

# What Value Do Safety Accreditation Schemes Offer?

Capita plans to stop running the Constructionline Scheme, writes Phil Pinnington of the GGF who believes the demise of the Scheme may actually allow small and entirely Health & Safety competent firms on to UK building sites where previously they were effectively barred

**The construction industry has been shaken by the demise of Carillion but there are other big firms in trouble. Capita, which owns the Constructionline Scheme, announced in January that they plan to sell off the Scheme.**

As yet, there doesn't appear to be any organisation currently interested in taking over the Scheme which I believe may well see its demise.

The marketplace has, for many years, been crowded with these accreditation schemes. CHAS, SSIP, ACCORD to name but three all with the express aim (at a price) of reassuring the commercial customer that the sub-contractor has the right level of safety management in place. The schemes vary vastly and ask for evidence that asks for information that covers a range of safety requirements, although often they are seen as a tick box exercise and they frequently lose sight of what's important.



## Bar is lowered

The application of Health and Safety that pertains to the business should be one of the core principles in the design of any accreditation scheme. Sadly the anecdotal evidence I see doesn't show this to be the case. Companies that have taken a strategic decision to have only Gold Level Constructionline sub-contractors immediately excludes smaller companies who are more than qualified to do the work safely but simply cannot afford the additional administration needed. It becomes a barrier to work opportunities and many simply choose not to compete in this market.

If the aim is to assure main contractors that the people they're putting their faith in are both competent and have the right level of safety commitment then I believe the design and execution of these schemes fall woefully short.

## No questions

To show how ludicrous a position some of these schemes hold, I was recently contacted through

email by a GGF member who had been visited by an auditor from one of the accreditation schemes. The member had asked if we had an audit model. A very unusual request until I was able to talk directly to the member. It appeared that an auditor had arrived on site to audit his systems but he had no audit plan and had not audited a glass company before and didn't know what to ask.

I believe that there are very responsible installation companies in the UK market but they're being held back, in no small part, by expectations that far outweigh the task.

## GLASS Charter Merit Scheme

In 2016 we at the GGF relaunched our GLASS Charter Merit Scheme which seeks to establish an industry safety accreditation scheme that we believe offers the assurance of safety compliance as well as quality that principle contractors should recognise. The scheme focuses on how the business applies Health and Safety within the size and scope of operations so, applies equally to flat glass processors as it does to window installers. This I believe should form the basis of industry specific safety schemes that instead of excluding small specialist business it helps them grow and flourish within new markets whilst continuously improving. [i](#)