIRS Forum discussion was structured around the presentation available on the WIRS website; <http://www.lloydsregister.co.uk/wirs/minutes.html>

In summary matters arising from the Forum discussion were;

1. (See above) (UCPs consider that it is unreasonable to keep the current NCO(W) timings as they feel there should be synchronicity with the timings of the proposed water industry network construction and maintenance framework.
2. UCPs had concerns that formalising the interface (see below) between the developer, principal contractor and designer may make the current working arrangements more difficult.
3. UCPs do not feel that the units in the designer NVQ framework reflect the work done by UCPs and therefore would not support this qualification becoming a mandatory requirement
4. Some UCPs are uncomfortable with the UU pressure test arrangements where they have to take loggers to Bodycote. Others thought the arrangements worked well. It was agreed that there was little benefit in considering the issue until the updated UU guidance is issued.
5. UCPs welcomed the Forum and thought that the end of the year (when the updated water company guidance could be reviewed) would be a suitable time for the next Forum.
6. It was agreed that the contact details of the 3 UCP representatives on WIRSAP should be made available. The contacts being Louise Boccaccini, Mike Scowcroft and Ken Marsh
7. In addition UCPs were informed that SLO representative places were available on the Ofwat Self-Lay Group

## 7. Clarifying WIRS requirements for subcontracted testing and disinfection

Following the last WIRSAP meeting, where it was recognised that whilst it did not merit the creation of a 'stand-alone' scope the scheme wording needed strengthening to give better guidance about the requirements when a UCP subcontracts testing and disinfection work to a 'specialist' contractor, proposals to amend the scheme were considered and the new wording was agreed by WIRSAP.

**Action:** LR to change the Sub-Contracted Work Section of the WIRS requirement document to better detail requirements for sub-contracted testing and disinfection work

## 8. Proposed scheme word changes

An issue had arisen where a UCP had acted outside of their accredited scope by sub-contracting work to another UCP who held the required level of accreditation but who did not take full responsibility for controlling the work. This meant that the original UCP was still working outside of their accreditation scope. To prevent this re-occurring proposals to change the scheme requirements to better define what is not permissible were considered along with stating in the scheme that it is permissible for a 'construction' UCP to engage a 'design' UCP to do all aspects of the design. Subject to LR reviewing that the proposed amended scheme wording was compatible with the subcontract arrangements discussed above the new wording was agreed by WIRSAP.

**Action:** LR to change the Scope Section of the WIRS requirement document to better detail 'out of scope' work (subject to it being compatible with the changes relating to sub-contracting)

## **9. Water Companies Self-lay CoP addendums**

The date set for the water companies producing CoP addendums appears to have been deferred until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2009. Water companies confirmed that they are working to this revised date.

LR stated that having told UCPs that the updated CoP represents current 'best practice' and should be followed they can only check against published guidance. So it is in water companies interest to get the updates produced quickly.

## **10. Any Other Business**

### a) Water Company Memorandum of Understanding

The MoUs signed by all England and Wales Water Companies come up for renewal in April 2010. LR confirmed that it is the intention to start the renewal process with a discussion at the next meeting.

## **11. Future Meetings**

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2009 was confirmed as the date of the next meeting (and 24<sup>th</sup> November as the following meeting). Meetings to be held at the LR offices in Coventry.