

WaterSafe briefing note for Stakeholders June 2013



It has been some time since the last Stakeholder briefing note, but much has happened in the meantime

WaterSafe – the national plumbing assurance scheme, supported by all the water companies in the UK and the key plumbing bodies - will officially launch to the public on 8th October. The Defra Minister, Richard Benyon MP, has agreed to speak at this event which will be held in Westminster. We are also, with the help of Northern Ireland Water, aiming to coordinate a similar event in Belfast.

For customers, the key interface with WaterSafe will be through the website, when they search for a qualified, competent and reliable plumber. The website is now being completed and will go live in early July. In the meantime there is a holding page at www.watersafe.org.uk.

The trade launch or roll out started in April. We are now signing up members from the existing approved contractor schemes and already have over 2000 plumbers from around 1000 business on-board. However we are seeking more businesses and sole traders who meet our standards, to ensure a good choice and geographic coverage for WaterSafe customers.

WaterSafe is also now seeking 'partner' organisations that share similar ideals and who can help promote, endorse and potentially support WaterSafe in the run up to and then post the October launch. We are very pleased therefore to have Plumb Center on-board. They have agreed to issue WaterSafe leaflets with their 70,000 monthly accounts, as well as placing posters and more leaflets in their 520 outlets. Plumbfix has also agreed to include an article on WaterSafe in the next edition of their catalogue.

The WaterSafe team have also provided a number of presentations to other interested organisations. WaterSafe articles have also appeared in eight trade magazines and water journals and more are on the way.

To support the WaterSafe team promoting the scheme we have just appointed a professional PR agency – Bright PR. Other help is also coming from the water companies' communications and customer service departments who will be key in spreading the message to the general public through their websites, telephone responses and messages to customers.

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The WaterSafe name, logo and strapline have now been published in the Journal of the Intellectual Property Office, for protection both as a Certification Mark and as a Trade Mark. We anticipate these being formally registered at the beginning of August, after the consultation period.

On the governance and compliance front, the Board has now approved all the key policies and procedures, including the compliance requirements for WaterSafe scheme operators and for WaterSafe Approved plumbing businesses; the Customer Commitment; the customer redress scheme; the audit regime and the disciplinary code.

All recognised plumbers (i.e. individuals) working for a WaterSafe Approved business will be expected to carry a WaterSafe branded ID card. These will be rolled out from September replacing existing ID cards or introducing new cards where these are not currently provided. That way the customer can clearly see the person working in their property is WaterSafe recognised – their assurance that the person is competent and qualified to do the work. Carrying and showing the card also addresses the Board's and the water companies' concerns that any individual entering a customer's property must be able to clearly identify themselves.

The WaterSafe team have also completed the work with BPEC that provides an alternative assessment and recognition route for experienced plumbers who do not have the qualifications for the normal entry route. This jointly developed course has now been accepted by Ofqual and has been passed to the Register of Regulated Qualifications.

We will provide a further stakeholder briefing before the launch.

In the meantime, if you are able to help promote or support WaterSafe, to the trade or to the public, we'd like to hear from you, or if you'd like to know more about WaterSafe, then please contact

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[WaterSafe can now provide promotional material in the form of A5 leaflets and posters and also more detailed briefing notes and Q&A texts.]