

DUCTWORKER RISES TO SKILLCARD CHALLENGE

Martin Kenyon – a self-employed ductwork installer from Bolton, Lancs – has become the first person to graduate from an Experienced Worker to a fully fledged Engineering Services SKILLCard, having achieved a Level 2 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in ductwork installation.

Presenting Mr Kenyon with his five-year blue card at a recent HVCA North West regional meeting, Council member Gareth Vaughan reminded his audience that it had been acknowledged from SKILLCard's early beginnings that it had the potential to improve and regulate competence standards.

This was particularly

so for those who worked in the industry in a skilled capacity, but who had

by their employer.

The accreditation arrangements were later



Martin Kenyon (centre) with Gareth Vaughan (right) and HVCA president elect Mike McCloskey

somehow missed the opportunity to obtain formal qualifications, Mr Vaughan pointed out.

To ensure that such individuals were not wholly disenfranchised, arrangements had been made for workers to be “industry accredited”

replaced by a requirement to register with SKILLCard as an Experienced Worker.

“When you get an Experienced Worker card, you are ‘on hold’,” said Mr Vaughan.

“You are required to register for an NVQ appropriate to your trade

– and use the limited, three-year lifetime of your SKILLCard to obtain your qualification through workplace assessment.

“And then, when you get your NVQ, you are able to apply for your fully-skilled SKILLCard.

“Martin Kenyon is the first person to have risen successfully to that challenge.”

Gareth Vaughan added that this process did not only represent a very significant achievement for one individual.

“It is also proof positive that the challenge posed by SKILLCard is reasonable, attainable and effective in its stated objectives.”

Mr Kenyon obtained his new qualification through Alliance Learning,

a centre accredited by sector skills council SummitSkills to provide an assessment service for mature workers.

Details of the network of centres providing similar services are available from the SKILLCard website at www.skillcard.org.uk.

It was via Alliance Learning that Mr Kenyon contacted Business Link North Manchester to obtain the necessary funding from a local employer training scheme.

This came in the form of full funding of the qualification plus a personal allowance in lieu of earnings while the assessment took place.

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