

QSS celebrates 25 years as an incorporated business!

Quality Service Standards Limited (QSS) was incorporated on 9th July 1999. As a wholly owned subsidiary of the British Association of Removers, its purpose was to be an autonomous organisation with employees and/or consultants qualified to install, give advice, audit and assess Members for those Quality Standards developed with a specific relationship to the removals and storage industry.

The original QSS Board of Directors included David Trenchard, John Luxford and Nick Brackin assisted by Mike Harlow as Company Secretary. QSS had to be independently audited and QSS were fortunate to have Julie Thompson already working at the BAR who was a qualified lead assessor and undertook that overseeing role.

Previous and current QSS Board Directors include Annie Neave, Sylvia Lane, Matt Purdie, Peter Weltenius, David Bunting, Stephen Vickers, Anthony Groves, David Russell, Paul Tracey, Kerry Allsop, Joanne Ball, Brian Kenny, Jess Clark, Ian Studd and the current QSS Board Chairperson, Dominic Murray. Company Secretaries have included Mike Harlow, James Faulkner, Robert Syers, Paul Swindon and current incumbent Tracy Britten. Every one of these people have helped and guided QSS through the past 25 years and have all played their part in QSS' success over that time.

David Trenchard comments: "During the first weeks of 1999, BS EN 12522 was installed on a trial basis into five member companies. These eventually achieved certification and were awarded certificates during the Annual Conference in Dublin in May 1999. The scheme was launched and publicised to the members".

In the 1999 QSS Annual Report David wrote: "We had been fortunate in that Britannia Movers International had recognised the importance of the BS EN 12522 Quality Standard to the removals industry and had made it a qualification for membership of their organisation. This added to the interest already in place by BAR members aware of the standard.

It must be noted that much of the work done to date has been groundbreaking with little experience of what has to be done and how to do it. I should like to pay tribute to the late Brian Mitchell for his work in getting BAR recognised by the DTI and in forming the external DTI committee which was chaired by Derek Payne. Thanks also to him and the members of that Committee for doing the groundwork for me to be able to represent the UK Industry at European level.

The speed in which we have been able to react to the final approval of the standard is due to the preparatory efforts of Nick Brackin and the support given to him by the BAR secretariat, particularly Robert Syers and Mike Harlow. Our thanks must also go to those members who have helped us with the pilot scheme and to our then BAR President, Gerald Sweeney, for his personal support".

Chris Waymouth was approached in 2004 by David Trenchard to become the QSS Chief Executive. By this time the organisation had a core customer base of



David Woodhouse, QSS General Manager.

something like 90 BAR-only companies, many of them being Britannia members, with just one quality standard (BS EN 12522) being audited by one auditor.

BAR inspections were being carried out separately on a rolling three-yearly basis by one Field Officer, a BAR employee. There was no synchronisation between inspections and audits, resulting in huge duplication of effort and unnecessary travel expense. A joint BAR/QSS decision was taken to revise all these arrangements and QSS took on responsibility for both activities, combining them into single visits on an annual basis and this arrangement continues to this day.

During Chris's management of the business, QSS recruited further inspector/auditors, all with vast industry experience, and soon the team had expanded to six, stationed all around the UK. That number currently sits at eight including an auditor permanently based in Europe to cover the ever increasing work QSS is developing with the Euromovers Group network.

QSS made a major step forward in credibility by gaining UKAS accreditation, and also by becoming the first service industry to be accepted by BSI into their Kitemark scheme. Working with BSI and industry stakeholders, QSS was instrumental in developing further standards for storage, self-storage, overseas and commercial moving, and then took on several ISO standards. Through this growth, QSS developed from being a loss-making drain on BAR's finances to a successful business showing a respectable trading surplus each year.



In response to claims that QSS was 'only for BAR Members', QSS targeted other companies and soon acquired (and has continuously developed) a significant proportion of non-Member clients, expanding its activities across Europe and further afield thanks to a very successful relationship with Euromovers.

In 2017 Chris Waymouth decided to step back from his role, and David Woodhouse, the current QSS General Manager, took over in January 2018. Chris comments: "At the point when I retired as Chief Executive in 2018, QSS had a total of just over 500 quality certifications across 12 different standards, with some 10% being from outside BAR. I handed over to David Woodhouse, fully confident that the company would be in safe hands, poised for further development – which has most certainly proved to be the case".

Peter Gawthrop and Lynne Halliwell (both QSS Inspector/Auditors) jointly said: "We began working for QSS within weeks of each other in 2008. At that time the workload for the actual audits for QSS was a bit random and something of a free for all, with auditors being told by email that a 'job' was available and 'who wanted it on a first come, first served basis'. At this time BS EN 12522 was divided into three audits which included one being a visit to the Company's customer's house. The other two divided the standard in half. Lynne spent a sleepless night plucking up the courage to ask if she might be permitted to fit two of these audits into one day. It was granted, and now QSS expects auditors to be able to do the whole thing plus one or two others in a day. To be fair everything is now digital and much more streamlined, with no more use of the beloved 'Note Sheet'!

Peter further commented: "Chris Waymouth and I opened up the possibility of auditing Euromovers giving QSS access to Europe, rather than just UK removers. This included an audit for me as far away as Australia!".

As of July 2024, QSS now audits 15 Quality standards including the new BS 8543 Complaint Handling Quality Standard (see page 40), and can report (as of 30th June 2024) current auditing of 662 certifications across 272 certified companies of which 119 certifications (17.97%) over 49 companies (18.01%) are Non-BAR member companies/organisations.

The current QSS Board Chairperson, Dominic Murray, commented: "It is great to see how QSS has developed and flourished over the last 25 years. In the current business climate this is quite an achievement however the Board cannot stand still and must look to the future to decide where to look for growth.

"There is no doubt that in business, standards are becoming more of the norm. QSS has worked hard over the last 25 years to develop standards within the BAR community but we need to continue to grow our non-BAR member market share. This will mean broadening our horizons and looking at businesses who are akin to our own industry where we can bring our expertise. As Chair of the board, I would like to thank all our customers for their support over the last 25 years and

look forward to dealing with them all for the next 25."

Ian Studd, BAR Director General, has only good words to say about QSS: "Over the course of the last 25 years QSS has become a vital cog in the machine that is the BAR. Not only does it provide the resource and capability for the Association's criteria and code inspections to be fulfilled effectively and efficiently, it is also a profitable trading business in its own right and one which is growing its market share year on year. It is really

encouraging to be able to report that a growing percentage of that annual growth is derived from non-BAR Member companies, which has the effect of making the business even more resilient. In my view, thanks to the foresight and involvement of such folks as David Trenchard, Chris Waymouth and now David Woodhouse, we have a successful and sustainable business that delivers value to its clients and which also adds value to our Association".

Some of QSS' client businesses also commented:

"As a business that realises that there is a close link between the quality of the service we provide and the price we are able to obtain for that, making sure we live up to our promises is paramount. QSS and their inspectors play a vital role in that process."

**Rob Bartup, Managing Director,
GB Liners Ltd**

"Universal has been a QSS client for many years, and it has proved to be a very positive ongoing working relationship for our business. Working with a close knit team made up of auditors with many years' real and working experience and knowledge of our removals industry ensures the inspection process is always a constructive and informative exercise for us. We also know that QSS will always support us with advice and insight whenever needed. Compliance is fundamental to our company and our clients, and our work with QSS is an essential part of demonstrating this approach."

**Sarah Cole, Managing Director,
Universal Commercial Relocation Ltd**

"Choosing QSS as our provider for standards has been positive from the first enquiry right through to the audit, using an industry experienced company certainly helps and without a doubt, the QSS audited standards have certainly contributed to us twice lifting the Commercial Mover of the Year trophy."

**Geoff Archer, Director,
Archers of Northallerton**

"On behalf of EUROMOVERS Worldwide Alliance SCE, I am honored to extend our heartfelt congratulations to QSS on the occasion of your 25th anniversary. This milestone is a testament to your unwavering commitment to excellence in certification services, and we are proud to have been a satisfied customer for the past nine years.

"Our partnership with QSS has been exceptionally beneficial, primarily due to the unparalleled expertise of your company and the professionalism of your auditors. The fact that your auditors come from our industry has been particularly advantageous, as their deep understanding of our specific needs and challenges has ensured a smooth and effective certification process. Their industry-specific knowledge has consistently facilitated a thorough and insightful auditing experience, which has significantly contributed to our continuous improvement and compliance.

"QSS's reputation for excellence is not limited to our domestic industry alone; your worldwide recognition as a leading certification company speaks volumes about your dedication to maintaining the highest standards. This global acclaim has reinforced our confidence in your services and has positively impacted our operations and credibility within the international market.

"As we celebrate this significant anniversary with you, we look forward to many more years of collaboration and success. We are confident that QSS will continue to lead the way in certification services, and we are excited to see the new heights you will achieve in the future."

Thomas Juchum, Chairman of the Executive Board of EUROMOVERS

"Specialised Movers cannot thank QSS enough for their support and help over the last 20 years. Gaining certification to our 12 standards has taken a long time, effort, new knowledge and new ways of working. A special further thanks to Peter Gawthrop and David Woodhouse for their extra time in helping us achieve this. The standards are a vital selling tool in all corporate relocation tendering opportunities and without standards you have virtually no chance of winning nor finding new commercial work. Also working to a quality manual streamlines the company making your company more efficient and easily accountable to all your commercial clients."

John Turner, Director, Specialised Movers Ltd