

Proposed Electricians (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

A proposal for a bill to provide for the protection of title and registration of electricians. The consultation runs from 19 August to 10 November 2020. All those wishing to respond to the consultation are strongly encouraged to enter their responses electronically through this survey. This makes collation of responses much simpler and quicker. However, the option also exists of sending in a separate response (in hard copy or by other electronic means such as e-mail), and details of how to do so are included in the member's consultation document. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer. All responses must include a name and contact details. Names will only be published if you give us permission, and contact details are never published – but we may use them to contact you if there is a query about your response. If you do not include a name and/or contact details, we may have to disregard your response. Please note that you must complete the survey in order for your response to be accepted. If you don't wish to complete the survey in a single session, you can choose "Save and Continue later" at any point. Whilst you have the option to skip particular questions, you must continue to the end of the survey and press "Submit" to have your response fully recorded. Please ensure you have read the consultation document before responding to any of the questions that follow. In particular, you should read the information contained in the document about how your response will be handled. The consultation document is available here: [Consultation Document](#) [Privacy Notice](#)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice attached to this consultation which explains how my personal data will be used

About you

Please choose whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. Note: If you choose "individual" and consent to have the response published, it will appear under your own name. If you choose "on behalf of an organisation" and consent to have the response published, it will be published under the organisation's name.

on behalf of an organisation

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

No Response

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

Commercial organisation (company, business)

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what the organisation does, its experience and expertise in the subject-matter of the consultation, and how the view expressed in the response was arrived at (e.g. whether it is the view of particular office-holders or has been approved by the membership as a whole).

electrical contractor

Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

Please provide your name or the name of your organisation. (Note: the name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication". Otherwise this is the name that will be published with your response).

Electro Installations (Scotland) Ltd

Aim and approach

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Electricians are trained to do work safely and efficiently. We should not see our industry standards undermined by unqualified or part qualified people claiming to be "electricians" and putting lives at risk.

It's high time our profession was recognised. All sorts of trades have registration systems and protection of title but many of them are in industries where an error or fault does not threaten injury or harm or worse.

Why should we electricians not have the same sort of status as other professions and trades? I work alongside them and cannot see why we shouldn't enjoy the same status as gas engineers for example.

If you want to drive up standards, then this is the way forward.

If you want a skilled profession, then protection of title is the way forward.

It may not be possible to eliminate all the fraudsters, but at least the public will have a better chance of choosing a qualified electrician when they need work done.

I am very concerned about how much work out there is hidden and which presents a real danger to people's safety and the safety of buildings.

You hear a lot about fire safety, but electrical safety is very important too. It's high time government stopped ignoring us or fobbing us off. We need to drive up skills and standards and these measures will help.

The complexity of the electrical work and the regulations which surround it, are such that untrained or semi-skilled people will not be able to do jobs properly. I think this trend is only going to continue.

Getting the job done right first time is what we should be aiming for particularly as much of what we do is sealed up or hidden in cavities or recesses.

Q2. What do you think would be the main practical advantages of the proposed Bill?

I think this will give a basic and solid grounding for standards in the profession and make it much safer for people and buildings.

The proposals will give electricians better professional standing in the community. Whenever I tell people that anyone can claim to be an electrician and carry out work without appropriate training, they look at me in disbelief. Why not just do what everyone thinks happens already? Standards will rise which is surely what we want.

Q2. What do you think would be the main practical advantages of the proposed Bill?

Why should some shop or kitchen fitter who can wire a plug be allowed to work on electrical installations putting people at risk?

This will improve standards by deterring the unqualified and semi-skilled

What's proposed seems sensible and straightforward and sends a message to the cowboys to move on or better still pack up

We owe it to householders to ensure our profession delivers safer buildings and protects them from harm. Serious and often hidden faults left behind by the semi-skilled or untrained will decline.

This is light touch and easy enough to cope with. The Bill will send a message to fraudulent traders that trading whilst not fit or unqualified to do so is just not worth it.

Q3. What do you think would be the main practical disadvantages of the proposed Bill?

There aren't any.

I can't think of many disadvantages.

We might get extra paperwork, but simple online stuff would help in that regard.

I suppose costs, but the I don't mind paying a little more if it improves the status and image of the profession.

It might be a bit more expensive, but we already have a scheme which does a lot of what's needed - the SJIB register. Can we build on this?

Q4. Which of the following best expresses your view of the establishment of a single register for electricians?

Fully supportive

Please give any views or comments on a single register and how it might be set up

This is the right way forward as it gives a single reference point which will be easily accessible.

A single register would mean that contracts could be let to those known to be qualified to a standard and clients could check that this was the case.

A single register will cost less especially if it's based on the existing SJIB model to avoid reinventing the wheel. It will help people identify competent electricians and act as a barrier to the untrained.

Let's make those who drag our industry down aware that if they are not on the register no-one will want them.

Most individuals who are qualified could presumably be transferred straight on to the new register. It must put off entrants to the industry that no-one would want.

Q5. Which of the following best expresses your view of establishing protection of title for electricians?

Fully supportive

Q5. Which of the following best expresses your view of establishing protection of title for electricians?

Please give any views or comments either on the principle or practical operation of protection of title:

It's high time.

Why wait? – it's the right thing to do as shown in other professions.

What's the problem? Protection of title enhances the profession's status and reputation by restricting opportunities for the unskilled or semi-skilled.

What's stopping the Scottish Government? This isn't excessive regulation and its common practice in other countries.

Protection of title will not by itself stop all bad workmanship or fraudulent trading, but it sends a clear message to the public, the workforce, builders, clients and the courts that this is what we all want.

It helps create a better culture and emphasises that poor standards are unacceptable.

It will help everyone understand that the expectation is for safe, reliable, good quality workmanship.

Financial Implications

Q6. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have on:

	Significant increase in cost	Some increase in cost	Broadly cost-neutral	Some reduction in cost	Significant reduction in cost	Unsure
(a) Government and the public sector			X			
(b) Businesses		X				
(c) Individuals			X			

Please explain the reasons for your response

It really all depends on how the register is set up. If we use existing frameworks like the SJIB, then the costs should not be prohibitive.

Q7. Are there ways in which the Bill could achieve its aim more cost-effectively (e.g. by reducing costs or increasing savings)?

Data on qualifications in the industry suggest an association between higher qualifications and higher pay (and therefore costs). This can be read in two ways. It represents a cost to society in the sense that regulated tradesmen charge more to cover the cost of their training and those unable or unwilling to gain qualifications are excluded from the market – in other words the new system acts as a "barrier to entry" that drives up costs.

Alternatively, higher wages imply higher productivity, quality of work and the fact that practitioners take a share of the benefits of the savings to be had from better safety in the form of higher wages.

Netting off costs against benefits, our research suggests a cautious estimate of net benefits to Scotland from proper regulation of electricians is c. £58million. This monetary figure includes all of the benefits

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from higher electrical standards, such as fewer injuries and deaths, better functioning installations, less need for call backs or for poor/unsafe work to be repaired leading to improved customer satisfaction.

Equalities

Q8. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation?

Positive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The electrical industry, like many others in the construction sector has a very low level of women and ethnic minority entrants. There is a whole host of reasons for this and the sector is working hard to encourage more women and others into the industry.

By making the role of Electrician a protected title and by implication a "profession" alongside other competing protected roles, this will lead to greater interest from women and lead to more joining the industry which would be a significant advantage to us all.

The numbers required to enter the industry to maintain and indeed grow the workforce, bearing in mind the drive towards an electric economy is significant, therefore increasing the number of women and other ethnic minority and other entrants will mean a significant benefit to the country as a whole.

Q9. In what ways could any negative impact of the Bill on equality be minimised or avoided?

The SJIB operates, the Crediting Electrotechnical Competence (CEC) Scheme. This allows those who hold partial qualifications/and or experience to submit an application to be graded as an electrician. The application is then considered by industry experts and they will advise what if any additional training is required for the applicant to meet the criteria to become an electrician. A number of candidates go through the scheme on an annual basis and to alleviate any additional demand which may be placed on this scheme, we would suggest a lead in time of 18-24 months between enactment and implementation of the Bill to make sure those who need to obtain a qualification can do so.

It is important to get the message about regulation as wide as possible and the industry and the government would need to work together to get information out as soon and as widely as possible.

It's important to manage any extra costs or red tape carefully so that there is no significant increase in either. Thus, using the existing scheme via the SJIB would minimise any such large increases.

Sustainability

Q10. Do you consider that the proposed Bill can be delivered sustainably, i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts?

Yes

Q10. Do you consider that the proposed Bill can be delivered sustainably, i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts?

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Yes. Any impacts are likely to be positive. From an economic view, such a Bill will give clarity to customers and will reduce not only the impact of re-doing faulty work, thus saving time and money but also more importantly, having work done safely, which will not put lives or property at risk.

As we face a growing demand on electricity to heat and light our homes, offices and shops etc., we need to make sure that the work is done by properly trained and qualified people. You wouldn't let an unqualified nurse give you an injection, so why should untrained and unqualified people call themselves electricians and put your life in their unqualified- hands.

Having a qualified and trained workforce is a real benefit to our country. Electricity is more and more important as we begin to see more electric vehicles being used, our homes being heated by electricity rather than gas. Therefore, regulation will actually become more rather than less important going forward.

Our future heating and other energy demands, driven by the government's own plans to increase more renewable installations and reduce our carbon footprint means that electricians will play an ever increasing role in delivering on these targets, so we must make sure these installations are done by properly qualified and trained workforce.

The government's own Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021-22 to 2025-26, talks about issues including:

Investing £1.6 billion over the next five years to decarbonise heat in buildings, including £55 million new investment in energy efficiency and £95 million programme to decarbonise the public sector estate.

Invest over £2.8 billion in direct capital grant funding, over 5 years, to deliver more affordable and social homes, continuing to ensure the right types of homes in the right places reflecting and supporting Local Housing Strategies and regional development priorities.

These are significant investments, and the electrical industry will play a big part in delivering these, so, it's vital that those undertaking the work are trained and qualified to complete this work.

General

Q11. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal?

There is overwhelming evidence that the general public thinks that our profession is regulated when of course it is not. People are genuinely very surprised when told that you need no formal qualification to call yourself an electrician. All survey evidence points to this and to a strong demand from the public that electricians should be qualified in the interests of consumer safety and it should be done sooner rather than later.

Survey evidence shows that the public has little or no idea how to check that an electrician has qualifications. Most people only use an electrician's service once in a while and it's quite understandable that they have no clear idea where to start. Unfortunately some bogus tradesmen rely on this and present false credentials. We need to protect people from the unscrupulous.

The case for action is overwhelming. Many electricians are fully trained and operate to the highest of standards and do a good and safe job wherever they work. You wouldn't expect anything less. However whilst most of the practising electricians do hold qualifications, quite a number do not and to save lives and protect the property its vital that regulation is introduced.