

Accreditation: An effective tool for Government

The influence and use of accreditation continues to grow across a wide range of Government policy areas including effective regulation, good governance, fair markets and public confidence. Strengthened by new European legislation (*see Issue 5 for details*), accreditation is being used by Government in a number of new areas such as healthcare and climate change (*see case studies*). As pressure on Government finances continues to build, accreditation is increasingly being seen as a market led solution to public sector imperatives.

The accreditation process determines, in the public interest, the technical competence and integrity of organisations offering testing, inspection, calibration and certification services (collectively known as evaluation services or conformity assessment services).

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) is the **only** national accreditation body recognised by Government to assess these types of organisations against internationally-recognised standards and it does so across all market sectors by offering a **single, transparent and repeatable approach** which:

- builds business and consumer confidence;
- is voluntarily embraced by business;
- enables innovation in the private and public sectors;
- reduces the need for central and local government to employ its own specialist assessment personnel.

If you are responsible for setting or implementing policies that involve any form of independent evaluation, UKAS can help in a number of ways including defining your needs or designing an assessment or accreditation service to suit your needs.

UKAS Chief Executive honoured



Paul Stennett MBE

Paul Stennett, UKAS Chief Executive, has been awarded the MBE in the New Year Honours list, in recognition of his work with UKAS in support of UK business.

Paul Stennett was appointed Chief Executive of UKAS in 2003 after a distinguished career in the food industry. Since then he has worked diligently to encourage UKAS' focus on customer service whilst still responding to government and public sector requirements. He has also encouraged an innovative approach to the use of accreditation in a number of new areas, such as the health care sector, whilst ensuring that UKAS retained its commitment to existing customers, end-users and government departments.

In 2007 Paul Stennett also took on additional responsibilities with Clinical Pathology Accreditation in the interest of helping these two organisations, which have similar objectives and public sector remits, work closer together. A merger of UKAS and CPA was agreed in April 2009.

Accreditation in action: diagnostic imaging



Ensuring the quality of healthcare – UKAS operates the Imaging Services Accreditation Scheme.

UKAS has been appointed by the Society and College of Radiographers and the Royal College of Radiologists to manage and deliver a new UK-wide imaging services accreditation scheme (ISAS). Under the new scheme, jointly developed by the Colleges in collaboration with other health professionals and patients' representatives, imaging services will be assessed against agreed standards for quality, patient-focused care and continuous improvement. The scheme will focus on the delivery of high-quality care for patients by competent staff working in a safe environment. The process of accreditation will involve peer review against agreed standards and criteria supported by expert speciality advice and input from patient representatives. UKAS accreditation will provide confidence in the quality and consistency of the imaging services delivered across the health sector.

Making a difference to public sector delivery

UKAS accreditation is an on-going business process to establish that:

- the evaluator is **impartial**;
- the evaluator is technically **competent**;
- the resources and facilities are **appropriate**;
- the evaluator's performance meets **the required standard**;
- the evaluator's standard of performance **can be sustained**.

UKAS carries out this accreditation work to internationally-recognised standards and is itself regularly reviewed by its international peers.



Protecting public health – UKAS accredits testing for infectious diseases.



Protecting the consumer – UKAS accreditation is a key part of the National Measurement System.

Because UKAS has well-established and transparent assessment procedures applicable to all forms of conformity assessment, its accreditation helps:

- **reduce bureaucracy**—the use of accredited services in a sector moderates the need for legislation and reduces the risk of unintended consequences;
- **enhance efficiency**—business innovates to meet standards in efficient and cost-effective ways. Accreditation also allows for a rapid response to new issues and priorities by swiftly adapting existing regimes according to circumstances;
- **engender trust**—the UKAS symbol is a well-known means of identifying organisations that meet and maintain high standards. The public gain more confidence in services when they know standards are checked, updated and enforced.

Accreditation in action: carbon footprinting



Carbon reduction – UKAS accredits carbon measurement.

UKAS has launched a pilot project for the accreditation of certification bodies to certify products and services to PAS 2050, the new specification for assessing life cycle green house gas emissions. PAS 2050 has been published by the British Standards Institution and is co-sponsored by the Carbon Trust and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. PAS 2050 provides a method for measuring emissions, from initial sourcing of raw materials through manufacture, transport, use and ultimately recycling of waste. The aim of the new specification is to help businesses move beyond managing the emissions their own processes create and to look at the opportunities for reducing emissions in design, manufacture and supply. This will then help businesses provide goods or services that are less carbon intensive and ultimately develop new products with lower carbon footprints. UKAS accreditation will provide an assurance that consumers can rely on the declarations made by organisations using the new standard.

UKAS accreditation is helping to establish and maintain confidence across the public sector in policy areas such as:

Environmental management	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Medical laboratories and point of care testing	Department of Health
New Approach Directives	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Vehicle exhaust gas analysers	Department for Transport
Monitoring Certification Scheme (MCERTS)	Environment Agency
Customer Service Excellence (Charter mark)	Cabinet Office
Food safety	Food Standards Agency
Building regulations	Department of Communities and Local Government
Asbestos surveys and testing	Health and Safety Executive
Gas safety	Health and Safety Executive
National DNA database	National Policing Improvement Agency
Microgeneration	Department for Energy and Climate Change

Accreditation in action: forensic science services



Underpinning confidence in the justice system – UKAS accredits forensic science services.

Following a major Home Office consultation exercise, the UK Forensic Science Regulator has recommended that all providers of forensic science services throughout the criminal justice system gain accreditation from UKAS. The assessment process being developed by UKAS is aimed at ensuring that providers of forensic science services are competent and operating to best practice. It will cover quality management in general and technical requirements for all activities related to the examination of the crime scene, the treatment of all forms of physical evidence, the interpretation of findings and the presentation of evidence. UKAS accreditation will ensure that the justice system can have confidence in the forensic science services on which it relies.



A framework for business resilience – UKAS accredits the certification of business continuity management systems.

Delivering confidence...

UKAS accredits:

- **1,500 laboratories**
- **150 certification bodies**
- **240 inspection bodies**

In doing so it enables them to provide services and products that meet agreed standards, delivering confidence on the part of consumers, government and purchasers alike.

Look for the Crown

Accredited organisations are entitled to display symbols that incorporate the Royal Crown, signifying Government recognition of the accreditation process.



Key facts about UKAS

- The only national accreditation body recognised by Government to assess organisations carrying out evaluations to international standards
- Non-profit-distributing company limited by guarantee
- Over 40 years' experience

UKAS Members

Rather than shareholders, UKAS has members that represent those who have an interest in different aspects of accreditation. Current members are:

Association of British Certification Bodies
British Measurement and Testing Association
British Retail Consortium
Confederation of British Industry
Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply
Chartered Quality Institute
Federation of Small Businesses
Food Standards Agency
Health Protection Agency
Health and Safety Executive
Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services
Ministry of Defence
Safety Assessment Federation
Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs



Contributing to public hygiene – UKAS accredits testing of drinking water.



Safeguarding the consumer – UKAS accredits the certification of electrical contractors.

Who to contact for further information

If you wish to find out more about how accreditation might be of assistance to you in your capacity as a public servant, please contact:

Malcolm Hynd, External Affairs Manager Telephone **020 8917 8443** Email malcolm.hynd@ukas.com Or visit our website at www.ukas.com

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service has made the greater public awareness of accreditation and its benefits a key strategic priority.

Activities towards this objective are carried out under the banner of the **Accreditation Awareness Campaign** and are supported by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

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Delivering Confidence

BIS
Department for Business Innovation and Skills