

FAST TRACK PLUMBER TRAINING – BEWARE

Plumbing industry organisations are receiving an increasing number of complaints from people who have paid large sums of money for ‘fast track’ training to become plumbers only to discover that the training is inadequate, the advertised qualifications are not fully achieved and/or the promise of lucrative work is non-existent. Examples include:

- organisations advertising themselves, quite legally, as City & Guilds registered, but they are not registered to deliver the specific plumbing qualification so the learner cannot be certified
- organisations delivering only the technical elements of training with no work experience, so learners cannot prove the competences required for the N/SVQ
- people investing in a franchise arrangement offering training and a promise of work opportunities once qualified, only to find out that they are charged for set up costs and a van amounting to thousands of pounds, and the promised work opportunities do not materialise.

The industry is working to find a solution to this problem, but it is complex as these training providers are operating within the law. In the meantime the key messages for people interested in a career in plumbing are:

- The skill shortages publicised a few years ago are no longer as acute and wage rates have now settled in line with other trades
- The industry recognised standard for plumbing is N/SVQ Level 3
- To find out about recognised training routes into the industry people should refer to the Learn Direct website www.learndirect.co.uk, which contains industry approved careers guidance
- Any complaints about poor training in the plumbing sector should be referred to Summit Skills (Sector Skills Council for the Building Services Sector) – contact details can be found on their website www.summitskills.org.uk.