



MANAGING COMPETENCE FOR VENTILATION HYGIENE ACTIVITIES

Benchmarking

Industry Competence Steering Group (ICSG)

Sector Led Group 10 – Installation & Maintenance (10.2 Engineering Services)

Ventilation Hygiene Competence Group (VHCG)

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ABOUT THE ENGINEERING & BUILDING SERVICES SKILLS ALLIANCE (EBSSA)

The Engineering & Building Services Skills Alliance (EBSSA) brings together leading organisations from across the engineering, building services and environmental technologies sectors to collaborate on shared workforce training and skills priorities. A coalition of Actuate UK members together with BEAMA, CIPHE, TICA-ACAD and MCS, EBSSA provides a credible voice for skills across all engineering and building services.

EBSSA would like to thank the following organisations for their participation in the development of this document:

- Airmec Essential Services
- Building Engineering Services Association (BESA)
- Compliance Air and Water Limited
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- IAQ Consultancy Services
- System Hygienics Limited
- Vent-Tech Ltd.
- Ventilation Surveys & Services Limited

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CONTENTS

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction..... | 5 |
| 1.1 | Drivers for change | 5 |
| 1.2 | Addressing organisational capability..... | 5 |
| 1.3 | Addressing individual competence | 5 |
| 1.4 | The Ventilation Hygiene Competence Group (VHCG) | 6 |
| 1.5 | Document purpose | 6 |
| 2 | Background and Context | 7 |
| 2.1 | Scope and criticality..... | 7 |
| 2.2 | Occupational relevance | 7 |
| 2.3 | Existing occupational standards | 8 |
| 2.4 | Existing qualifications and assessment programmes..... | 9 |
| 2.5 | Training provision | 11 |
| 2.6 | Capacity and capability for training / qualification / assessment delivery..... | 12 |
| 2.7 | Validation of competence | 12 |
| 2.8 | Direct links to organisational capability | 14 |
| 2.9 | Devolved nations consistency..... | 14 |
| 2.10 | End user considerations | 14 |
| 2.11 | Communications..... | 14 |
| 3 | Functional map and framework of competencies | 15 |
| 3.1 | Development background..... | 15 |
| 3.2 | The functional map and framework of competencies | 15 |
| 3.3 | Mapping to other standards and framework..... | 15 |
| 3.4 | Ongoing monitoring and maintenance | 15 |
| | Appendix 1 – Consolidated list of recommendations | 16 |
| | Appendix 2 – Terms & definitions..... | 18 |
| | Appendix 3 – Bibliography | 20 |

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Drivers for change

In 2017, the Grenfell Tower fire created shockwaves throughout the built environment sector and generated a great deal of focus on deficiencies in both practices and capability of the built environment workforce.

It was recognised in the report of Dame Judith Hackitt, 'Building a Safer Future: Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety' (also known as the Hackitt Report) that a simple, more effective regulatory framework would be required to deliver change. This included moving to an 'outcomes-based' model, rather than a prescriptive rules-based model reliant on complex and detailed guidance. To achieve this, competent people who are capable of understanding their responsibilities for safety & integrity and thinking for themselves are required.

The Building Safety Act 2022 (the Act) has introduced a new regulatory regime which puts a legal requirement to demonstrate competence front and centre, to directly address this issue. The Act, together with supporting secondary legislation sets a general requirement for competence at both individual and organisational levels:

- Organisational capability – Organisations must have the organisational capability to perform their functions. Organisational capability is defined within Building Regulations as having the appropriate management, policies, procedures, systems and resources in place to ensure that individuals under the control of the organisation comply with relevant regulations and that those in development are appropriately supervised
- Individual competence – Any person carrying building or design work must possess the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours (SKEB) necessary

1.2 Addressing organisational capability

Organisational capability for those carrying out grease hygiene activities is currently measured through mechanisms such as the ventilation hygiene register and other similar schemes, which show contractor compliance with TR19 Grease (Specification for Fire Risk Management of Grease Accumulation within Kitchen Extract Systems). These schemes include both desk-based audit of, policies, processes, insurance and training, follow up site visits, and unscheduled audits. The ventilation hygiene register may be further extended to cover air hygiene and fire damper testing. Any extension of the register will be aligned to industry identified requirements for individual competence.

Approaches to setting out requirements for, and implementing mechanisms for, demonstrating organisational capability are currently under consideration in collaboration with the wider built environment sector. This work is on-going and is not directly addressed within this document.

1.3 Addressing individual competence

The Industry Competence Steering Group (ICSG) is a formal, cross-sector working group of the Industry Competence Committee (ICC), a statutory committee of the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). ICSG provides a vehicle for industry collaboration in development and implementation of competence frameworks in the built environment.

ICSG is made up of multiple sector led groups (SLGs), each leading work in a specific area. Within this, SLG 10 is focussed on competence frameworks for installation and maintenance. The structure of SLG 10 is split into 5 super sectors, each focussed on different aspects of the

installer landscape. SLG 10.2 covers roles and activities associated with engineering services, including ventilation hygiene.

1.4 The Ventilation Hygiene Competence Group (VHCG)

VHCG was formed to take forward the development of a sector-based approach to competence on behalf of SLG 10. It is formed from industry specialists and employer representative organisations in line with the principles underpinning the work of ICSG (see page 2 for a full list of participating organisations).

The work described within this report has focussed on defining an approach to individual competence which can be connected to wider organisational capability. This has been aligned with the requirements set out in BS 8670-1:2024, the code of practice for competence frameworks for building safety – core criteria.

At every stage, VHCG has endeavoured to consult with or include the work of other relevant bodies or working groups to ensure a joined-up approach to competence with allied areas.

1.5 Document purpose

This document sets out contextual and background information collated through consultation with VHCG, and details of the benchmarks for competence that have been put in place by industry. This is intended to be used as contextual information for further development and documentation of:

- Pathways for competence - requirements for competence, including how SKEB should be evidenced and how competence should be validated, kept current, and revalidated, for various relevant occupational areas
- Implementation plans – the actions required to implement the agreed standards for competence

The content of this document was initially collated and published in a consultation document circulated to industry in September 2025. This was then further refined prior to publication based on consideration of feedback received. Information on how feedback was addressed can be obtained by contacting BESA (SSB@theBESA.com).

This document provides background and context to industry guidance on demonstrating competence in ductwork installation activities. Whilst the requirements of the Building Safety Act (2022) and secondary legislation such as the Building Regulations 2010 and their 2023 amendment have been taken into account in its production, its content does not constitute regulatory guidance and it is not intended to provide interpretation of the law. Responsibility for complying with the law resides with the individuals and organisations carrying out work. Signposting to relevant legislation and regulations can be found within Appendix 3 – Bibliography.

2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 Scope and criticality

Correct cleaning of ductwork and associated products is critical to ensuring correct function of ventilation systems and to minimise risk. The following definition has been used to underpin the developments outlined in this document:

Ventilation hygiene ensures that ventilation systems are maintained in a clean condition and decontaminated as required by statutory regulation and in compliance with industry standards, to maintain system performance and efficiency important to net zero and ensure the wellbeing and safety of those within the built environment. This includes checking, testing and reporting operation of associated equipment when cleaning is being carried out.

This includes:

- Air hygiene – cleaning of industrial, commercial and healthcare ventilation systems that are not used for commercial extract cooking applications, aligned with the requirements of TR19 Air – Specification for Internal Cleanliness and Hygiene Management of Ventilation Systems, NAAD-21 Part 2: AIR (Indoor Air Quality), and BS EN 15780 – Ventilation for buildings. Ductwork. Cleanliness of ventilation systems
- Grease hygiene – cleaning of industrial, commercial and healthcare ventilation systems specifically relating to kitchen extract systems not suitable for air or general ventilation cleaning works, aligned with the requirements of TR19 Grease – Specification for Fire Risk Management of Grease Accumulation within Kitchen Extract Systems, NAAD-21 Part 1: GREASE (Kitchen Extract), and BS EN 15780 – Ventilation for buildings. Ductwork. Cleanliness of ventilation systems

The scope of this work applies to industrial / commercial, healthcare and large-scale residential settings.

Ventilation hygiene work may be carried out on both new build construction sites and in existing buildings. It also occurs in both higher-risk buildings (HRBs) and other building types.

No specific sector-based legal requirements for validation or revalidation of competence in ventilation hygiene currently exist, however the Building Safety Act (2022) and associated legislation place an onus on individuals and employers to prove competence to work in critical activities in construction and the built environment.

2.2 Occupational relevance

Work carried out in ventilation hygiene extends from general cleaning activities through to customer service and supervisory activities in both air and grease hygiene. Activities for those carrying out surveying and auditing may also need to be addressed. The extent of work in an individual's area of responsibility will depend on whether they are conducting air or grease hygiene work and the scope of their role. An activity-based definition of competence will help to set out these requirements in a modular way.

Recommendation 1: An activity-based approach should be used when defining required standards of competence

Ventilation hygiene may be carried out those with the following role titles (or similar), depending on role scope:

- Air hygiene operative
- Air hygiene technician
- Grease hygiene operative
- Grease hygiene technician

Operatives undertake general duties of cleaning on site.

Technicians act as team leaders / supervisors, with responsibility for signing off work, conducting specified pre- and post-clean surface cleanliness validation tests, clarifying post-clean information, and supervising cleaning on site. Each site should have a technician present for the duration of the clean.

Operatives with less than 6 months' experience are considered to be trainees in the process of developing their skill, knowledge and experience to prepare for operative training and assessment.

Initial development of competence standards should focus on activities carried out by those in operative and technician roles for both air and grease hygiene. Progression and upskilling activities such as surveying and auditing activities should be covered in a subsequent phase of work.

Recommendation 2: Development of initial competence standards and frameworks should focus on activities carried out by ventilation hygiene operative and technicians

2.3 Existing occupational standards

The National Occupational Standard (NOS) BSEHV11 – clean industrial and commercial ventilation systems – is the only existing description of competence for ventilation hygiene (apprenticeship occupational standards in England were withdrawn due to low uptake). This standard was reviewed in early 2025 with only minor amendments made. Already consulted upon and adopted by industry, this provides an existing foundation for development of broader competence standards.

No specific occupational standards for surveying and auditing currently exist, but elements of these may be embedded within existing NOS.

Recommendation 3: NOS should form a basis for development of competence standards in this area

The NOS primarily reflect skills and knowledge requirements, with some implicit requirements for experience and behaviour. Explicit requirements for experience and behaviour have not been fully articulated. There are also areas of identified weakness around engaging with customers which are applicable at technician level. Addition of further statements in the competence standards in these areas will therefore be required in order to support industry in discharging their legislative and regulatory responsibilities. Integrating NOS into wider competence standards set by industry will maintain alignment between qualifications systems and wider legal or best practice requirements.

Concerns around the level of detail included in the NOS have also been identified which may result in inconsistent interpretation in resulting qualifications and assessment programmes.

Some clarification detail may therefore be required in the competence standards which does not appear in the NOS.

Recommendation 4: Competence standards should build on the NOS to ensure full coverage of SKEB requirements in relevant activities

No industry agreed qualification structures (which would usually be developed by the relevant standard setting body alongside the NOS) exist to underpin assessment provision¹. The full scope of health and safety included in building services engineering NOS which underpin qualifications at level 2 and 3 is considered to be too broad in scope for the needs of ventilation hygiene operatives and technicians. To address this, the work of this group should set minimum standards of SKEB for health and safety within the competence standard that programmes of training and assessment can be aligned to.

Recommendation 5: The competence framework should set minimum requirements for health and safety SKEB

2.4 Existing qualifications and assessment programmes

2.4.1 Regulated qualifications

No nationally recognised qualifications specific to ventilation hygiene currently exist. Difficulty creating traction with awarding organisations has been identified throughout mechanical engineering services. Current qualifications across the sector have limited take-up. Costs and time taken for completion are seen as barriers to learner uptake.

Apprenticeships were developed in England, but these have subsequently been withdrawn due to very low uptake. This is likely due to the scope of work in ventilation hygiene and difficulties meeting minimum thresholds for apprenticeship duration.

It is felt that further formal qualifications for ventilation hygiene will not provide the necessary support to the sector. Work should focus on ensuring that non-qualification programmes of training and assessment, aligned to the competence framework and appropriately quality assured, are available to industry.

Recommendation 6: Work should focus on ensuring that non-qualification programmes of training and assessment, aligned to a central competence framework and appropriately quality assured, are available to industry

An optional unit for ventilation hygiene is included within the SVQ Heating and Ventilation Ductwork Planning and Installation (SCQF level 6). Updates to the qualification structure were agreed during 2025 to make this unit additional rather than optional (it is currently unclear when this change will be implemented). This is, however, only accessible to those carrying out installation works as well as cleaning. This creates a barrier to use of this qualification for ventilation hygiene operatives and technicians. Consideration for maintaining alignment of this qualification with newly developed pathways specific to ventilation hygiene needs to be made.

2.4.2 Alternative programmes of training and assessment

The gap in qualifications has been filled with alternative programmes of training & assessment (e.g. through AEME and the BESA Academy) and customised awards.

¹ Qualification structures usually group multiple NOS together and usually create combinations of generic NOS (e.g. health and safety) with specialist NOS like BSEHV11. In the absence of these, industry has not confirmed or agreed the relevance of other NOS to this field of work.

AEME (Air Environmental Mechanical Equipment Ltd.) training & assessment is short-form, conducted over 2 days and aligned with BSEHV11, BSEBSE01 and BSEBSE02 and industry technical standards. This is designed to add additional air systems cleaning capabilities for individuals who already carry out kitchen extract cleaning. Individuals undertake an exam at the end of training.

BESA training & assessment is short-form, lasting a maximum of 4 – 5 days and aligned to BSEHV11 and the TR19 code of practice. Assessment tests underpinning knowledge through multiple choice questions and professional discussion, and practical skills through practical assessment tasks. Capstone, on-site assessment is not carried out as, in this case, assessment of skills can be successfully carried out in a simulated environment.

Customised awards are provider specific packages of learning and assessment, designed to allow recognition of employer-specific training. In this case, they have been repurposed to create a commercial offer. Customised awards may not be regulated in the same way as nationally recognised qualifications, although awarding organisation specific quality measures are applied. For ventilation hygiene, the relevant customised awards are based on BSEHV11 and wider health and safety NOS taken from existing building services engineering suites.

Non-qualification programmes of training and/or assessment should align to the competence standard and framework moving forward (both initially and as time passes). It should be made clear to industry which available programmes meet or exceed the standards set.

Recommendation 7: The Skills Partnership Committee should approve all products which contribute to evidence of competence and make it clear how these relate to the activities and statements set out within the competence framework

Although these interventions address skills and knowledge, limited assessment of experience and behaviour is made. Additional mechanisms for evidencing experience and behaviour will need to be set out within routes to competence created

Recommendation 8: Mechanisms for evidencing experience and behaviour should be set out within the routes to competence

Although elements of surveying and auditing may be built into these programmes, the extent to which these activities are covered is unclear. Phase 2 of work should set minimum requirements for these activities and identify appropriate routes to competence.

Recommendation 9: A second phase of activity should address routes to competence for surveying and auditing

Concerns have been raised around the consistency of assessment between providers, due to the potential for differing interpretations of the NOS. Confidence will need to be provided that assessment is robust and meets any competence standards set. Developing a central assessment specification alongside the NOS, offering more concrete guidance around the scope and depth of content covered during assessment, would help to drive consistency and ensure that assessments in place remain true to the competence requirements set by industry². It is important that assessment providers are included in this work.

Recommendation 10: A standard assessment specification should be developed to drive consistency and ensure alignment with the competence framework

On-site assessments for ventilation hygiene may be cost and time prohibitive, or unnecessarily extend the time taken to signoff of initial competence. In some cases, the logistics of getting

² Note that any specification created should be designed to sit alongside BSE Skills' existing assessment strategy

assessors on to site can be difficult due to the nature of sites being worked on, permitting requirements or scheduling of work at unsociable hours. This may overlay additional costs that ultimately need to be borne by employers. Low volumes of learners split across multiple locations do not allow for economies of scale to offset these costs and drive efficiencies. The use of simulation in the assessment process should be carefully considered to mitigate this – the move to simulation is reflective of other areas of construction and the built environment and has not been found to adversely affect outcomes. Room should be left for both on-site and simulated assessment models within the assessment specification, although care should be taken to ensure parity of outcomes.

Recommendation 11: Provision for on-site and off-site assessment should be made in the assessment specification, ensuring parity of outcomes

2.5 Training provision

2.5.1 Industry training

Much training in ventilation hygiene takes place in the workplace, within organisations. This may be difficult to replicate in a training environment. Despite this, lack of clear direction for those carrying out training may result in differing operative / technician capabilities. Training infrastructure is in place to deliver off-site training to supplement this where required.

Development of a standard training specification would support both employer developed and third-party training to meet the needs of the sector, providing more insight into the depth and breadth of content that should be covered to prepare individuals for assessment. Input from training providers will be essential to ensure that this guidance is fit for purpose.

Recommendation 12: A standard training specification aligned to the competence standard should be created and maintained to support consistency of training delivery

2.5.2 Basic fire safety training

A key recommendation of CSG's final report³ was the development and implementation of basic fire safety training for all installers across the built environment. As a result of this, in consultation with industry, CITB has developed a basic e-learning package to ensure awareness of the basic principles of fire safety. A contextualised version of this is currently in development for the Building Services Engineering sector, which will create broad awareness of fire safety requirements in a sector specific manner. Integrating this into routes to competence for ventilation hygiene will ensure a basic awareness of fire safety for all whether dealing with air or grease hygiene work.

Recommendation 13: Building services engineering specific basic fire safety awareness training should be incorporated into ventilation hygiene routes to competence

2.5.3 Manufacturers' training

Training on manufacturers' specific products or requirements is an important component of familiarising operatives with the materials that they will be using during the course of their activities e.g. specific manufacturer requirements for installation of access doors. This goes

³ CSG (the Competence Steering Group) was the forerunner of ICSG. Its final report was: Setting the Bar. The Final Report of the Competence Steering Group for Building a Safer Future. October 2020. Available from: <https://www.cic.org.uk/uploads/files/old/setting-the-bar-9-final-1.pdf>

beyond baseline competence, building in detailed product-level familiarisation and confidence with manufacturers' specific instructions.

VHCG acknowledges the importance of this additional process, and its adoption should be promoted within the industry. However, this is considered a separate process to the validation of competence in the activities identified.

2.6 Capacity and capability for training / qualification / assessment delivery

A lack of qualified assessors is seen as a potential barrier to driving a consistent standard of qualification / assessment within industry. Training and assessment providers in both the private and public sectors struggle to find appropriately qualified and experienced people to deliver, which leads to a knock-on lack of investment in facilities specific to building services engineering learning and assessment programmes. Despite this, there is a wealth of expertise and experience within industry which could be leveraged to expand the trainer and assessor population.

Consideration needs to be given as to how to expand and formally qualify the pool of available assessors. Transitional arrangements to allow occupationally competent individuals to assess wider workforce competence may be required to allow time for more formal infrastructure to be embedded.

BESA is currently running a campaign called Skills Legacy to encourage experienced workers to qualify in learning and development in order to support ongoing provision. This includes connecting potential trainers and assessors with upskilling qualifications, brokering funding, creating a register of assessors, and connecting those assessors with qualifications providers who need additional support.

2.7 Validation of competence

2.7.1 Initial validation

Initial validation of competence across the full scope of SKEB is not currently made. Additional guidance on how to evidence competence as defined within the Building Safety Act and associated secondary legislation will need to be made available to industry to support individuals and employers in discharging their legislative and regulatory responsibilities. This should sit alongside existing guidance on qualification assessment provided in BSE Skills' assessment strategy, which primarily deals with assessment of skills and knowledge.

Recommendation 14: Additional guidance on how to evidence competence should be made available to industry

Card provider registration (BESA SKILLcard) is currently used as a proxy for validation of competence. This currently relates to skills and knowledge only. On-going registration with SKILLCard is then subject to completion of the relevant health, safety & environment (HS&E) test.

Concerns have also been raised around a lack of opportunities for assessment of competence linked to registration, particularly for operatives. Registration is currently only available through Ventilation Hygiene Technician registration with BESA SKILLCard. The only existing route to registration is via completion of a customised award, subject to the completion of health and safety testing.

In addition, the majority of work within ventilation hygiene is not carried out in environments where CSCS linked cards are required for site access (i.e. not within new build or large scale repair, maintenance or improvement (RMI) projects).

Consideration should be focussed on the requirements for competence in this area, taking into account the level of skill required for the roles (considered to be semi-skilled rather than skilled at operative level), and competence should be validated accordingly. If a card is required for site access, the basis on which this card is awarded should link with the competence requirements as set out by industry, rather than the competence requirements being built to allow achievement of a blue skilled worker card. Other card types should be explored which better reflect the scope and extent of requirements, for example exploring the use of the 'related discipline card' for ventilation hygiene operatives⁴.

Recommendation 15: Other existing card types for ventilation hygiene operative should be explored, which link to rather than drive competence requirements

Current registration is occupational and does not provide a granular view of the work that people do, or do not, have the skills and knowledge to undertake. No distinction is made between grease and air technicians. This may need to be made explicit in future models.

Recommendation 16: Card scheme registration should be made more granular to make it clearer whether scope of assessment related to air, grease or both

In addition, registration is made mainly on demonstration of skills and knowledge with little accounting for experience or behaviour. Additional consideration of how card schemes may be able to support demonstration of competence across the full scope of SKEB should be made. This may provide an additional avenue to support individuals and their employers evidencing that the required competence is in place.

Recommendation 17: BESA SKILLCard should consider how it might support validation / evidencing of competence across the full scope of SKEB

2.7.2 Currency of competence and ongoing validation

Currency of competence is essential to ensure that the workforce is not only capable now but remains capable in the future. A key component of the new competence regime is that competence must be maintained over time and that maintenance should be demonstrated.

Currently, no formal ongoing assessment of competence is made. Card scheme re-registration is based on achievement of the relevant HS&E test, with evidence of occupational competence coming solely from initial programme completion. No continuing demonstration of sector based SKEB is required. No requirements for continuing professional development (CPD) are in place.

Recommendation 18: Routes to competence should consider the threshold(s) for continuing demonstration of competence

Completing formal CPD is not the only mechanism for retaining skills and knowledge. Consideration should be given to how continuing to evidence application of skills and knowledge (experience) plays into currency of competence.

Recommendation 19: Routes to competence should consider all potential mechanisms for ensuring currency of competence, not just formal training and/or assessment

⁴ This is an existing, available card type used for ancillary occupations or activities within building services engineering.

2.8 Direct links to organisational capability

Both the short form training for Grease Hygiene Technician and the customised awards are further linked to demonstration of workforce capability contributing to organisational registration on the Ventilation Hygiene Register. Consideration needs to be given to the equivalence between these two routes and the role that they play in organisational capability.

In future, the Ventilation Hygiene Register may also be extended to cover air hygiene. Consideration should be given to how any routes to competence identified for Air Hygiene Technician underpin this new part of the register.

2.9 Devolved nations consistency

In setting out requirements for the development, measurement and validation of competence, consideration of the best methods of ensuring consistency between England and the devolved nations is required. This is particularly important where parts of the workforce on national borders may operate in more than one nation. It is essential that a consistent bar for competence is set and adhered to throughout the UK.

Additional collaboration with skills bodies will be required to encourage take up of the additional requirements for competence identified in the devolved nations, over and above NOS, as these sit outside the direct scope of application of the Building Safety Act.

Recommendation 20: Additional collaboration with the devolved nations should be made to drive consistency in standards of competence across the UK

2.10 End user considerations

Any solutions developed in this area need to consider what the market can / will bear in addition to providing robust routes to competence. Cost is a key issue – organisations need to see the value that they are getting from training and assessment processes to be able to justify the spend. Likewise, time taken to complete any processes needs to be considered to ensure that unnecessary burdens are not being placed upon individuals or organisations. Employers / contract holders acknowledge that competence is a requirement and that individuals will need to go through a process but want to ensure that this is as streamlined as possible to ensure that buy-in can be gained from those working in the sector.

2.11 Communications

Communication will be critical to ensure uptake of any final solutions. The value of competence processes needs to be communicated to be seen as credible. This also needs to link back to quality of work. Communications need to show the benefits and why these solutions are different to what has come before.

Across the board, support from the Skills Partnership Committee to review products against the competence standards, any quality requirement in place within industry, and training / assessment specifications, and make clear which products are confirmed as contributing to competence would be helpful.

Recommendation 21: The Skills Partnership Committee should promote the competence requirements approved by industry, and maintain a list of both qualifications and non-qualifications products that contribute to evidence of competence

3 FUNCTIONAL MAP AND FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCIES

3.1 Development background

A functional map has been created which breaks down the work carried out within the scope of ventilation hygiene (as defined in section 2.1) into discrete activities. These activities reflect the roles, responsibilities and types of work undertaken. These activities have then been aligned to the roles set out within that definition – where activities are marked as mandatory it is expected that individuals within the specified role(s) will demonstrate competence in them.

Note that although upskilling (additional) activities have been included within the functional map, only those prioritised as phase 1 (mandatory activities) are addressed in this document. A subsequent phase of work will be required to address phase 2 activities.

Each activity has then been broken down into competency statements outlining the skills, knowledge, experience, and behaviour (SKEB) required to perform that activity competently. The most recent versions of National Occupational Standards (NOS), reviewed during 2025, have been used as the basis for skills and knowledge statements⁵. Statements for experience and behaviour and additional specific knowledge and skills statements have been added to create fit for purpose competence standards.

It is acknowledged that the full scope of health and safety included within engineering services qualifications is too broad in this case. Statements of skills, knowledge, experience and behaviour related to working safely have been derived from the basic entry standard expected for existing ventilation hygiene training, as agreed by industry.

Together, the functional map and SKEB statements set out the benchmark for competence in each activity.

3.2 The functional map and framework of competencies

The detailed functional map and SKEB statements can be found in the spreadsheet 'VHCG-OP005 – VH functional map & SKEB R1'.

3.3 Mapping to other standards and framework.

The SKEB statements developed have been mapped against BS 8670-1:2024, the relevant BSE Skills NOS (as amended 2025), and the emerging requirements for construction products competence as outlined in the WG12 whitepaper. Details of that mapping can be found in the framework spreadsheet.

Consideration has also been given to the contents of the whitepaper by the Joint Competence Initiative for the Building Envelope Sector (JCI), published in June 2023.

3.4 Ongoing monitoring and maintenance

The current version of the framework was published in April 2026 and is due for review in April 2029. This will be managed and maintained by the BSE Skills Partnership with practical support provided by VHCG. Minor amendments to the framework, including the addition of clarification text to existing statements, may be made during this period. Resolving typographical errors and formatting changes to ensure the framework is up to date may be carried out on a continuous basis.

⁵ Note that these versions are yet to be made publicly available at the time of publication of this document

APPENDIX 1 – CONSOLIDATED LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: An activity-based approach should be used when defining required standards of competence

Recommendation 2: Development of initial competence standards and frameworks should focus on activities carried out by ventilation hygiene operative and technicians

Recommendation 3: NOS should form a basis for development of competence standards in this area

Recommendation 4: Competence standards should build on the NOS to ensure full coverage of SKEB requirements in relevant activities

Recommendation 5: The competence framework should set minimum requirements for health and safety SKEB

Recommendation 6: Work should focus on ensuring that non-qualification programmes of training and assessment, aligned to a central competence framework and appropriately quality assured, are available to industry

Recommendation 7: The Skills Partnership Committee should approve all products which contribute to evidence of competence and make it clear how these relate to the activities and statements set out within the competence framework

Recommendation 8: Mechanisms for evidencing experience and behaviour should be set out within the routes to competence

Recommendation 9: A second phase of activity should address routes to competence for surveying and auditing

Recommendation 10: A standard assessment specification should be developed to drive consistency and ensure alignment with the competence framework

Recommendation 11: Provision for on-site and off-site assessment should be made in the assessment specification, ensuring parity of outcomes

Recommendation 12: A standard training specification aligned to the competence standard should be created and maintained to support consistency of training delivery

Recommendation 13: Building services engineering specific basic fire safety awareness training should be incorporated into ventilation hygiene routes to competence

Recommendation 14: Additional guidance on how to evidence competence should be made available to industry

Recommendation 15: Other existing card types for ventilation hygiene operative should be explored, which link to rather than drive competence requirements

Recommendation 16: Card scheme registration should be made more granular to make it clearer whether scope of assessment related to air, grease or both

Recommendation 17: BESA SKILLCard should consider how it might support validation / evidencing of competence across the full scope of SKEB

Recommendation 18: Routes to competence should consider the threshold(s) for continuing demonstration of competence

Recommendation 19: Routes to competence should consider all potential mechanisms for ensuring currency of competence, not just formal training and/or assessment

Recommendation 20: Additional collaboration with the devolved nations should be made to drive consistency in standards of competence across the UK

Recommendation 21: The Skills Partnership Committee should promote the competence requirements approved by industry, and maintain a list of both qualifications and non-qualifications products that contribute to evidence of competence

APPENDIX 2 – TERMS & DEFINITIONS

Behaviour

Observable traits or ways of working that should be displayed. Observable things that an individual does or does not do

Competence / individual competence

Application of skill, knowledge, experience, and behaviour consistently by an individual to achieve a specific outcome

Standard for competence

Procedures & requirements for developing, measuring, validating, and proving competence against agreed skills, knowledge, experience, and behaviours required for an individual undertaking a role, function, activity, or task in order to perform their work to predetermined standards and expectations and maintain or improve their performance over time. This is sometimes referred to as a competence framework or competence standard

Continuing professional development (CPD)

Activities undertaken by an individual to maintain and develop competence, including formal and informal learning, self-assessment, obtaining feedback and identifying areas for improvement

Firestopping

Firestopping techniques encompass those used for penetration seals for services e.g. cables and pipes, linear joint seals, cavity barriers (e.g., in voids in roof spaces, above suspended ceilings, within walls and in external walls). Firestopping is also required as part of some other passive fire protection measures, including around fire door frames, around fire resisting /smoke control ducts and dampers.

Experience

Participation in relevant activities or observation of facts and events leading to

acquisition, improvement or demonstration of skills and knowledge

Formal learning

Organised and structured learning against formal learning objectives

Framework of competencies

Agreed statements of skills, knowledge, experience, and behaviour against specific activities identified in the functional map

Functional map

A map of activities included in the sub-sector, split into pre-determined levels of complexity

Individual

A single human being

Informal learning

Self-directed learning, or learning from experience

Higher-risk building (HRB)

Building subject to enhanced regulatory requirements or where risks might be considered elevated (for example as a result of the physical characteristics of the building, the way in which the building is used, or as a result of human factors)

Job role

The specific combination of activities performed in a specific role, as agreed between an employee and an employer. This may change over time, or from employer to employer, or between employees of the same employer

Knowledge

Assimilation of facts, theories, and practices in relation to a given role, function, activity, or task

Occupation

The area of work undertaken by a category of employees, each of which may have a

related but different job role. This is standard across the entire industry

Organisational capability

The combination of people, practices and other resources brought together by a business to allow it to function effectively and deliver value to customers and stakeholders

Qualification

A regulated programme of assessment, sometimes with aligned training, which results in the issue of a nationally recognised award being made upon completion

Revalidation

The formal process of reassessing an individual's competence against a sector-specific framework on a periodic basis to check that competence has been maintained

Sector-specific competence framework

A competence framework relevant to a specific role, function, activity, task, trade, or discipline

Semi-skilled role

One which requires more capability than unskilled workers, but with a lower competence level than that required for fully skilled workers when carrying out the job correctly. Semi-skilled workers generally perform routine, well defined tasks, requiring moderate judgement

Skill

The ability to perform an activity or task consistently with a specific intended outcome

Validation

The formal process of assessing an individual's competence against a sector-specific framework

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