

Putting safety at the heart of the process

Dame Judith Hackitt sets out
her vision for culture change
and better leadership



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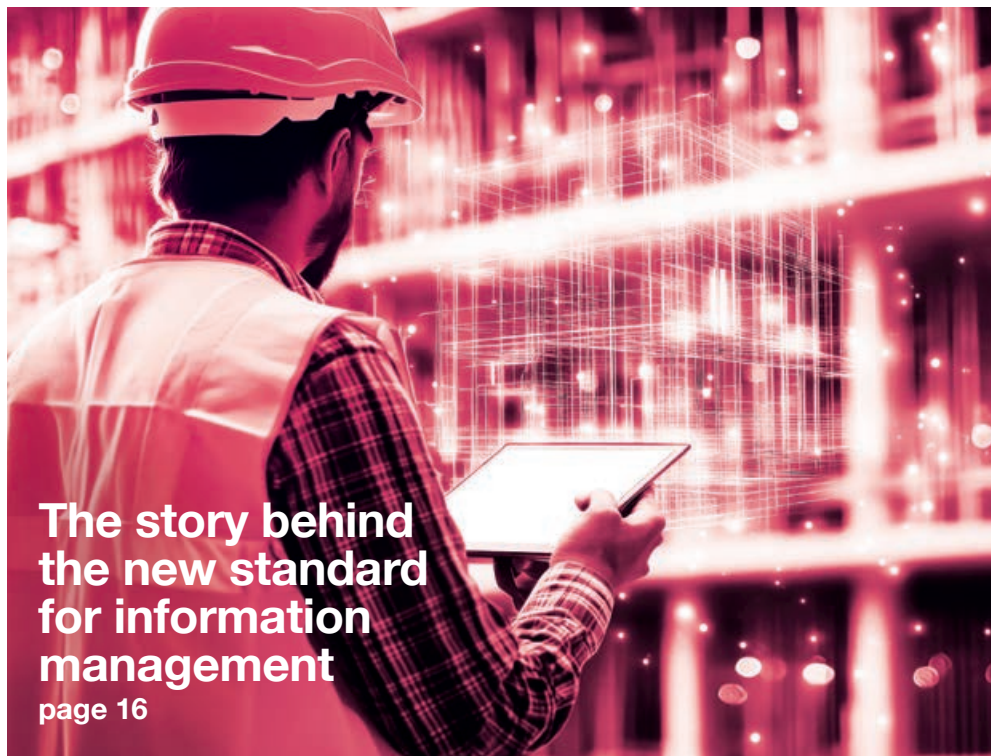
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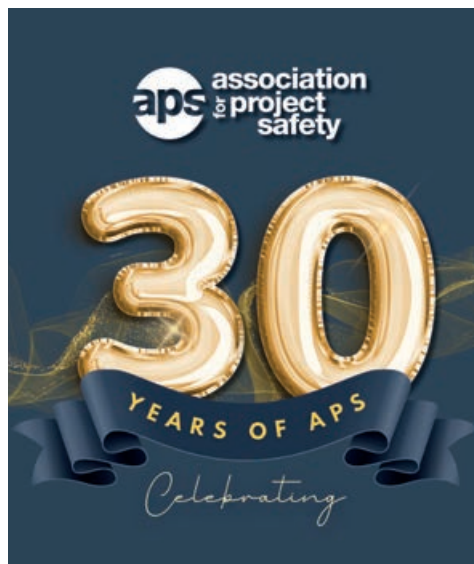
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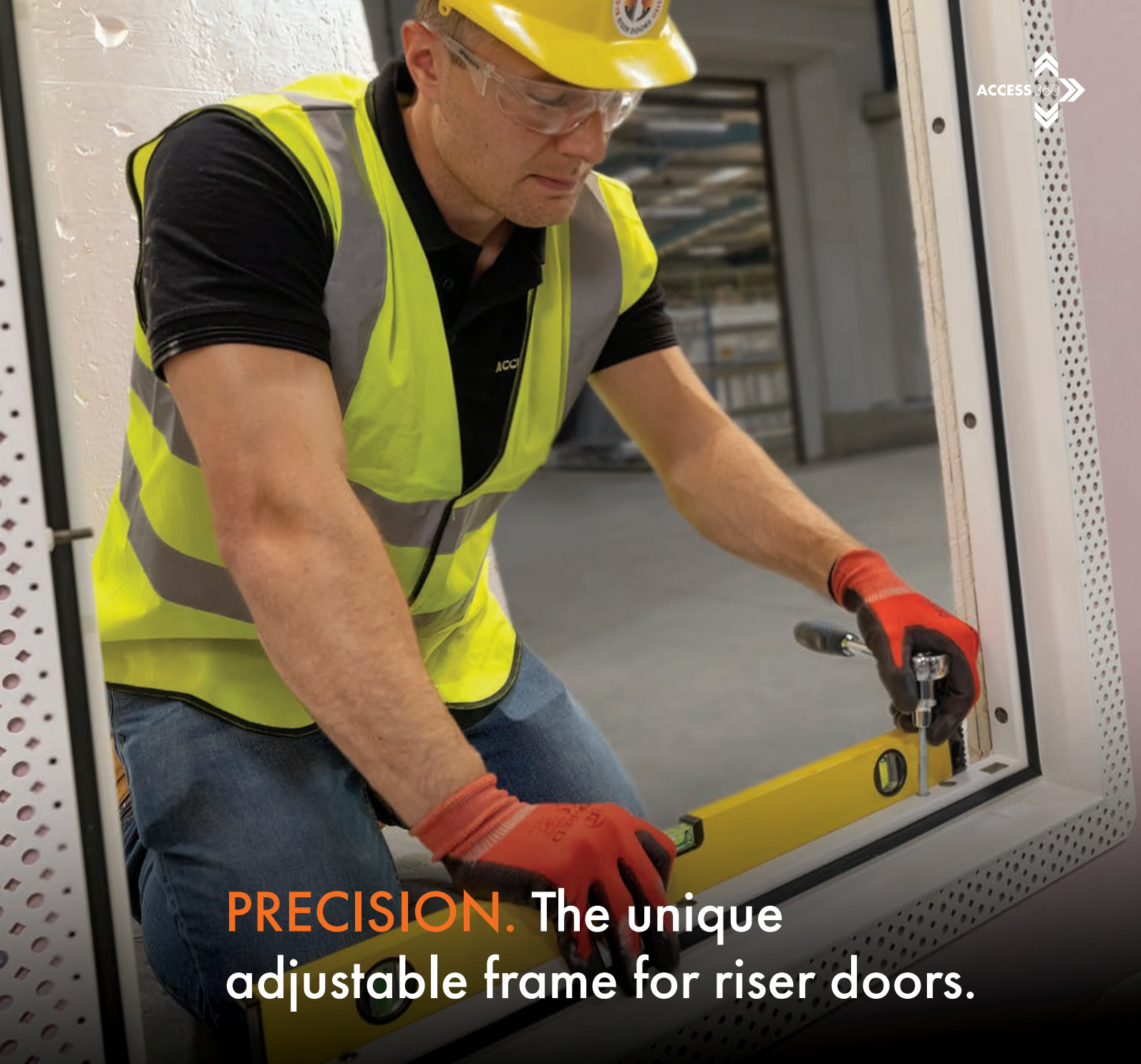
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“
One thing I'll be focusing on is helping to make sure our membership engagement is as good as it possibly can be, so we provide members with the best service that we possibly can
Bryn Wilde, APS





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Andrew Leslie
Association
for Project Safety

Welcome

Time flies! Can it really be 30 years since APS was founded by the redoubtable team at RIAS in Edinburgh in response to the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994? says **Andrew Leslie**

Thirty years is almost a career in itself – I should know. I was there from the start, with 20 years’ experience as a UK architect under my belt. My involvement with APS has been a second career, balancing CDM and H&S consultancy with membership roles across three organisations.

As part of APS’ 30th-anniversary celebrations, we hosted five days of insightful discussions on CDM’s evolution as well as the Member Recognition Awards. Nick Charlton Smith deservedly received the Pioneer Award for founding APS and serving as technical editor for many years – congratulations to him and all the winners!

APS and CDM have driven change, reduced accidents and fostered a culture of safety, collaboration, inclusion and mental wellbeing. With post-Grenfell regulatory compliance now in play, APS, alongside members and industry partners, will continue to lead in promoting excellence and innovation.

“If industrywide competence is achieved, additional top-heavy bureaucracy becomes unnecessary

Andrew Leslie,
Association of Project Safety

APS relies on members stepping up to shape strategy – taking on roles like president, president-elect, board directors and committee members – all driven by commitment to the cause and the wider industry.

Time for reflection

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report made 58 recommendations but overlooks progress on designer competence, omitting references to BS 8670, PAS 8671 and APS’s work. This well-publicised work should have been recognised. It also missed an opportunity to promote collaboration between professional bodies and specialist industry organisations.

Competence assessment remains non-mandatory. For the principal designer building regulations role in England and the roles still to be unveiled in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, adherence to the principles set out in PAS 8671 is crucial for progress to be made.

As of now, the APS Principal Designer Building Regulations England Register (PDBR register) of assessed individuals lacks endorsement from the Building Safety Regulator, as do other schemes.

Low uptake suggests designers avoid non-mandatory requirements – yet another ‘race to the bottom’. The industry’s reliance on self-certification and self-regulation has led to systemic issues. Existing reform efforts, though imperfect, have potential – if made mandatory.

Most professional and trade bodies assess competence only upon initial qualification and/or entry and maintain membership through CPD – self-assessed, without revalidation. True competence assessment requires periodic revalidation.

The Grenfell Phase 2 Report indirectly highlights that professional membership can create a false sense of competence within organisations. It also acknowledges commercial pressures driving shortcuts in design, construction, product supply, regulatory oversight and client services – resulting in real risk to workers, building occupants and future users.

APS’s CDM 2015-assessed members provide additional assurance to clients. The APS PDBR register of competent individuals reassures clients that organisations employing registrants have the capability to deliver safe, compliant services.

If industrywide competence is achieved, additional top-heavy bureaucracy under the report’s ‘system transformation’ proposals becomes unnecessary.

Can we be optimistic? Given how Latham, Egan, Prescott and even parts of Hackitt have been largely ignored, it’s debatable – unless the industry establishment is willing to change its behaviour. What is certain is that APS will keep fighting to reduce injuries and fatalities in the built environment.

Andrew Leslie is CEO of the Association for Project Safety.



APS plans members' toolbox as it celebrates 30 years

President Mark Snelling sets out aspirations to develop materials that will help members thrive in a post-Grenfell world

APS is looking to provide its members with training and guidance materials to help them raise their competence and be better equipped for post-Grenfell demands and opportunities.

President Mark Snelling set out the association's aspirations for a members' toolbox as he reflected on the organisation's future as it marked its 30-year anniversary.

Set up in 1995, APS was created to be a professional body for planning supervisors – a new role created with the arrival of the CDM regulations – and was called the Association of Planning Supervisors.

This role became CDM coordinator, and then principal designer. The Building Safety Act has now added a new principal designer role to ensure that projects comply with the building regulations, a role some APS members are looking to fulfil or advise on.

Its name was changed to the Association for Project Safety in 2007.

Snelling said that, in turning 30, APS had reached a significant milestone. Membership was growing and diversifying and the organisation was very much looking to the future.

"We have always had a clear core purpose and message that has been tied around the CDM regulations, which have transformed the safety landscape within the construction sector," he said.

The change wrought by the Building Safety Act in England and Wales, and the anticipated impact in Scotland and Northern Ireland, had, he said, "presented APS with a real opportunity to reinvent ourselves and think about who we are and what we offer".

He continued: "This is not just about how we can be different, but how we can do what we've done even better – and increase in membership is a very



Mark Snelling
President,
APS

good sign that industry professionals have confidence in us to do that."

Snelling, who became president in 2024, said he was fortunate to take the helm of an organisation that was still robust and healthy after 30 years but as industry changed APS needed to evolve with it. "It's done well, but Grenfell changed the world and things will never be the same – and that applies to every professional body," he said.

"I think it's exciting that we've started that journey to talk about things differently, to look at things differently, and it seems to have had an impact on that membership growth."

The 4,000 strong APS membership is drawn from a wide range of specialisms, including engineers, architects and safety specialists.

Snelling said the first exercise as it looked to develop the suite of knowledge materials, or toolbox, was undertaking a root-and-branch review of the skills, knowledge and behaviours that members needed to be all-round competent people.

"Once we know what all that looks like we will endeavour to produce training and guidance and competence registers. Members will be able to add these core competences with other more specialist ones as they need them," he said.

The second major strand of work, moving forward, is to work more collaboratively with other professional bodies to collaborate on training.

Snelling explained: "As an organisation I think we are punching above our weight. We are relatively small but I think some of our ideas can change a lot of things."

He said the *raison d'être* of APS and its members was to make things safer – to build projects safely. "Arguably we have been successful in improvement through design risk management but I still think, even after 30 years, there is a long way to go.

"Compliance with CDM and doing things better shouldn't be seen as a cost burden – it should be seen as something that has a real benefit." ■

“
Doing things better shouldn't be seen as a cost burden – it should be seen as something that has a real benefit
Mark Snelling, APS

APS events launch 30th anniversary

The Association for Project Safety (APS) kicked off its 30th anniversary this year with a week-long series of events from 19-24 January 2025.

Events included:

- Industry experts sharing insights on the progress made in health and safety risk management, the evolution of CDM and the ongoing need for education, collaboration and innovation.
- A Building a Caring Industry event, which focused on mental health in construction.
- Member Recognition Awards recognising those members who have gone above and beyond to uphold and promote health and safety excellence.
- A panel discussion exploring 30 years of CDM, APS's journey since 1995, and the opportunities to shape the future of construction safety.



GAVIN DANDO PHOTOGRAPHY

APS takes mental health campaign message to politicians

The association’s January event in the Welsh parliament was the latest in a series spreading the word about supporting mental health awareness in construction

APS has been ramping up its UK-wide campaign to promote mental health and wellbeing within the construction industry, by taking its campaign to Westminster and the devolved parliaments in Scotland and Wales.

The association has vigorously campaigned across both its 4,000-strong UK membership and the wider built environment for greater awareness and understanding on the range of issues impacting an industry where there are an estimated 16,000 construction workers in Britain suffering from work-related stress, depression, or anxiety. Together, these account for 24% of all ill health in the construction sector.

In January the message was taken to the Welsh parliament

(Senedd Cymru) in Cardiff. This followed the launch event in November to promote construction industry mental health awareness held at the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh.

Speaking at the Holyrood event, host and mental awareness campaigner Sue Webber MSP, a Conservative shadow cabinet secretary, spoke of the need for employers and individuals to prioritise mental health awareness and provide support where it is needed.

She commented: “There are two construction-related suicides every day, according to recent construction statistics in the UK published by HSC.

“Working in construction comes with intense pressure, tight contracts, long hours, time away from family

Above: APS president-elect Bryn Wilde (see member profile, p20) and director Ceri Camilleri address the Cardiff event

“Addressing the stigma of poor mental health and promoting positive mental wellbeing across workplaces has never been more important

John Griffiths, MS

and managing extremely tight budgets, so it’s little wonder workers in the sector are really feeling the strain.”

In Cardiff, an invited audience made up of APS members in South Wales, local construction companies, cross-party MS members from the Welsh parliament and representatives from local mental health charities gathered to hear the event’s host, senior former Labour minister John Griffiths MS, from the Welsh Labour group, speak of the need for employers and individuals to prioritise mental health awareness and provide support where it is needed.

He commented: “Addressing the stigma of poor mental health and promoting positive mental wellbeing across workplaces has never been more important. We need to focus on the great work carried out by APS and its focus on construction. In doing so, we can work towards a mindset change needed to improve workplace mental health.”

The event also heard from guest speaker Dylan Skelhorn – a former solid fuel heating engineer who sustained life-changing injuries following a fall from height nearly 15 years ago. Since his slow mental and physical health recovery, Skelhorn has been a motivational safety speaker, sharing his story to try and prevent others having life-changing accidents.

APS CEO Andrew Leslie believes the construction industry is sitting on a mental-health time-bomb.

“There were often no ‘warning signs’ that employees are suffering from mental health issues until, sadly, it may be too late. This is why we have taken the campaign to Holyrood, the Senedd and Westminster,” he said.

“Our politicians will recognise just how important this issue is and the need to address the fact that everyone affected has their own unique challenges.”

APS plans to hold its next event at the Palace of Westminster in early summer. ■

Dozens of firms suspended over solid wall insulation

Minister tells MPs of ‘serious and systemic’ issue of substandard installation of solid wall insulation on government-funded schemes



The government has suspended 39 businesses that installed poor-quality solid wall insulation using publicly funded energy efficiency schemes.

Routine checks carried out by independent quality body TrustMark uncovered cases of substandard solid wall insulation fitted under the Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4) and the Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS).

Around 65,000 households have had solid wall insulation installed under these government schemes since 2022. Examples of botched jobs include missing or incomplete paperwork, insufficient ventilation and missing or exposed insulation, which could lead to damp and mould if left.

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) said that while “this is a serious issue”, it does not consider it “a widespread threat to safety”.

On 23 January 2025 minister for energy consumers Miatta Fahnbulleh told MPs that TrustMark found a “very small number of cases” of health and safety issues, such as wires not fitted properly. Fahnbulleh said those problems were “being

Above: Since 2022 65,000 households have had solid wall insulation installed under government-funded schemes

urgently fixed” and should be resolved within 24 hours of being found.

DESNZ said it will not be publishing the names of the suspended businesses. The government said the companies responsible for the failures will be forced to carry out the repairs at no cost to the households affected.

Qualified professionals have started checking every installation under these schemes. Ofgem, which administers the schemes on behalf of the government, has begun writing to all the households affected.

Fahnbulleh said there is a “serious and systemic issue” affecting ECO4 and GBIS solid wall insulation.

She said: “Officials informed ministers at the start of December about the situation and that early findings suggested that there were widespread cases of poor-quality installations that did not meet the required standard.

“Since that point, we have consulted with certification bodies that are responsible for overseeing the work and the Building Safety Regulator to understand the true scale and nature of the emerging problem.”

“It is clear the existing system of protections for consumers we inherited is in dire need of reform. This will be front and centre of our Warm Homes Plan, as we work to make sure no households are let down in this way again.” ■

Architects shortlisted for Grenfell Tower memorial

The Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission and the RIBA have shortlisted five architecture firms to design the memorial to be built on the site of the tower.

The studios selected from the 28 applications received are Curl la Tourelle Head Architecture, Freehaus, George King Architects with Grow to Know, New South and Office Sian.

The Memorial Commission, which is made up of representatives of the bereaved, survivors and local residents, said that due diligence checks were carried out to ensure none of the companies or people potentially working on the project bear any responsibility for the fire that killed 72 people in June 2017.

Over the next six months, the five studios shortlisted will go through a second round of evaluation, which includes meetings with bereaved families, survivors and the immediate community that lives close to Grenfell Tower.



E-bike safety research published

The government has published new independent research into the safety of e-bike and e-scooter lithium-ion batteries, chargers and e-bike conversion kits.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) commissioned Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) to research risks associated with unsafe e-bike and e-scooter batteries and chargers, following a rise in the number of UK fires related to these products, some of which have led to fatalities.

The research gives new insight into:

- How battery failures occur during real-world use and environments, including scenarios of foreseeable misuse or modification.
- The types of processes and materials used in product manufacture that achieve safer design and safer use of lithium-ion batteries.
- Potential shortcomings in technical requirements in product standards that have not kept pace with technological innovation.



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Can we get serious now?

The construction industry could learn a thing or two from Captain Chesley 'Sully' Sullenberger, if it is to genuinely change culture in the wake of Grenfell, says **Paul Nash**



On 4 September 2024, the Phase 2 Report of the public inquiry into the fire at Grenfell Tower was published. For those who followed the inquiry, listened to the BBC podcast, or have read Peter Apps' book *Show Me the Bodies: How We Let Grenfell Happen*, there were no real surprises.

It may be to some that the inquiry recommendations go too far in some areas and not far enough in others. Ultimately it will be for the government to decide which of



Paul Nash
Industry Safety
Steering Group

the 58 recommendations to accept and act upon. In the meantime there is much within the report that is not in the recommendations, which we need to reflect on if we are to learn the lessons of Grenfell.

I want to focus on two issues: the competence of the client and the behaviour of consultants involved in the refurbishment.

It is evident from the report that the tenant management organisation (TMO) lacked the competence or capability to undertake some of the

roles that it took upon itself and failed to appoint suitably qualified companies or individuals to undertake these roles.

The report recognises that it is usual to appoint a professionally qualified project manager for any "substantial construction project" and criticises the TMO for failing to do so.

It also records that the TMO's decision not to appoint a client design adviser was "foolish and reflected an over-confidence in its ability to manage the design aspects of the project itself".

Since the fire, much work has been done to establish and improve standards of competence across the built environment and fire safety sectors. But the question of what it takes to be a competent client has been largely overlooked.

This is surprising when you consider the key role that the client has to play under the new building safety regime and the legal duties that it is now required to comply with. And yet many clients appear to be unaware of these duties or the consequences of failing to comply with them.

Clients must be competent, but they are also responsible for ensuring that the organisations and individuals that they appoint are competent. And this leads me to the question of consultant behaviour.

It is clear from the evidence presented to the inquiry that consultants involved in the refurbishment failed to adequately understand the building or the nature of the proposed works, they failed to commit sufficient time to undertake the required tasks and they failed to undertake proper peer reviews of the work.

Race to the bottom

Why did consultant employees behave in this way? There is nothing in the report to suggest that the agreed scope of work or the fee was deficient, or that the consultants were not paid for the work they did.

In my view this is another example of the 'race to the bottom' and to better understand the behaviours shown by consultants we need to understand the business model of consultancy organisations and how they manage the allocation of time and resource to projects.

The Building Regulations etc (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023, which came into force on 1 October 2023, place a duty on clients to ensure the allocation of sufficient time and resource to ensure compliance.

Left: Quality must be prioritised to ensure all buildings are safe

Below: US Airways Flight 1549 after landing in the Hudson river

However, ensuring that a consultant has allocated sufficient resource and fee in their proposal does not guarantee performance. And while an experienced consultant will always operate a peer review system, the evidence has shown that this cannot always be relied upon.

We need to consider the wider question of consultant behaviour within the sector and the culture that underpins this if we are to bring about the type of change that is needed in our industry.

Which brings me back to the title of this article and a man named Chesley 'Sully' Sullenberger.

On 15 January 2009, US Airways Flight 1549 had just taken off from New York City's LaGuardia Airport when a bird strike resulted in the catastrophic failure of both engines. What the pilot, Captain Sullenberger, and his co-pilot did next made

“The ‘miracle on the Hudson’ is an example of good decision-making under extraordinary circumstances. The Grenfell inquiry is littered with poor decision-making in ordinary circumstances

headlines around the world and inspired the film Sully: Miracle on the Hudson. With extraordinary skill, they managed to land the plane on the Hudson River. Incredibly, there were no fatalities.

The subsequent inquiry into the incident explored a number of different scenarios which would have had different outcomes, but ultimately concluded that the pilots decision to land on the Hudson River was the right one and the outcome a result of “good decision-making and teamwork by the cockpit crew”.

Putting quality and safety first

The miracle on the Hudson is an example of good decision-making under extraordinary circumstances. The Grenfell inquiry is littered with examples of poor decision-making under ordinary circumstances.

From the evidence of the public inquiry there is no doubt that individuals bear responsibility for the events that led to the loss of 72 lives at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017. Had they behaved differently, those lives would not have been lost.

But, to understand why those individuals behaved in the way they did, we need to understand the institutional and organisational cultures that created, promoted and, in some cases, incentivised those behaviours. And we need to change it.

Put simply, any business model that puts expediency and profit before quality and safety is no longer supportable or sustainable. Other industries have learned that lesson and adopted new ways of working, not just because they have been told to, but because it is good business.

Only by doing that will we begin to transform this industry and ensure that in future all buildings are safe for those who occupy them.

As Sully would say: “Can we get serious now?” ■

Paul Nash is a member of the Industry Safety Steering Group and past president of the Chartered Institute of Building.



GREG LAM PAK NG

‘We know that the culture can change’

Despite the safety reforms brought in by the 2022 Building Safety Act, substandard submissions are still holding up approvals by the Building Safety Regulator. Dame Judith Hackitt tells **Denise Chevin** what needs to be done to transform the construction culture that allows this

When Dame Judith Hackitt delivered the CIOB Sir James Wates lecture to an invited audience in late November last year, industry disquiet about the new Building Safety Regulator (BSR) was rearing its head. Schemes were being routinely held up at Gateway 2, meaning they could not start work on site.

A freedom of information request to the HSE submitted by the Fire Industry Association had revealed that between 1 October 2023 and 16 September 2024 the BSR received 1,018 Gateway 2 applications, of which only 146 were approved, allowing construction to commence.

This equates to an approval rate of approximately 14%, with many rejected due to incompleteness or failure to demonstrate full compliance with building regulations.

Industry reports also indicate that the BSR is experiencing significant delays in processing these applications. Rather than the expected 12 weeks to decide on an application, approvals are often taking much longer.

The BSR said it was responding to the delays. It was increasing its team and working closely with industry to see how it could strengthen its guidance to encourage high-quality applications that fully comply with building regulations.

But while the BSR has been adopting a conciliatory or collaborative tone, Dame Judith herself is having none of it – taking a more robust stance that has been a hallmark of the former chair of the HSE since writing her post-Grenfell report, *Building a Safer Future*, in 2018.

She stated in her lecture that the system was being clogged up with

substandard submissions. These were taking up time that was not planned for and not anticipated. It was yet more evidence that industry was dragging its feet in failing to get ready for the reforms coming their way.

In Hackitt’s view an “appalling attitude continues to prevail”, despite the 2022 Building Safety Act now being in force and the failings of the industry laid bare in the report from the second phase of the Grenfell Inquiry. She was equally emphatic in a follow-up interview with *Project Safety Journal* at the start of 2025.

Hackitt chairs the Industry Safety Steering Group (ISSG), which meets every three months to review progress on improvements to building safety culture and reports to the secretary of state. At the time of the PSJ interview in January, ISSG had submitted its advice to government on the recommendations of Phase 2 inquiry, saying which should be taken forward.

Though the contents have not been made public, Hackitt let it be known that the ISSG does not support the resurrection of a chief construction adviser or a single, ‘super regulator’ – more of which later. Government has

14%

of Gateway 2 applications approved out of those received by the BSR between 1 October 2023 and 16 September 2024

“Introduction of the Building Safety Act is the start of the process, not the end. Now begins the process of driving the right moral and ethical behaviours”
Dame Judith Hackitt

pledged to respond to the Phase 2 inquiry by the end of March.

Speaking at the lecture in London, she linked the industry’s slow response in implementing her recommendations to improve the building safety culture with its record on health and safety on site and how slow it had been in that sphere ‘to get it’.

“We can look back to a period prior to the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations, when it was the norm for more than 150 people to lose their lives in this sector every single year. It took a summit back in the early 2000s when John Prescott [then the deputy prime minister] shook the industry out of its presumption that things could not be changed.

“We know that the culture can change and that good performance will follow. Introduction of the Building Safety Act is the start of the process, not the end. Now begins the process of driving the right moral and ethical behaviours alongside complying with these new laws. Compliance is the minimum we require.”

Hackitt said that there were companies who were doing the right thing – making provisions of millions of pounds, as well as changing the way they work. She singled out Persimmon Homes and Clarion Housing Group as exemplars (see box, p14).

She thought, however, that the first prosecution under the act – which she said is only a matter of time – would galvanise more into action.

She went on to tell PSJ: “We’re in a kind of grace period at the moment where people get the benefit of the doubt. They can say they don’t yet know what they are required to do. That’s why you see the regulator ►





Left: Cladding in the process of being removed from a student accommodation building

What good leadership looks like

The need for people in the sector to show more leadership has been one of Hackitt's constant refrains. But what does this look like?

Dame Judith told PSJ:

“It is about admitting and acknowledging the mistakes that we make, stopping the denial. Stop saying ‘it wasn’t me. I did nothing wrong. It was someone else’.

“What we need are clients who demand quality and ensure that it gets delivered. And contractors and designers who refuse to bend to pressure when they’re asked to cut corners and cut costs.

“We need site managers who turn away the cheap substitutes and demand what was actually specified, knowing that they will have the backing of their companies and their bosses for doing that.

“In buildings already occupied, we need building safety managers who draw up sensible, prioritised work lists to improve buildings that they’re managing. That list must prioritise the work to make the most improvement, rather than fixating on doing lots of small things, simply to demonstrate that they’re busy.

“Most importantly of all, we must design

in ways which put the safety of users at the heart of the process, which everyone then commits to deliver in full.”

Hackitt said that good practice was already emerging among many companies.

She singled out Persimmon Homes and Clarion Housing Group as exemplars of the sort of leadership she was looking for and where true commitment came from the very top.

She said of Persimmon: **“What I’ve actually seen for myself is a genuine root-and-branch review of what they do and how they do it, and serious financial commitment over the long term to address the issue.”**

Talking about the need for urgency on changing culture she said: **“We really cannot follow the similar path that we went through with health and safety, where it took this industry 30 years to ‘get it’.**

“If you don’t seize the opportunity, don’t be surprised when you face more regulation, because that is the recommendation of the inquiry.”

erring on the side of being more helpful at this stage in terms of, ‘this is what good looks like’. But there will come a point in the not too distant future where they will say, ‘You have no excuse anymore’.”

She expected prosecutions to come about through building inspectors spotting the failure to meet compliance. “It’s about people in building control now recognising that they have a different role in this system. When they find things that are of concern to them, that need to be addressing them in the right way and reporting them back up to the building safety regulator.”

What other changes would Dame Judith like to see?

● Urgent action on certification of construction products

Dame Judith said that one of her greatest frustrations to date was the lack of progress assuring the quality of construction products – despite a comprehensive report and plan of action by Paul Morrell and Anneliese Day in 2023. She herself had chaired an international panel which pulled together examples of what good practice looks like from around the world and came to very similar conclusions on what was needed.

“The Grenfell inquiry report could not be clearer that this rotten system needs to be fixed and in a robust way. It is long, long overdue, and it is a major weakness in the new system. It’s surprising to me that people in industry are not calling for it, because with the duties that they now have under the Building Safety Act, not being able to assure themselves of the quality of the products they’re using is a major vulnerability for them.”

She added: “What we need is to re-establish trust in the way products are tested, and whether the tests that we conduct are fit for purpose.”

“What we need are clients who demand quality and ensure that it gets delivered. And contractors and designers who refuse to bend to pressure when they’re asked to cut corners and cut costs

Dame Judith Hackitt

● The need for a new safety summit

“One of my personal pleas to the new government in response to the public inquiry will be to seek another summit on the Prescott scale. That marked a turning point on an attitude to health and safety, but this time it needs to be focused on building safety. Real and genuine commitment to being part of leading this new approach should, in my view, be a condition of being involved in building the 1.5 million new homes the government has committed to.”

● Meaningful professional development

Hackitt noted that the final report of the public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire, published last September, had provided the most chilling accounts yet of the poor behaviour which existed and which contributed to the tragedy.

“At best, people were incompetent, but it is the lack of care and the cynicism demonstrated by some, which really continues to shock. We are also reminded again of what happens when roles and responsibilities become blurred and conflicting interests get in the way.

“Lessons need to be learned by engineers and other professionals on the need for real, meaningful, continued professional development, and for adhering to a high standard of moral and ethical behaviour.”

● Demonstration of competence

One of the recommendations of the Grenfell Phase 2 Inquiry was compulsory registration for companies working on higher-risk buildings. Asked about her support for this, she said: “I think there ought to be a threshold of competence for working on complex buildings, and a demonstration of an organisation’s competence, not just the competence of individuals.

A number of professional bodies, including APS, have developed new

Double blow for cladding victims

By Claire Elliot

ONLY one building identified by the Scottish Government as having dangerous Grenfell-style cladding has had it replaced. Ministers have been accused of moving at a 'snail's pace' in their efforts to rid homes of highly combustible materials in the wake of the 2017 tragedy which killed 72. The admission that only one building has had cladding replaced comes despite an inventory showing that 23 high-rise blocks had the highest risk category J' combustible polyethylene core. In comparison, 397 buildings in England have had remediation works completed.

Just ONE building with Grenfell-style cladding fixed... 7yrs after traged

Ministers get new powers to cut fire risk

A BILL aimed at reducing the risk of Grenfell-style fires in Scotland gained unanimous support at the Scottish parliament yesterday. The Housing (Cladding Remediation) (Scotland) Bill will see developers face potential sanctions if they don't tackle cladding problems. The law will give ministers the power to assess and carry out remediation on buildings with unsafe cladding - with any work then recorded in a register. The Bill, however, has been called out at several stages for its slow roll-out that resulted in instances where fire experts were called in to protect buildings flagged as at risk.

have each on a 'pathway' to SEA by this summer. Scott Griffin said: 'The stakes are too high for inaction.' Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Alex Cole-Hamilton said: 'The images of Grenfell will linger long in the memory, ministers must pick up the gauntlet to ensure buildings safe.' A Scottish Government spokesman said: 'The cladding remediation programme is protecting lives by ensuring assessment and remediation of buildings. Our overall spend has been increasing with an investment of £29.6m

Loans to fix dangerous panels can

Plan to let owners sell low-risk flats

TENS of thousands of leaseholders will be impacted by the cladding scandal could be allowed to sell their properties again under plans to end a bureaucratic nightmare. But fire safety experts warn that the fire risk will not be fully addressed until 2027. In flats with low-risk cladding, owners will be able to sell their properties from February.

Everyone failed them

Grenfell: a disaster caused by 'dishonesty and greed'

'Grenfell' cladding won't be removed until 2027

Government set to miss repairs target by more than half

Thousands trapped in Grenfell-style flats 'scammed' by insurers

Tens of thousands of residents unable to sell homes in blocks built with cladding deemed to be safe



registers that provide a means for members to certify their competence, but take-up is proving slower than hoped. Hackitt says that this is disappointing.

"That's all part of the culture change that we need to see: so that leading companies will only engage with people who are registered or who are demonstrably competent, and that will then drive people to register. But it's a pity that it takes that kind of process to evolve, rather than people seeing the logic of doing it and being proactive."

● Government being more proactive in driving culture change Hackitt is firmly of the view that alongside new legislation, government could be doing more to drive a culture change through setting the right standards in public procurement. This could include requiring collaborative construction, requiring people to demonstrate competence, and not allowing buildings to be built by people

who don't sign up to the principles and processes that demonstrate they're doing the right thing.

She said that this should be extended to local authorities as well. While government often said it had no direct control over local authority procurement, Hackitt disagreed, pointing out that government may not hold the purse strings, it sets the policy framework in which local authorities operate.

● But no need for a single regulator Dame Judith said she had serious reservations about setting up a single 'super regulator' for construction. This was one of the recommendations in the Grenfell Phase 2 Report that would bring construction regulation - currently fragmented across different departments - under the aegis of a single secretary of state, supported by a chief construction adviser.

Such a move would be a distraction. "It will be used by

Above: Coverage reflects the slow industry response to the issues raised by Grenfell

industry as an excuse for not doing anything while people have a think about yet more structure and so on. What we need right now is focused effort to get BSR properly resourced and working effectively in its domain, and similar focus on creating a robust new regime for product regulation.

"There may be a case at some point in the future for bringing that together, but the logic tells me that it would be better to get them both up and running effectively first, rather than wasting precious time now on form before function."

In terms of a chief construction adviser, she reiterated that the priority for government ought to be acting as an exemplar with its own directly controlled spend.

And her number one ask? "I have two. One would be to address the product issue, and the second would be for government itself to show leadership in its own procurement." ■



A new approach to sharing risk information

Nick Nisbet, the author of the newly published ISO 19650-6:2025, which covers information management for health and safety, explains its benefits to **Denise Chevin** and what has changed from the draft version

The new international standard for sharing health and safety information throughout the life cycle of a building has been published.

As well as helping to improve health and safety performance, the new standard will also provide a key tool for managing the golden thread of information for higher-risk buildings (HRBs) that is now required by the Building Safety Act.

The standard, ISO 19650-6:2025, is the final part of the ISO 19650 series, for managing information over the whole life cycle of a built asset – including, but not exclusively using, building information modelling (BIM).

It contains all the same principles and high-level requirements as the UK BIM Framework and is closely aligned with the current UK 1192 standards. In a key change from the

draft version, it has also been adapted to those not using BIM.

The author of ISO 19650-6:2025 is Nick Nisbet, a built environment information consultant and vice-chair of buildingSMART UKI, who has been working on it for two-and-a-half years.

He explains its benefits: "It's a method for sharing the risk registers in a project, which are a requirement of the CDM regulations, in a way that the participants in the project can contribute to.

"It structures information about risks, and not only health and safety risks but also incidents and mitigations, so that everyone in the project can access that information – principal designer, principal contractor and owner. The roles of principal designer and contractor are quite isolated, and so this should help bring them into the whole team.

Using structured information can result in improved health and safety performance, fewer incidents and associated impacts. It can also provide clearer, more assured and relevant health and safety information to the right people at the right time.

Nisbet says that setting out a standard approach to health and safety information is an "important element" of the golden thread: "It helps ensure that the information isn't lost or overlooked," he says.

The principles and requirements of the standard can be applied equally to project delivery and buildings in use. Though it is applicable to – and extremely important to – the generation of BIM information, it is also important for those that are not using it.

The draft was consulted on in the early part of 2024. Key differences



Nick Nisbet
buildingSMART
UK & Ireland

between the draft and the final standard include:

- More emphasis that it is a communication standard – not a risk assessment standard, which is covered in the ISO 31000 series.
- Developing the likelihood and consequence as an informative annex.
- Allowing the standard to be used in 'non-BIM' situations.

Nisbet says: "ISO 19650 extends the ideas in PAS 1192-6. The PAS still has some useful suggestions on techniques and technologies for identifying risk, but otherwise ISO 19650-6 supersedes it.

"PAS 1192-6 was developed by Peter Nicholas and myself working with the BIM4HS (BIM 4 Health and Safety) working group."

He stresses: "The standard is about communicating the risk information, and it doesn't attempt to tell people how they should do risk assessments."

The new standard will be officially launched at the BSI built environment summit on Wednesday 26 March 2025.

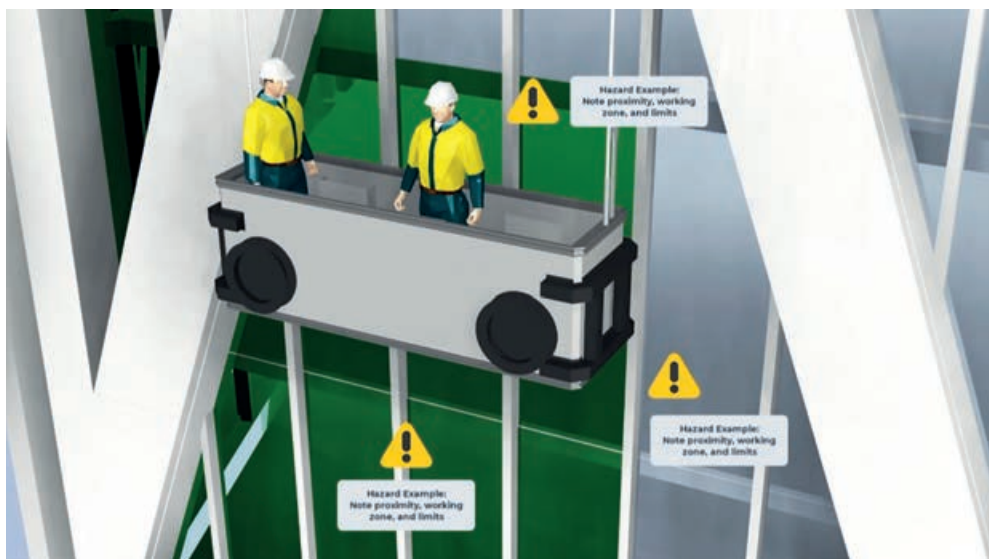
"It fits in with the processes described in ISO 19650-2 and -3 with some additional considerations about making sure that the information is structured and accessible," he says.

"So, for example, in the UK the recommendation would be to classify risks using the Uniclass RK risk table for health and safety risks in construction and in buildings in use [<https://uniclass.thenbs.com/taxon/rk>], which was developed by HSE and myself, in parallel with developing the new standard, and published in October 2023."

The classification of risk in buildings in use is again a requirement under the Building Safety Act. ■

Left: ISO 19650 is suitable for both BIM and non-BIM situations

Below: The new standard communicates risk information



FREEFORM

“It structures information about risks so that everyone in the project can access that information

Nick Nisbet, buildingSMART UKI

What is ISO 19650-6?

The new standard is applicable to individuals and organisations that contribute to and influence the procurement, design, construction, use (including maintenance) and end of life of building and infrastructure assets.

The document:

- Specifies requirements for the collaborative sharing of structured health and safety information throughout project and asset life cycles.
- Supports the digitisation of structured health and safety information in project and asset life cycles progressively from the outset.
- Provides specification on how health and safety information is shared for use throughout project and asset life cycle.
- Sets out a health and safety information cycle framework for the identification, use, sharing and generalisation of health and safety.

Further BSI safety standards in the pipeline

● **Fire risk assessment for housing:** The new standard for fire risk assessment, BS 9792, will provide recommendations and examples of documentation for undertaking and recording fire risk assessments related to housing. It will supersede PAS 79-2, which was withdrawn in 2021.

● **Fire risk assessor competence:** BSI is developing a new standard on the competence of fire risk assessors. BS 8674 builds upon the success of the BS 867X series by establishing the competence (skill, knowledge, experience and behaviours) that must be attained by individuals undertaking general fire risk assessments. It is suitable for a range of building types.

● **Construction product competence:** BS 8670-2 will describe the core competencies of those working with construction products, as well as recommending how such competencies can be integrated into competence frameworks. The standard is due out in 2026.

Dan Rossiter

What lies ahead in 2025

Policy and regulatory changes will drive progress on building safety in England

Over the past year, the construction industry has been grappling with the requirements of the Building Safety Act, digesting the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report and navigating delays in obtaining Gateway 2 and 3 approval due to resource constraints at the Building Safety Regulator (BSR).

It has been remediating unsafe buildings at a pace slower than the government hoped and has had to familiarise itself with the new and more rigorous standards for fire safety for residential buildings.

The pace of change in the building safety landscape looks set to continue as government ramps up pressure, particularly around unremediated buildings – so change will continue unabated throughout 2025. Here are some policy and regulatory changes that lie ahead.

Below: Construction work in Woking town centre: tall buildings will see further regulatory change in 2025

Remediation Acceleration Plan

There are still several unresolved questions around building safety, such as whether the draft legislation from 1984 introducing the right to pursue civil damages for a breach of a duty imposed by building regulations (regardless of building height and type) will ever come into force.

The Remediation Acceleration Plan (RAP) and accompanying documents, published in December 2024, provide clarity on a number of building safety issues.

These include:

● **The Building Safety Levy:** The levy is intended to come into force in autumn 2025 and will be charged on all new residential buildings in England that require building control approval (with some exceptions).

The rates for this levy are yet to be announced but its aim is to raise

around £3.4bn over the next 10 years to pay for the remediation of building safety defects.

● **Increased building registration requirements:** A new duty to register buildings between 11-18 metres tall and a proposal to tighten requirements relating to building assessments.

● **New cladding remediation deadline:** The new cladding remediation deadline will be the end of 2029 for buildings 18 metres or over in a government-funded scheme, while buildings of 11 metres or over must at least have set a remediation completion date by then.

The deadline will be coupled with financial and criminal liability sanctions for non-compliance.

● **Reforms to charges for arranging insurance:** New consultation considers how to restrict what leaseholders are charged for arranging

“The pace of change in the building safety landscape looks set to continue as government ramps up pressure, particularly around unremediated buildings



insurance to a “fair and transparent permitted insurance fee” under section 59 of the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act. It launched on 2 December 2024 and closed on 24 February 2025.

● **Beneficial ownership disclosure requirements:** New powers will be introduced for the secretary of state and regulators to compel entities to disclose their beneficial ownership so the entity responsible for a building can be identified.

● **Leaseholder support through the remediation process:** New measures will enable leaseholders in buildings that have reverted to the state when the owner dies without a will or heirs (escheated) to manage their building and apply for cladding remediation funds, and to ensure that regulators are notified when landlords of buildings 11 metres or over become insolvent, disclaim or go into escheat.

● **Developer-led remediation:** The RAP introduces a new voluntary “joint plan” to accelerate progress on developer-led remediation by way of 35 separate commitments. At the time of the RAP’s launch, this had been agreed with 29 developers and the government expects more developers to sign up to the plan in the coming weeks.

● **Remediation enforcement:** The RAP also contains proposals to bolster remediation enforcement,



Alexandra Gower
Osborne Clarke



Sarah Steed
Osborne Clarke

including more funding and enforcement powers for local authorities and the introduction of local remediation acceleration plans run by metro mayors.

It confirms the government’s intention to take action against construction product manufacturers, as promised in response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report, with a new construction products standard likely to be published in 2025.

Building safety case law

Further case law on the ever-evolving building safety landscape is anticipated: Osborne Clarke is acting for BDW in a Supreme Court case concerning the allocation of liability where a property developer carried out remedial work on properties it no longer owned (URS Corporation Ltd v BDW Trading Ltd) and the Court of Appeal will make a decision on remediation contribution orders in Triathlon Homes LLP v Stratford Village Development Partnership.

Building regulations guidance

The BSR will publish revised Approved Documents (the guidance to the building regulations) early next year. Businesses should stay informed on these developments as they are likely to have an impact on building safety regulations and practices.

“New powers will compel entities to disclose their beneficial ownership so the entity responsible for a building can be identified

Other building safety developments expected include the government’s intention to stop the “most egregious companies” implicated in the Grenfell disaster from being awarded government contracts (with guidance on this expected early this year), a promise to respond to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report in full by early March and updating parliament (by September) against every building safety commitment made.

Conclusion

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry’s final report made sobering reading for all in the industry and beyond. Reform was clearly necessary and urgent.

However, the resourcing issues at the BSR will not be resolved overnight, and the extensive and ever-growing body of building safety related requirements continues to pose an enormous challenge to an industry struggling with recent tax increases, high levels of insolvency, staffing issues and persistently high interest rates and inflation.

The industry will need to work hard to stay abreast of developments and ensure its contracts and practice reflect the latest changes in this area. ■

Alexandra Gower is a partner and Sarah Steed is a senior knowledge lawyer in the Projects, Construction, Planning and Environment team at the law firm Osborne Clarke.





‘Let’s make it as good as it can be’

New APS president-elect Bryn Wilde on his plans to enhance membership engagement, promote women in construction and the challenges of implementing new regulations

Give us an outline of how you’ve got to where you are today

I took a degree in civil and structural engineering at University College Cardiff (as it was called then), followed by a PhD on the use of geographic information systems and remote sensing to predict hydrological events, which I completed in 1992.

That gave me start in industry, when I took a job where I was

working primarily in flooding and hydrology. After that, I started working on large brownfield regeneration projects and I then started to specialise in demolition in the mid-1990s. That’s when I first got involved with health and safety issues and entered the world of CDM.

As my career progressed, I took on more responsible positions – junior engineer, senior engineer, associate

Bryn Wilde:
‘One thing I’ll be focusing on is helping to make sure our membership engagement is as good as it can be’

director. Then in 2011 I started my own company based in Cardiff.

I called it Ateb Consult – in Welsh, ‘ateb’ means to answer or solve. But after a few years when the name CDM Solutions became available, we snapped it up – with it being a far better fit for what we did.

CDM Solutions is still going, but now it just provides training materials. That’s because when the Building Safety Act and all the new building safety regulations were set to come in, we could see what was coming and decided to adjust our focus. We created a new company, the Building Safety Consultancy Group.

We now offer all our health and safety knowledge, CDM knowledge and buildability experience under one roof. We’re an APS-accredited trainer too.

What sort of work are you mainly involved with?

We provide general health and safety advice, and we regularly take on the principal designer role under CDM.

We do a lot of work with Cardiff Council, acting as the initial principal designer, and then once it goes out to a design-and-build tender, we move to client-side adviser. We’re involved with most of the major regeneration housing projects around Cardiff, including big tower blocks.

The Building Safety Act is not operational in Wales just yet but with certain clients we are being proactive getting up to speed with what needs to be done by carrying out the building safety role in parallel with the live job itself.

When do you expect the act to come into force in Wales?

Possibly by the end of this year. In Wales, we always say, let England put it in place first, find out what all the problems are, and then fix them!

Working through APS, we meet frequently with the Welsh government and the people who are actually writing the building safety regulations in Wales.

It's going to be very similar to the Building Safety Act in England, with just a few subtle differences.

Wales will have a slightly different definition of a higher-risk building under its safety legislation. In England, it's an HRB if it meets the height or the storey criteria, and two residential units. In Wales, it's just one residential unit.

There has been talk about whether we bring more buildings into scope as higher-risk buildings, because we don't have anywhere near as many tower blocks in Wales as in England.

The other big difference between the two country's safety regimes is that the Building Safety Regulator is obviously the Health and Safety Executive in England, but in Wales it will be the local planning authority.

I must say, in Wales nobody likes the name 'principal designer' because they find it gets confused with the CDM role. I can understand that it's all about getting the same organisations undertaking both roles on projects, and that does make sense. However, it's not the way things are happening in industry, and to me it's just another example of how policymakers sometimes don't listen to business people in the way they should.

How do think APS members will deal with the challenges of implementing the act?

It probably will be quite a big challenge for many people. That's why APS needs to be there, helping and supporting, giving the right kind of guidance, and trying to make that progression as smooth as it can be.

What are your hopes for future working life under the Building Safety Act?

I hope the act gets the same due care and attention as CDM does when applied properly – and that people don't just pay lip service to it. And really, I hope people see the value of it, and what it can achieve – and understand that there is a justifiable cost associated with it.

CV: Bryn Wilde

- **2021 to present:** Managing director, Building Safety Consultancy Group (associate company to CDM Solutions, which he started in 2019)
- **2011-19:** Managing director, Ateb Consult
- **2005-14:** Associate, SLR Consulting
- **1992-2005:** Associate director, Wardell Armstrong
- **1986-92:** Cardiff University, BSc (Hons) and PhD Civil Engineering

Too many people still see health and safety purely in terms of cost and are always trying to drive cost down. We've got to fight that mentality and show there's a value in excellent professional service.

What are your most memorable career moments?

One of my favourite jobs since setting up my own companies was working as CDM co-ordinator on a major energy-from-waste facility that was being built in Cardiff. It was a multi-million pound project, and I could see the site from my office window.

Every day I watched as the old site was demolished, and the new building emerged, stage by stage. Seeing it progress was like viewing it in a time-lapse film, and it was thrilling to be so close to something you'd been involved in and see it all come to life right in front of you.

I've always enjoyed pointing out to my son the buildings I've worked on – I get a lot of pride from that.

How long have you been involved with the APS?

For well over 25 years now. I became a member and then got involved with the Welsh committee. When I became chair of that committee, I also became a council member and then became a board director, also sitting on various committees.

Now I've been elected as the next president. I'll be taking over from the current president Mark Snelling in February 2027, with much of the next two years being about helping and supporting Mark.

Naturally, I've got my views for how APS should be going forward, and so has Mark. We'll be working together to bring those visions to life. Thankfully we get on very well.

One thing I'll be focusing on is helping to make sure our membership engagement is as good as it possibly can be, so that we provide members with the best service that we possibly can.

“Too many people still see health and safety purely in terms of cost and are always trying to drive cost down. We've got to fight that mentality

Bryn Wilde, APS

Sometimes in the past, engagement in certain areas hasn't been as good it might have been.

I'll also be encouraging areas to set up branches. We don't have a branch in south Wales or north Wales at the moment. I think we should.

I've also talked previously about how we must also do more to increase diversity. One of my fellow directors, Ceri Camilleri, is very involved in this area and I'd like to set up a focus group with her to look at how we can overcome the existing barriers and promote diversity further within APS and construction generally.

The third area I'm am very keen to look at is mentoring. When I was a young civil engineer, as you're going through your ICE progression, you get a mentor to help you. I think there are a lot of people in APS who could act as that kind of mentor to more junior members.

What are your interests outside of work?

I've played rugby most of my life and when I stopped playing, I coached many junior rugby teams. I am also a qualified referee, but not any longer – my knees have gone!

I enjoy most sports – and I've been a lifelong supporter of Wrexham football club. I've been impressed by the new celebrity owners – who have been known to come into the pub next to the ground and buy everybody a drink.

As well as sports, I travel a lot with my friends and family and have visited most parts of the world watching Wales play rugby, even going to Patagonia once. I also love cooking. One of my specialities is a banana parfait with a rum sauce and coconut caramel wafer.

Any advice for someone starting out now?

Don't let fear of failure stop you from trying something. Failing is not a problem. You can learn from failing but you might regret something afterwards if you never tried. ■

“I think there are a lot of people in APS who could act as a mentor to more junior members
Bryn Wilde,
APS

CPD: Fall protection systems

This CPD, in association with MSA Safety, explains what principal contractors need to be aware of to ensure robust fall protection in building construction. By **Stuart Pierpoint**



“Above all, the risks of working at height must be kept to the absolute minimum, getting safety right from business, ethical and moral perspectives

The responsibilities of a contractor regarding fall protection are set out in the Health and Safety Executive’s (HSE) work at height guidance and the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and its 2007 amendment. These regulations instruct employers to take preventative measures “so far as is reasonably practicable” to prevent falls when work is carried out at height.

The recently introduced Building Safety Act 2022 assigns principal contractors strict obligations to ensure that all building work that is carried out is compliant with relevant requirements, including planning, managing, coordinating and monitoring work. Under the act, contractors responsible for any of the above works need to consider all other work which directly relates to the building work and report any building regulation compliance concerns to the principal contractor or principal designer.

Getting the balance right

In deciding what is “reasonably practicable” and the most practical and effective solutions for a particular building, contractors will want to know where the right balance lies. ‘Innovation versus proven systems?’ is the kind of question that principal contractors ask themselves every day as they grapple with the challenge of fall protection safety.

Although aesthetics are important, fall protection systems that have longevity are a must. Budgets are also an essential consideration. Above all, the risks of working at height must be kept to the absolute minimum, getting safety right from business, ethical and moral perspectives.

Existing approaches in place save contractors from having to choose between these options while enabling the highest standards of safety when it comes to fall protection.

Left: Fall protection systems can be used along with individual full body harness

Below: Employers must take preventative measures when working at height takes place

Fall protection hierarchy

Safe access considerations should always follow the hierarchy of fall protection.

This means first eliminating any fall hazard wherever possible. Where this is not feasible, collective fall protection should be explored – for example, a guardrail that acts as a physical barrier between a worker and a hazard. Installing collective fall protection will allow less-trained users to access a rooftop without the need for personal protective equipment such as harnesses and lanyards.

If collective fall protection is not possible, perhaps due to planning constraints, rights to light or viewing

corridors, the next option is to specify a personal fall protection system. There are two kinds: a fall restraint system and a fall arrest system.

With a fall restraint system (the preferred option), workers use fall protection equipment – such as an anchor point, harness or fixed-length lanyards – that prevents them from reaching the hazard.

If a fall restraint system is not possible, the alternative is to specify a fall arrest system. This allows trained workers wearing specialist equipment to access the hazard safely with the reassurance that if they fall, their fall will be ‘arrested’ by the equipment they are wearing. ►





“ It’s not advisable to assume that a system tested against the old standard from 1997 will be capable of meeting the revised, up-to-date version

Stuart Pierpoint, MSA Safety

Systems available

There are two main options when considering a personal fall protection system: a perimeter system and a ridge system. With a perimeter system, users have full movement around the perimeter while remaining in restraint at all times.

With a ridge system, workers use additional single-point anchor posts to gain access to roof corners. The ridge system is suitable for both fall restraint solutions and fall arrest solutions.

Both systems should be tested for fall arrest in case of misuse.

Test standards

Once it has been decided what kind of fall protection system is most suitable for a particular structure, the next challenge is choosing a system that meets the right test standards.

This means specifying a system that meets both the BS EN 795:2012 standard (which superseded the previous edition from 1997) for single-user anchor devices and the PD CEN/TS 16415:2013 standard for multi-user anchor devices.

There are a few things to be aware of regarding test standards. It is not advisable to assume that a system tested against the old standard from 1997 will be capable of meeting the revised, up-to-date version. Systems that claim to be tested against current standards should be checked if they have been tested against the 2012 standard as they may only meet the 1997 version.

It is also necessary to check that the system has been tested on the structure or base material it will be used on, for example, tested using UK standard BS 8610. This is ►



MSA Safety’s Constant Force Post

MSA Safety’s Constant Force Post is a fall protection solution that helps protect both the worker and the roof from the sudden energy of a fall.

It has been tested on representative roof types and used in iconic buildings such as the Blackpool Tower, London Bridge, New York’s Grand Central Station and Qatar Airport.

The patented star-wheel technology Transfasteners allow the system users to walk freely along the entire rooftop lifeline system. Every single point of the system absorbs energy via the patented Constant Force technology in case of a fall.

Left: A ridge system uses additional single-point anchor posts to gain access to roof corners

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important because anchors perform differently on different materials and roof structures when force is exerted.

In conclusion, things should be kept in perspective. When trying to achieve the right balance at the time of constructing a building that is both aesthetically pleasing and safe to work on at height, it is important to remember those key words from the regulations: “so far as is reasonably practicable”.

Contractors can stay compliant and keep workers safe if they know their responsibilities, take them seriously and partner with a trusted supplier of fall protection systems. ■
Stuart Pierpoint is a specification sales manager at MSA Safety.

Below: Safe access considerations should always follow the hierarchy of fall protection

“Contractors can stay compliant and keep workers safe if they know their responsibilities, take them seriously and partner with a trusted supplier of fall protection systems

Useful resources

● **HSE Work at Height guidance:**
www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm

● **The Work at Height Regulations 2005:**
www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/735/contents

● **Building Safety Act 2022:**
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/30/contents

● **BS EN 795:2012:**
<https://knowledge.bsigroup.com/products/personal-fall-protection-equipment-anchor-devices?version=standard>

CPD Questions

1) What's the first step in the hierarchy of fall protection?

- a) Using personal fall protection systems
- b) Eliminating the fall hazard
- c) Installing guardrails

2) Which of the following is a preferred personal fall protection system, if collective fall protection is not feasible?

- a) Fall restraint system
- b) Ridge system
- c) Fall arrest system

3) What standard must a fall protection system meet for single-user anchor devices?

- a) BS EN 795:1997
- b) PD CEN/TS 16415:2013
- c) BS EN 795:2012

4) When should a contractor use a ridge system in fall protection?

- a) Only when a perimeter system is not available
- b) To provide full movement around the perimeter
- c) To allow access to roof corners

5) What is an example of collective fall protection?

- a) Guardrail
- b) Fixed-length lanyard
- c) Anchor point and harness

To test yourself on the questions and collect CPD points, go to: projectsafetyjournal.com



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Rate of fatal incidents in construction rises

Before the pandemic the death rate in construction was slowing. The latest HSE figures show that this has now reversed

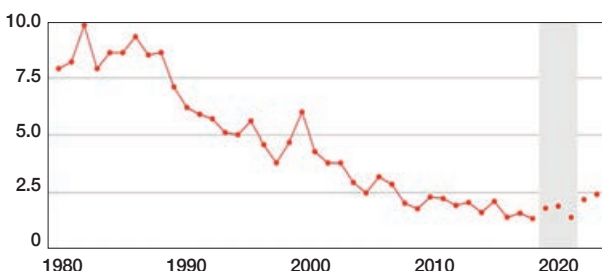


Percentage of fatal injuries by accident, kind in construction

- 52% Falls from a height
- 11% Trapped by something collapsing/overturning
- 11% Struck by moving, including flying/falling, object
- 10% Struck by moving vehicle
- 5% Contact with electricity or electrical discharge



Changes over time: Rate of work-related fatal injuries in construction (rate per 100,000 workers)



The data for 2019/20-2021/22 includes years affected by the coronavirus pandemic, shown inside the shaded column

Figures released by the HSE in November revealed that fatalities in construction were not just rising in terms of the numbers of deaths, but – in a significant development – fatalities per 100,000 workers were also increasing.

The latest annual data shows that 51 construction workers died of injuries on site in the year to 31 March 2024, confirming findings published in July. The average number of deaths in construction over a five-year period was 42. This continues an upward trend in deaths in the previous year.

More than half (52%) of these deaths were caused by falls from height, followed by being trapped by something collapsing and being struck by a moving object (both 11%).

The rate of fatal incidents per 100,000 workers was 2.4 for 2023/24, continuing the upward trend from the previous year. In 2022/23 the fatal injury rate in the construction sector increased to 2.1 per 100,000 workers, up from an average of 1.72 during the 2018/19 to 2022/23 period. Now the five-year average stands at 1.96.

Prior to the pandemic, the rate of fatal injury to workers in construction

showed a downward trend with signs of flattening out in more recent years. However, while the rate of fatal injury is prone to year-on-year fluctuations, the average rate to construction workers in the last two years is statistically higher than the pre-pandemic period, said the HSE report Construction Statistics in Great Britain, 2024.

The growing rate of fatal incidents has prompted the APS Fellows' Forum to examine what might be at the root of the increase in fatalities. APS fellow Philip Baker is leading the work.

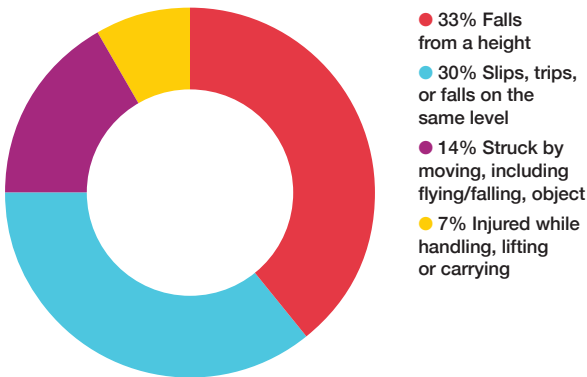
Baker said that the rise in fatalities was worrying and that APS wanted to understand what was causing this.

He said that currently discussions were purely anecdotal. "Data on construction output indicated that the output per worker has gone up in the previous period, which may suggest that people are working harder, which could lead us to think that maybe fatigue is an issue," he said.

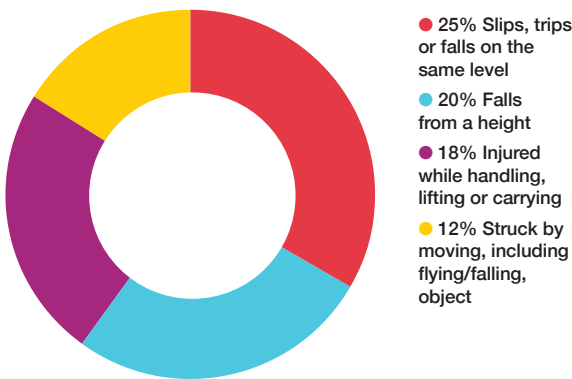
"We intend to engage with other institutions in the industry to see if we can identify what we can do better, to continue to bring the rate down."

Baker said that the current review of the implementation of the CDM

Percentage of non-fatal work-related specified injuries by accident kind in construction



Percentage of non-fatal injuries by accident kind in construction



regulations being conducted by the HSE could also throw light on the issue, as there was some suggestion that the application of CDM 2015 appeared to be resulting in less effective designing-out of risk than the previous revision.

The HSE figures published in November revealed there were three fatal injuries to members of the public in 2023/24. This is in comparison with the annual average of four fatalities over the five-year period 2019/20-2023/24p.

In the same period in construction, an estimated 47,000 workers reported sustaining a workplace non-fatal injury, or 2.4%, a rate that is statistically significantly higher than that for workers across all industries (1.7%).

In construction around 2.5 million working days (full-day equivalent) were lost each year due to workplace injury (17%) and work-related illness (83%). The HSE said this is equivalent to around 1.3 working days lost per worker, which is not statistically different from the all-industry level (1.1 days).

The total cost in 2022/23 is estimated at £1.4bn, accounting for 7% of the total cost of all work-related ill health and injury (£21.5bn). ■

1.4

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In the dock

Recent prosecutions for health and safety breaches

Steeplejacks fined £60k after fatal church fall

A specialist contractor with “outdated attitudes to managing health and safety” has been fined £60,000 after a worker fell to his death from a church steeple in Birmingham.

David Clover, 64, was employed by Ecclesiastical Steeplejacks to carry out restoration work to St Nicolas’ Church in Kings Norton on 13 November 2020. He had been suspended from the 60 metre steeple of the Grade I-listed building, sitting in a ‘boson’s chair’ (a work positioning seat), when he fell, suffering fatal injuries.

An HSE investigation found the boson’s chair was not supported by a suitable backup system preventing falls, such as a double or twin-leg lanyard fall arrest harness.

Ecclesiastical Steeplejacks, which has ceased trading since the accident, pleaded guilty to contravening Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

It was fined £60,000 at a hearing at Birmingham Magistrates’ Court on 15 January 2025.

£120k fine after worker breaks leg in roof fall

A solar panel installation business has been fined £120,000 after an employee broke his leg while working on a property in Salisbury.

EE Renewables had been hired by the homeowner to move nine solar panels higher up the building’s roof. On 16 December 2022, the worker, who was 23 at the time, fell from the roof of the property on Sherfield English Road.

He had been adjusting a solar panel when he fell 4 metres onto the ground, sustaining a broken femur.

An HSE investigation found that EE Renewables had not properly planned the work at height and failed to take suitable steps to prevent a fall.

It was fined £120,000 and ordered to pay £4,716 in costs at Swindon Magistrates’ Court on 23 December 2024 after pleading guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

Wood company prosecuted over repeated dust failures

An Essex-based company that makes windows and doors has been hit with a £4,000 fine after repeatedly failing to protect its workers from exposure to wood dust.

Timbercraft Windows & Doors was visited by the HSE on three occasions over a 12-year period. Those visits identified large build-ups of wood dust around machinery, as well as other health and safety breaches.

A subsequent HSE investigation found the company failed to adequately control and prevent its employees’ exposure to wood dust.

Timbercraft Windows & Doors, of Crowborough, East Sussex, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 9(2), 11(1) and 7(1) of Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. It was fined £4,000 and was ordered to pay £2,792 costs at a hearing at Colchester Magistrates’ Court on 16 January 2025.

Amey’s FM arm fined £600k after legionella death

Amey Community has been fined £600,000 after a prisoner contracted Legionnaires’ disease and died while serving a prison sentence at HMP Lincoln.

The HSE opened an investigation following the death of Graham Butterworth, 71, on 5 December 2017.

Water samples from Butterworth’s cell and nearby shower blocks tested positive for legionella days after he died.

The HSE investigation found that Amey Community, an Amey subsidiary which provided facilities management services at HMP Lincoln, failed to act on a risk assessment carried out in 2016 and to put in place a written scheme for preventing and controlling legionella risks.

Amey Community, of Furnival Street, London, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. It was fined £600,000 and ordered to pay £15,186.85 in costs at Lincoln Magistrates’ Court on 3 December 2024.

There's a lot to look forward to in 2025

APS has kicked off its 30th anniversary year with purpose and excitement – and there's more to come



This is already shaping up to be an exciting year for APS, as we build on a strong start and prepare for what's to come.

In January 2025, we proudly marked our 30th anniversary with a celebratory week filled with inspiring, thought-provoking and reflective conversations. It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on three decades of contributions to the built environment while setting the stage for continued growth.

If you missed the celebrations, don't worry. Recordings of the sessions are available to watch on demand.



In February and March 2025, we continue our Fire Safety webinar series, providing critical insights into fire safety and risk management. These are packed with practical knowledge, and members who can't attend live can catch up with the recordings at their convenience.

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The APS Annual Conference in September will provide an excellent platform for networking with peers



One of the standout events of the year will take place on 14 March 2025, when APS hosts a joint congress with ISHCCO (International Safety and Health Construction Coordinators Organisation) in Edinburgh. This collaborative event is free for members to attend and will provide a unique opportunity to engage with international perspectives on safety and health in construction.

Looking ahead, April will see the launch of our Spring CPD sessions, which promise to deliver expert knowledge and updates to help members stay at the forefront of the industry. Alongside this, our Building Regulations sessions will run throughout the year, offering members timely guidance on regulatory changes and best practices.

The highlight of the year will undoubtedly be our APS Annual Conference, scheduled for September.

This flagship event will bring together leading voices from the industry, share the latest developments and provide an excellent platform for networking with peers. Stay tuned for the official date and further details, which will be announced soon.

As we move into autumn, we're preparing to deliver our Autumn CPD and webinar series. These sessions will focus on key issues facing the industry and offer practical takeaways to help members navigate challenges and capitalise on opportunities.

At APS, we're committed to supporting our members through high-quality resources, expert-led sessions and meaningful opportunities for professional development.

To ensure we continue meeting your needs, we welcome your suggestions for future topics. If there's something you'd like to see covered, please email your ideas to info@aps.org.uk. We'd love to hear from you.

To find out more about all our events, visit [aps.org.uk/events](https://www.aps.org.uk/events), where new events will be added throughout the year. Whether you join us live or catch up on demand, we encourage you to make the most of everything APS has to offer in 2025.

Let's make this year one to remember with APS! ■

Find out more about what's on at www.aps.org.uk/events.

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Synergie Training specialises in the **APS Accredited Principal Designer** course which we provide as both onsite closed company courses and as public courses throughout the UK. We have successfully accredited over 2,000 individual Principal Designers with a 95% pass rate. We also provide the **APS CDM Awareness, APS Accredited CDM Client, APS Accredited CDM Principal Contractor** and the new **APS Accredited Building Safety Act & PD Building Regulations 2023 training course**.

VIRTUAL TRAINING

We are currently still running the majority of our CDM courses virtually via live trainers. These courses have been a great success having trained over 1000 delegates on our virtual APS CDM PD course.

Upcoming dates include:

10 Mar 2025	APS Accredited – CDM Client	Online	£295.00
10 - 11 Mar 2025	APS Accredited – Building Safety Act & PD Building Regulations 2023 (2 Day)	Online	£595.00
12 - 13 Mar 2025	APS Accredited – The role of the Principal Designer under CDM 2015 (2 Day)	Online	£595.00
18 - 19 Mar 2025	APS Accredited – The role of the Principal Designer under CDM 2015 (2 Day)	Nottingham	£595.00
24 Mar 2025	APS Accredited – CDM Awareness	Online	£250.00
26 - 27 Mar 2025	APS Accredited – The role of the Principal Designer under CDM 2015 (2 Day)	Online	£595.00
07 Apr 2025	CDM 2015 Overview	Online	£225.00
08 Apr 2025	APS Accredited – CDM 2015 for Principal Contractors	Online	£250.00
10 - 11 Apr 2025	APS Accredited – Building Safety Act & PD Building Regulations 2023 - (2 Days)	Birmingham	£595.00
14 - 15 Apr 2025	APS Accredited – The role of the Principal Designer under CDM 2015 (2 Day)	Online	£595.00
15 - 16 Apr 2025	APS Accredited – The role of the Principal Designer under CDM 2015 (2 Day)	Birmingham	£595.00
24 - 25 Apr 2025	APS Accredited – The role of the Principal Designer under CDM 2015 (2 Day)	Online	£595.00

Please quote **APS-MAR** for a 10% discount on any of the above public courses.

Please visit: <https://training.ttc-uk.com/construction> to view additional public course dates.

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