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SMART MOVE PUTS SKILLCARD IN FRONT

The Engineering Services SKILLcard is converting to 'smart' technology as part of a strategy to further improve professional standards across the building engineering services industry.

SKILLcard, which is used by more than 50,000 mechanical engineering workers and professionals to provide proof of their skills and to access project sites in line with health and safety legislation, is the first of the specialist schemes in the construction industry to switch to chip-enabled smart technology.

As the first affiliate of the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) to go smart, it puts mechanical engineers in the vanguard of the construction industry's adoption of digital methods. Other construction sectors will follow so that by 2020 all building professionals will be using smart technology to gain access to project sites.

The new cards are available from this month and will gradually replace the old-style cards as they come up for renewal. They offer greater functionality than their 'analogue' predecessors enabling employers and site managers to check the holder's qualifications and skills much more quickly; with information on the card accessible via smartphone, card reader or tablet. The information held on the card will also be more accurate as it can be rapidly updated with any new skills and qualifications.

Smart cards are also much harder to fake so this change will lead to a reduction in counterfeiting and misuse by unqualified 'cowboy' operatives.

Valid

The application process via the SKILLcard website (www.skillcard.org.uk) remains the same and current cards will still be valid until their expiry date. The cost of the new smart card is £40 and renewal reminders will be issued to holders in the usual way.

Peter Rimmer, Head of Employment Affairs and Skills at the Building and Engineering Services Association (BESA), said he was extremely proud that SKILLcard had shown “forward thinking” by choosing to be the first specialist scheme to go digital.

“It is a real coup for our sector to be leading the way in the modernisation of this crucial competence and health and safety measure,” said Mr Rimmer. “The improvements offered by the smart card will make life much easier for employers and card holders. Accessing information will be quicker and more accurate as the card will be immediately updated with any new details about the individual holder.

“This really is a great step forward for our industry,” he added.

CSCS Chief Executive Graham Wren commented; “I welcome the move by SKILLcard to adopt smartcard technology. This contributes to the modernisation of the industry and is part of a wider strategy to validate professional and vocational standards and contribute to the health and well-being of operatives and the general public.

“Information is extremely powerful in this day and age,” he said.

“Construction is such a huge and complex field that it is vital we take advantage of all the digital technologies available to us. This is a very significant step being taken by SKILLcard, adding to the 1.5 million CSCS Smartcards in circulation and placing their card holders at the forefront of a new generation in construction.”

For more information visit: **www.skillcard.org.uk**

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Notes to Editors:

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