

Royal Charter for the Institute of Plumbing & Heating Engineering

Many questions are being asked about how the new Royal Charter will affect the Institute of Plumbing & Heating Engineering and its members. To help clarify the situation, we have put together the following most frequently asked questions and answers.

What is a Royal Charter?

Royal Charters, granted by the sovereign on the advice of the Privy Council, have a history dating back to the 13th century. Their original purpose was to create public or private corporations (including towns and cities), and to define their privileges and purpose. Nowadays, though Charters are still occasionally granted to cities, new Charters are normally reserved for bodies that work in the public interest (such as professional institutions and charities) and which can demonstrate pre-eminence, stability and permanence in their particular field.

Why did IPHE seek a Royal Charter?

IPHE has long pursued professional standards, becoming a Chartered Body was for many years considered to be reserved only for those bodies that required degree level membership. There is now greater public acknowledgement that the term 'professionalism' encompasses wider attributes than the possession of a degree and should apply to more practically acquired skills. In addition, professional bodies generally need to have been in existence for a long time before they can be granted a Royal Charter. As the Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering has celebrated its centenary, it was an ideal time to petition for Charter. Now that the IPHE has achieved chartered status it will be one of the first craft-based bodies to reach this distinction.

How will a Charter differentiate the Institute from other industry bodies?

The IPHE is seeking to differentiate itself from trade associations as a professional institution and a registered educational charity, holding a membership of individuals committed to high standards to protect the public health. Chartered status will put clear water between the CIPHE and trade bodies by raising the status of the Institute (and its members). Chartered bodies hold high respect within industry and government. The public are also aware of the enhanced status of Chartered bodies compared to trade associations and even professional bodies.

How will Chartered status affect IPHE members?

By belonging to a Chartered professional body, members will benefit from enhanced status in the industry and the wider community.

Members will be a part of an organisation which holds the respect of government and industry, and can communicate with the public on a whole new level. There will be little doubt in consumers' minds that members of the Chartered Institute of Plumbing & Heating Engineering are professionals and as a consequence have to act as such.

How will the Institute's role change in regard to the government?

The Institute's role in maintaining standards, not only of individual competence but also in the public interest, will be recognised.

Chartered bodies directly influence government policy – they are usually the first port of call for proposed changes in legislation. By gaining Chartered status, the IPHE will be centrally involved in the development and communication of industry policy.

How will the Institute's role change in respect of other professional bodies?

The Institute is more likely to gain ready access to Government, its agencies and with industry in general. Its increased influence will lead to more constructive dialogues and improved outcomes on, for example, consultative matters e.g. to promote government legislation where it will be one of the first ports of call for government consultation in relation to new and revised legislation. It will therefore be able to more effectively communicate and promote standards of excellence in the profession. This will benefit both industry and the general public.

The Royal Charter will raise the sector's image to the benefit of all industry associations, organisations and trade bodies. We will enhance our dialogue and collaboration with engineering institutions and trade bodies so that we can develop shared aspirations and objectives, so facilitating improved outcomes for the sector.

Will the running of the Institute change?

The day-to-day running and structure will be largely the same. However, Chartered status would allow the Institute more autonomy to govern its own affairs.

Will individual members have Chartered status?

No, not for the time being. They will be members of a Chartered Institute. Being a member of a Chartered body will raise the status of the individual.

However, in the future it may be possible to achieve individual chartered status for those qualified to degree level and who reach the appropriate criterion as laid down by EC^{UK}.

Will this help to attract more members?

It is anticipated that the increased profile and importance of the Chartered body, together with greater public exposure, will present an attractive opportunity that will encourage more high calibre individuals to apply for membership.

Will Chartered status affect the cost of membership?

At present IPHE membership subscriptions rise annually in line with inflation. There are no plans to increase subscriptions as a direct result of charter.

Will there be a new logo to reflect the Institute's new status?

No. The red crescent, already in the IPHE logo, will represent the status of Charter. However, there will be a new range of corporate literature and stationery produced by the Institute.

What was the official date the Royal Charter was granted?

It was on 12th February that the Queen agreed the awarding of a Charter of Incorporation to the IPHE.

When will it be effective from?

This decision is yet to be confirmed by the Board. The two options available to us are on the day of this year's AGM or from 1st January 2009.

Is there a big launch planned? Will the press be involved?

We have arranged a summer reception for 10th July, which could be used to promote the award of Charter. Press will be invited.

Will I be able to use my current IPHE / Institute headed paper

When incorporation of the CIPHE becomes effective we will have new stationery to reflect the name change.

Will there be a new website address?

Yes the following website domain is operational: <http://www.ciphe.org.uk/>

Will head office email addresses be changing? If so will the old ones still work?

Yes.

As a member do I need to do anything or take any further action now?

No.

Where can I find out more information about what a Royal Charter is all about, the official terminology and terms etc?

The Privy Council website should help:

<http://www.privacy-council.org.uk/output/page1.asp>

If I need to ask any more questions who is the main contact at head office?

Marketing and Communications department – 01708 463106 or 01708 463114.