



The institution of
environmental sciences



SPECIALIST IN LAND CONDITION

PRESS RELEASE

Recognition of land condition experts boosted by IES joining SiLC

The Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES) has joined SiLC to support the development and accreditation of land condition experts.

The move reflects the growth of land condition specialists within the IES membership, which has recently overtaken the other disciplines it supports to become its largest membership constituency. This in turn supports local authorities, landowners and developers in meeting the ongoing demand and growing policy appetite for the reuse of post-industrial brownfield sites.

The IES joins seven membership organisations who set up the Specialist in Land Condition Register to independently assess and recognise those who have achieved a high level of knowledge, competence and expertise in the investigation, reclamation and remediation of land. Currently there are 197 SiLCs, with 111 also accredited as SQP (Suitably Qualified Person) under the National Quality Mark Scheme (NQMS). The NQMS allows SQPs to sign declarations that land condition reports meet regulatory quality criteria. This is expected to speed up compliance with planning requirements.

Collectively, SiLCs provide a vital service to the development industry and ensure there is a clear source of competent professionals in the land condition sector. IES joining SiLC is a further example of how professional bodies are collaborating in their shared aim of setting, maintaining and promoting an appropriate standard in land condition expertise.

Paul Burden, Chair of SiLC's Professional Technical Panel, said:

"We're delighted IES has joined SiLC. They have long been committed to the same aims as embodied in our organisation and I am sure they will be proactive and progressive partners in supporting and driving excellence in the industry. Our hope and expectation is that they find that SiLC membership will be a great driver for professionals in their membership to become Chartered and seek the top level of recognition that becoming a SiLC represents."

Adam Donnan of IES said:

"Joining SiLC has been something we have been moving towards for some time. We have experienced significant growth in the number of our members who are land condition specialists over the past few years. Therefore, the time is right for the IES to join the collaborative effort to recognise quality in the industry, give our land condition professionals an additional designation to strive for after achieving their Chartership."

IEMA Transforming the world
to sustainability

**ROYAL SOCIETY
OF CHEMISTRY**

**Chartered
Institute of
Environmental
Health**

ice
Institution of Civil Engineers

AGS Association of Geotechnical &
Geoenvironmental Specialists

**The
Geological
Society**

CIWEM Chartered Institution of
Water and Environmental
Management

NOTES FOR EDITORS

About SiLC

The Specialist in Land Condition (SiLC) Register scheme has been designed to recognise the skills and competence of those working in the land condition sector.

A registered SiLC is a senior practitioner who has a broad awareness, knowledge and understanding of land condition issues, the ability to recognise and draw on multiple disciplines' specialist expertise in providing impartial and professional advice in their field of expertise. Entry to SiLC is gained through a process of examination and interview, held bi-annually.

The SiLC Register lists individuals from a broad range of professional backgrounds who advise on land condition matters. The Register is run and administered by a Professional and Technical Panel (PTP) which comprises representatives from the supporting professional bodies. The PTP develops and implements the registration process and is the ruling committee for individual registrations.

Benefits of the National Quality Mark Scheme to Post-Industrial Brownfield Site Development.

The NQMS has been designed by the National Brownfield Forum to ensure that land contamination is managed in accordance with relevant technical and regulatory standards. The NQMS has been developed to provide visible identification of documents that have been checked for quality by a Suitably Qualified and experienced Person (SQP). SQP declarations should provide increased confidence that reports submitted under various regulatory regimes, but particularly in support of planning applications, are reasonable and have been written by appropriately competent individuals.

Significant economic benefits are achieved by "getting it right first time" without the need for lengthy negotiations and detailed auditing by regulators. In particular, planning applications, discharge of planning conditions and reserved matters applications should benefit significantly from speedier resolution if regulators are provided with an SQP declaration under the NQMS. By providing a "Quality Mark" to land contamination reports the Scheme aims to provide greater confidence in the quality of land contamination evaluation and hence speed up the planning appraisal process.

Projects that meet the standards for regulatory compliance are likely to incur fewer costly delays and are less likely to be subject to enforcement action. As such the scheme is of benefit to both land developers and regulators alike.

In gaining sign off through NQMS all parties can show review and guidance from a **competent person**, as required under the planning regime, notably the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) in England and its equivalents in other parts of the UK.

The NQMS has the full backing of the Environment Agency. In a letter dated 5 September 2016 the Environment Agency's Chief Executive welcomed the introduction of the NQMS, noting that getting it right first time means savings for both the taxpayer and for industry.

A report produced under the scheme will be accompanied by a SQP's declaration of compliance and will bear the NQMS quality mark so it can be clearly identified. This ensures a greater degree of confidence for all parties involved in appraisal, transaction and development of sites.

Making a declaration is simple and aligns with normal quality assurance requirements and timescales. Each declaration (per report) is only £90 and as such is great value in assigning a quality mark to your documentation/product and most notably your client's land asset.

Overall reports carrying the NQMS Quality Mark provide a greater level of confidence that information and decisions made within land development or transaction contexts are robust and can be relied upon. The Scheme provides greater certainty that a site's suitability for re-use and/or remedial requirements have been robustly determined. The Scheme provides a greater degree of assurance across differing suppliers, where consistency is managed through the NQMS.