

project safety journal

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health, safety and wellbeing in the built environment

Autumn 2026

New standards ahead

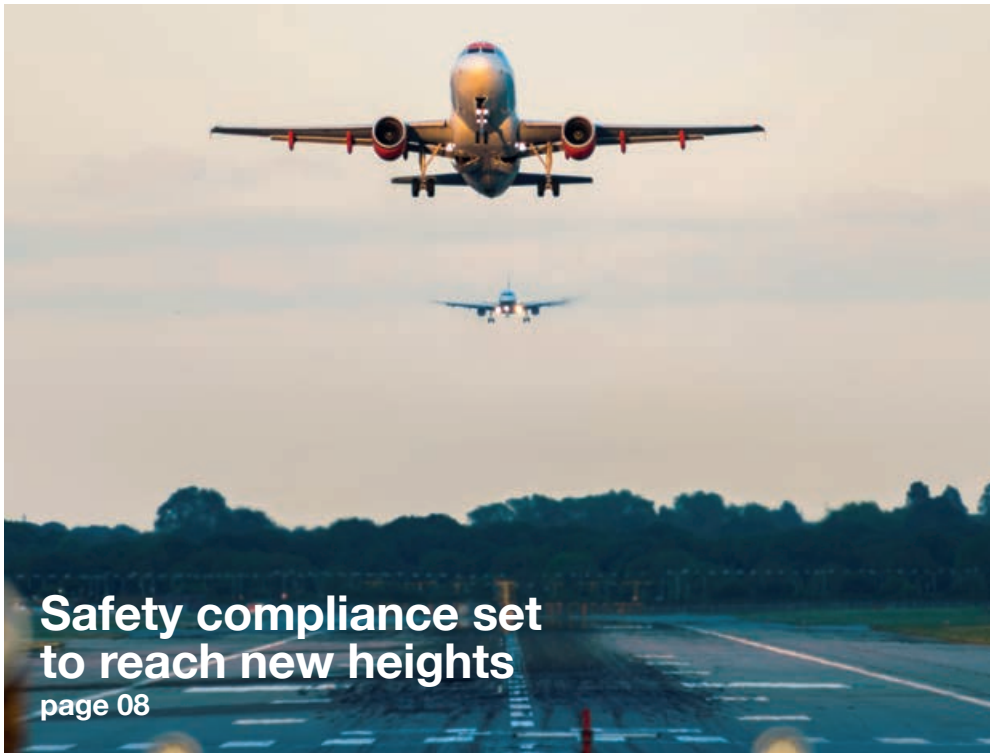
How professionals will need to
navigate the new competence
and compliance landscape



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Safety compliance set to reach new heights

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While we aim to use images that demonstrate best practice in this magazine, some are for illustrative purposes only.



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We are incredibly pleased with how this collaboration is evolving and it remains a blueprint for how we intend to work with our partners to raise industry standards



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Atom Media Partners
Project Safety Journal is published for the Association of Project Safety by Atom Media Partners.
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Telephone: +44 (0)20 7490 5595
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Printing
Printed by Precision Colour

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ISSN 2755-7855

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Welcome

Driving up competence across the sector has long been my ambition and now it feels like the time is right to see it through, says **Mark Snelling**

It is my honour in the run-up to my last APS conference to draft the welcome to *Project Safety Journal*, which will land on your desk just before our face-to-face conference titled *Beyond Compliance: When regulation is only the starting point*.

When I set out on my presidential journey with APS, my ambition and vision was short, but perhaps not simple: to drive up competence across the sector. Where to start?

APS, as my professional body, had long supported my own journey of professionalising. Becoming president-elect seemed like the ideal opportunity to do something towards my goal, while giving back to the community that had supported me over my long career.

My mission was twofold: drive thought leadership and help design practical routes and tools for our members to upskill. The two had to go hand-in-hand because you need to engage and influence the external environment to make sure that what we do within the APS confines would actually work.

And what a journey it has been so far; we've engaged with and driven external initiatives such as the Building Safety Alliance, set up the Industry Task and Finish Group to drive up organisational management of competent individuals, resulting in practical guidance, engaged with regulators across both the principal designer CDM and building



Mark Snelling
President,
Association
for Project Safety

regulations agenda, engaged with government and key stakeholders across the competence agenda and much more.

Within APS we have:

- Set up the Principal Designer Building Regulations Register, following the Post Implementation Review of CDM 2015.
- We are working on a PD CDM competence framework to give more clarity to members, clients and regulators.
- We've set up a new academy, which is dedicated specifically to support CDM practitioners with their upskilling in key areas.
- We have also provided a plethora of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) outputs.

But is all this enough to make sure that the sector becomes more competent? Is it making an impact? And are we making such a difference that we are not just meeting minimum compliance, but are achieving health and safety and building safety outcomes that are really making a difference in people's lives, now and in the future? The conference in Birmingham will explore where we can continue to step it up to keep on improving what we do, both as professionals and a professional body.

These important questions are not just being asked by us, they are being asked by government too. It's becoming very clear that the post-Grenfell drive for a more effective regime and better competence outcomes didn't finish with the government's response to the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 report. Since then, we've had the Single Construction Regulator Prospectus consultation and government's response to it, which makes it clear that "they", and therefore "we", are not nearly finished.

Yes, it's important to recognise that the competence agenda is moving from aspiration into expectation, but this is not yet consistent across the board. Organisations are stepping up their capability, and the conversation is broadening from individual



Above: This year's conference will take place in Birmingham

competence to organisational management of competence and the important role of behaviours and culture in organisations.

Government has repeatedly recognised the existing fragmentation and is currently designing a sector wide approach to regulate both professionals and organisations. We made sure to share APS's thoughts of what isn't working, and how it can work, through our response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's call for evidence on the professions strategy. Our response to the 79-question consultation was only possible because of the expertise of our expert Fellows who shared their time and insight. We hope their voice will help shape what comes next for us all.

What government is planning, we will not know in full until early 2027, but if we listen carefully, we may begin to understand the shape of the whole system change to come. Then it is up to us, members and professional body, to make it happen. One thing is for certain, APS intend to lead from the front.

Mark Snelling is the president of the Association for Project Safety.

“It's important to recognise that the competence agenda is moving from aspiration into expectation, but this is not yet consistent across the board

Construction deaths halve, but sector remains deadliest

The number of construction deaths for the past year halved, but the industry remains the most fatal sector compared to others

A total of 25 workers died in incidents between April 2025 and March 2026, down from 35 last year and 51 in 2023/24. Construction accounted for 20% of overall fatal injuries during the period, according to the figures released by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Falls from height remains the most common cause of deaths both in construction and wider industries – 11 workers died from falls for that year. This was down from 19 for the previous year and significantly below the 31 fatalities recorded in 2023/24.

Other cause of fatalities were broadly similar for the period barring deaths by being trapped by something collapsing or overturning – this was

down to two in 2025/26 compared to six for the previous year.

The rate of fatal injuries in construction, which accounts for the number of deaths per 100,000 workers, is considerably lower (1.23) than the rate in agriculture, forestry and fishing (8.09), although still higher than the all-industry average (0.37).

In all industries, a total of 126 workers were killed at work during the last reporting period in Scotland, England and Wales. The figures were 223 two decades ago (2004/05) and 495 in 1981, the HSE said.

A further 104 members of the public were killed in work-related incidents in the past year, up from 92 for 2024/25.



Number of construction deaths by cause

Accident cause	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Falls from a height	11	19	31	24
Struck by moving, including flying or falling, object	6	5	4	7
Struck by moving vehicle	3	1	6	6
Trapped by something collapsing or overturning	2	6	5	5

Call for updated heatwave protocols

Industry urged to 'respond to changing weather conditions'

Contractors are calling for industry-wide protocols to be introduced for working in heatwaves to reduce risks for site teams.

Tier 1 contractor Costain and Kori Construction said measures on PPE and risk protocols were required to manage the increasing number and length of heatwaves in the UK. The UK was hit by three heatwaves in the summer from May to July. It has been estimated that around 2,700 people died from heat in the UK in May and June.



Costain director of safety, health and environment Gavin Bye said the industry must evolve and respond to changing weather conditions. He said: "This might involve modernising PPE standards and material technology to ensure thermal comfort in different extreme weather conditions without compromising safety."

Bye added that a greater adoption of modern methods of construction with offsite manufacturing would "minimise workers' direct exposure to heat on site while improving delivery efficiency".

Richard Ball, health and safety, environmental and quality director at Kori Construction said there needed to be set industry protocols such as "controls and risk assessments" when the workplace temperature reached a certain threshold. He said current Health and Safety Executive language on work conditions needing to be comfortable was not clear enough.

This comes as there are increasing calls for maximum temperatures for working to be set in the UK. Green MP Hannah Spencer put forward a parliamentary motion to that effect in July, which was backed by London mayor Sadiq Khan.

Obituary: Fraser Cook



APS member and fellow Fraser Cook passed away aged 77 in spring. Fraser founded CDM (Scotland) Ltd, with the support of his wife, Kath, in 1995 delivering CDM services throughout the UK. The Ayr-based firm built an excellent reputation and

became the first independent UK CDM consultancy to achieve Investors In People accreditation.

Fraser was elected to the Committee for the West of Scotland Branch of the in 2002 and was also part of the APS National Design Working Group which prepared Designer Guidance for the revised CDM Regulations, and the National Guidance Procedures Working Group covering the full Guidance Documents for the new CDM Co-ordinator role under CDM 2007.

Fraser was the consummate professional and a very generous and caring employer, but first and foremost he was a true gentleman who cared very much for family, friends and colleagues alike.

Read the longer version of this obituary at aps.org.uk/news



Above: Building Safety Regulator (BSR) chair Andy Roe

Contractors set to come under greater scrutiny

The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) will be closely scrutinising how contractors manage their supply chains on major projects as they move from Gateway 2 approval to Gateway 3 completion.

BSR chair Andy Roe said the control of subcontractors was crucial for the quality of delivery to match design.

In a press briefing, Roe said the body was keen to avoid delays in the build phase of the gateway process.

"We are going to be looking very very closely at how you manage your subcontractors and the level of quality in that build process," he said.

Roe said the general standards of design going through Gateway 2 were good, although there was a lack of a consistent approach by design team in aspects such as design, fire and ventilation. He added that a proposed single construction regulator could address some of these historic issues and poor practices by closely scrutinising professional competence across a range of industry roles.

In the briefing, the regulator reported higher Gateway 2 approval rates and shorter determination periods and praised the industry for its engagement and commitment to the process.

Roe said the body was already in "very close conversations" with government on the ambition of new prime minister Andy Burnham to significantly increase council housebuilding. Angela Rayner returned to her previous job as housing secretary in the cabinet reshuffle following Burnham taking up his new post on Monday. She replaces Steve Reed as secretary of state for housing, communities and local government.

Roe added that any increase in council housing work would need to be procured very differently to previous council housing expansions given the lack of in-house resources in local authorities.

In the dock

Recent prosecutions for health and safety breaches

Director sentenced after apprentice death

A property management company has been fined and its director given a suspended sentence after a teenage apprentice was killed while working on a property in North Wales.



Chloe Bidwell (above), 18, was working as an apprentice joiner for Varcity Living at the residential site in Bangor in late December 2023. She died after a stack of wooden board material fell on her.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching two sections of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay £10,080 in costs at Llandudno Magistrates' Court.

David Horrocks, of Felinheli, pleaded guilty to another section of the Act and was sentenced to 26 weeks' imprisonment, suspended for two years, and ordered to pay £7,886 in costs.

Bidwell was working alone at the time of the incident – it is believed she was trying to retrieve a plywood board from a stack of 28 that were left unsecured against a wall. Some of the boards fell on her, causing fatal injuries.

An investigation by the HSE found that no attempt had been made to secure the boards in their upright position, and the risk of them falling had not been identified.

The HSE probe found that Varcity Living failed to provide safe systems of work and to provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision, so far as was reasonably practicable.

Bidwell's mother, Clare Stephenson-Brown, speaking on behalf of the family, described her daughter as "full of life, energy and determination".

Cement firmed fined £1m following crush

A cement company repeatedly exposed dangerous machinery parts that led to the death of one of its workers.

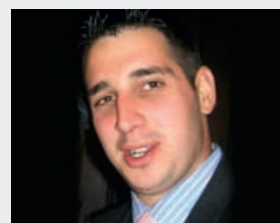
Dragon Alfa Cement was fined £1m after Martin Bennett (below), 35, was crushed to death by a 1.6-tonne concrete weight used to raise pallets full of 25kg bags of cement.

He was working at its Gloucestershire cement bagging facility when the incident took place on 4 August 2021.

An investigation by the HSE found that a large section of the equipment's perimeter fencing had routinely been removed over a prolonged period. This allowed full access into the dangerous parts of the machinery, including moving parts that presented a risk of serious injury or death.

Dragon Alfa Cement pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. It was fined £1m and ordered to pay £9,621 in costs at Bristol Magistrates' Court on 21 July.

HSE inspector Oliver Guiver said the incident should never have happened. "The company repeatedly failed to ensure dangerous parts of this machinery were properly guarded, despite suitable safeguards being available. Had those measures been in place, Martin would not have died."



In a victim personal statement, Martin's wife, Layla, said: "He was kind, I mean right down to the very bones of him kind, he would always put himself last even if you didn't want him to."

Worker killed in scissor lift fall

A Scottish-based specialist contractor has been fined nearly £54,000 after a worker died falling from a scissor lift.

Steven Tervit was working at a specialist technology centre in Renfrew on 9 November 2022 when the incident happened.

He was removing wall panels from a cleanroom at the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS) at Westway Business Park at a height of around 4m when the remaining panels fell and struck the platform. Tervit was thrown from the lift onto the concrete floor of the warehouse, suffered traumatic brain injury and died in hospital the following day.

The 32-year-old was employed as a labourer by Food Process Engineering, which was subcontracted to remove the panels.

An investigation by HSE found that the company's risk assessment and method statement did not adequately address the risk of unplanned collapse due to structural instability. The wall panels, once the roof had been removed, had insufficient lateral support to maintain their structural stability.

Although the company's own method statement specified that 'A-frame' props or supports should be installed where necessary, no such props were present or in use on site at the time of the accident.

Food Process Engineering was fined £50,000 with a victim surcharge of £3,750 at Paisley Sheriff Court.

Safety first: paving the way for ↑ compliance ↑

As government regulations and standards tighten, ensuring construction professionals are properly certified will only further enhance standards across the entire UK sector, says **Phil Clark**

Compliance and ongoing validation of your professional credentials is now becoming a reality for those working in the construction industry. The response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy, which exposed deep flaws in how the industry operated and was policed, has been widespread and far-reaching.

Since 2017, when the fire took place killing 72, the industry has faced both a landmark public inquiry and a review (overseen by Dame Judith Hackitt) as well as ongoing legislative change, most notably through the Building Safety Act of 2022, and subsequent changes to the Building Regulations 2010, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.

"This is a huge reset for the construction industry," said Building Safety Regulator (BSR) chair Andy Roe, as he described the ongoing regulatory reform agenda at a press briefing in July. "We will look back at this in 20-30 years as a very significant moment," he added, referring to how such changes to how standards are upheld and enforced in the sector would, in his view, improve the overall reputation of construction and the quality of the built environment.

The current wave of reform in the industry has started to impact on specific professionals, notably with the creation of the principal contractor and the principal designer roles that emerged from the Building Safety Act as well as tighter regulation being introduced specifically for those working in building control and for fire safety and engineering. The former now have a new registered title in England and Wales overseen by the BSR and, in less than two years, will face their first mandatory four-year revalidation cycle.

And last year, the British Standard Institution (BSI) published a new competency framework for fire risk assessors to undergo based on three levels of fire risk profiles from low, moderate or high fire risk.

In late 2025, the Fire Engineers Advisory Panel, a body set up by

the government earlier that year, recommended that a new protected title is introduced for fire engineers to ensure that fire safety strategies are "developed by individuals who meet recognised education, ethical and competency requirements".

The expectation is that further professions across the industry – particularly those in safety-critical roles or with key safety responsibilities – will face similar tightening of regulation. It is anticipated for some roles that this may include externally verified registration and revalidation.

Significant proposals

The government is planning wider reform of regulations for the profession alongside the formation of a single construction regulator. This was a key recommendation from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and, last December, the government published the prospectus for this new body, which hints at plans for tighter controls on competence. The aim is to reduce the fragmentation of the construction sector's regulation and, more widely, to promote cultural change.

A recent report from the Industry Safety Steering Group (ISSG), an independent body formed to scrutinise changes to the industry to make it a "safer and more trusted sector", summed up the significance of the proposed regulator. "Establishing a dedicated regulator for building safety lays the groundwork for an integrated system and will further enable the cultural and systemic reforms recommended by the Inquiry," the report said.

In June, the government asked regulator Architects Registration Board (ARB) to lead an industry taskforce that will inform future policy options for the new wider regulator.

In a letter to ARB, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) said this exercise should assess "the level of life safety, economic, social and environmental risk to the public from professional activity across the building lifecycle. This should ►

72

When the fire took place killing 72, the industry has faced both a landmark public inquiry and a review

“Establishing a dedicated regulator for building safety lays the groundwork for an integrated system

Timeline 2017-2026

Key events in the past decade driving compliance for built environment professions

14 June 2017

Grenfell Tower Fire: the tragedy exposes systemic failures across design, construction oversight, product testing and supply chain accountability.

May 2018

The Hackitt Review: Dame Judith Hackitt publishes her landmark independent review. She condemns the construction industry's "race to the bottom" and calls for a mandatory framework to ensure dutyholders are demonstrably competent.

28 April 2022

Building Safety Act (BSA) 2022: the BSA becomes law, establishing the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) and creating new criminal liabilities for failing to comply.

2022/2023

The PAS Frameworks published: BSI publishes PAS 8671 (Principal Designers), PAS 8672 (Principal Contractors), and PAS 8673 (Residential Building Safety Managers).

October 2023

Regulations under the BSA come into force. Clients face a legal duty to appoint only competent principal designers and principal contractors. The Gateway System for higher-risk buildings (HRBs) goes live.

6 April 2024

Building Control registration: Private inspectors and local authority inspectors must register with the BSR.

2024/2025

The Gateway 2 backlog: the initial implementation faces friction. Gateway 2 pre-construction sign-offs experience significant delays, and early Building Assessment Certificates (BACs) show high refusal rates as the BSR rejects duty holder applications that lack robust evidence of real-world competence.

27 January 2026

BSR becomes independent: the Building Safety Regulator transitions out from under the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to become a standalone body sponsored directly by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG).

Mid-2026

Consolidation plan for a single construction regulator: government responds to consultations on establishing a single construction regulator, designed to unify oversight across buildings, construction products, and duty holder competence registers into one centralised authority.

consider risk to both individual buildings as well as systemic risk”.

ARB chief executive Hugh Simpson told industry title *Building Design*: “Our view is that if you’re going to look at systemic problems, it’s quite hard to see how you could [do that] without looking at functions in law, and not just related to architects, but all professions working in the built environment.”

This taskforce would look to identify the key high-risk functions in the built environment that would face future regulatory interventions and will include experts from trade bodies, including the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE), RIBA,

Below: Pilots face rigorous checks by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)



the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the BSR. This is part of a wider “professions” strategy being formed by the government, which is due to be announced next spring.

In many respects, the industry has been an outlier in not facing independent scrutiny. Regulation and revalidation are well established for a host of other professionals, from doctors to airline pilots, security guards to accountants (see box below comparing other professional regimes). Revalidation is the periodic process by which licensed or registered professionals such as doctors formally demonstrate their ongoing competence, up-to-date knowledge, and fitness to practice in order to renew their legal authority to work.

While some were set up decades ago for doctors and security professionals, the move to a tighter regime was more recent. In medicine, self-regulation was replaced with professional regulation earlier this century and the General Medical Council (GMC) introduced revalidation for doctors in 2012. Security professionals now face enhanced scrutiny from a government-appointed body in a system brought in last year.

In construction, there is a likelihood that models for revalidation will

blend the two - requiring submission of documented portfolio evidence including of recent projects and relevant CPD that demonstrate that the person still meets the SKEB of the relevant standard, along with a possibly professional interview, every five years.

Revalidation is expected under current competence assessment schemes, including those offered by APS, who are currently designing their revalidation process. This will not be a full re-assessment, but rather a proportionate approach building on CPD, portfolio evidence and a possible interview.

Firstly, portfolio and reflection. Professionals are expected to undertake training, quality improvement activity as well as feedback from both patients (or users of their services) and colleagues. For example, if a doctor receives a complaint or if they have been involved in a significant event, they need to actively reflect on this. These activities need to be recorded and form part of an appraisal process.

Secondly, practical testing. This is a more hands-on process that relies on a professional attending an independent facility every few years to physically prove they still possess the technical capability to safely handle

Competence regimes for other professions: what regulations and revalidation processes do other professions face?

Profession/regulator	Licensing system	Introduced in	Why it happened	Frequency	What the check requires
Medicine (General Medical Council – GMC)	Medical revalidation (to hold a licence to practice)	2012	High-profile clinical failures such as the Bristol Heart scandal and the GP Harold Shipman case. The landmark 2005 Shipman Inquiry highlighted that “lifetime registration” with zero ongoing checks was a major risk to public safety.	Every 5 years	Annual appraisals featuring a portfolio of evidence: continuous professional development (CPD), quality improvement activities, feedback from patients and colleagues (multisource feedback) and a reflection on complaints or adverse events.
Law (Solicitors) (Solicitors Regulation Authority – SRA)	Annual practising certificate (PC)	Annual renewal (modernised competence regime introduced in 2016)	The Legal Services Act 2007 demanded greater public accountability. In 2016, the SRA scrapped “ticking a box” for 16 hours of CPD in favour of a rigorous, reflective “Continuing Competence” framework to ensure lawyers remain fit to practice.	Every year	Rather than counting hours, solicitors must declare annually that they have reflected on their practice, identified their learning needs, addressed them and can prove they remain competent in line with the SRA’s Statement of Solicitor Competence.
Accountancy (Chartered) (eg ICAEW)	Practising certificate (for those offering services to the public)	Annual renewal (with continuous updates over decades)	The financial crashes of the late 1990s/early 2000s (eg Enron, WorldCom) and the 2008 financial crisis. These events spotlighted the catastrophic risk of outdated technical knowledge and poor ethical compliance.	Every year	Accountants must confirm they hold adequate Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII), complete a set amount of relevant CPD (often around 30-40 hours annually, including mandatory ethics training), and face periodic, randomised practice reviews and quality.
Private security (Security Industry Authority – SIA)	SIA licence	Enhanced rules came into force April 2025	Escalating public safety threats and lack of preparedness for terrorism incidents (eg the Manchester Arena Inquiry), which led to Martyn’s Law that came into force in 2025, which was part of a push to professionalise frontline security.	Every 3 years	Prior to their three-year renewal, guards must pass a practical, assessed refresher course covering first aid, terrorism awareness and physical conflict resolution.
Aviation (Civil Aviation Authority – CAA)	Rolling validity (ratings last 1-5 years depending on type)	Ongoing and regularly updated	Historically high accident rates in early commercial flights. The industry realised human error, “skills fade” and medical incidents were the primary causes of crashes.	Ongoing	Pilots face rigorous practical “checkrides” in a flight simulator twice a year, alongside annual line-checks and strict periodic medical examinations.

“The real challenge for clients, consultants and contractors is building collaborations where competence, culture and accountability are embedded throughout every stage of a project

high-risk tasks and is in systems that regulate professions such as airline pilots.

In construction, there is a likelihood that models for revalidation will blend the two – requiring both documented portfolio evidence of recent projects (CPD/SKEB) and formal, independent third-party assessments every 3-5 years. This is the case for the principal designer and principal contractor roles overseen by the Building Regulations Act 2010 (amended in 2023).

A key aspect to any regime is the idea of proportionality – designing a framework that reflects the risk profile of the task that a professional is carrying out as well as to avoid overburdening professionals who typically have a high volume of work with excessive added bureaucracy. This is a particularly relevant issue for the government to juggle given its stated aim to increase construction of infrastructure and new housing to support wider economic growth.

A relevant example of proportionality is the competence framework for fire risk assessors launched last August under BS8674. Under this, buildings are now classified as low, moderate or high fire risk and each category is directly tied to the level of competency required such as foundation, intermediate, or advanced. The principle is clear – the complexity of a building should match the competence of the assessed.

Industry step change

Unsurprisingly, given the serious repercussions for professionals who do not meet the standards or face charges of misconduct/being struck off from a register, these systems are never always straightforward to administer. Revalidation in medicine has been subject to two more reviews in 2017 and 2018 since it was introduced, and the doctor's union the British Medical Association (BMA) last year called for a new body to replace the GMC, which would “protects



patients, treats doctors fairly”, and “puts them [doctors] at the heart of its decision-making”. Medicine is also a field where having robust checks and balances for professionals to undertake has become challenging during periods of increased demand for those practitioners such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

The pathway for future mandated competence assessments and registers is one supported by APS, which they see as part of a wider industry step change in improving safety culture and practices. The theme of its upcoming conference in September is Beyond Compliance, and the APS chief executive argues that legal requirements set minimum standards and do not tackle wider safety issues.

“The real challenge for clients, consultants and contractors is building collaborations where competence, culture and accountability are embedded throughout every stage of a project,” the chief executive said, adding that successful projects are “rarely those that simply tick compliance boxes”. “They are the projects where information is shared effectively, responsibilities are clearly understood and teams work together to achieve safe, high-quality outcomes.”

With this shared philosophy, combining the more structured approach of competence frameworks and registration schemes with behavioural and cultural change will create rewards for those professionals that embrace and engage with the drive for improving professionalism.

As the ISSG report concluded: “We envision a future defined by a more skilled and productive workforce, creating sustained economic growth.” ■

Above: In medicine, the General Medical Council (GMC) introduced revalidation for doctors in 2012

Future steps

How the regulatory landscape is expected to evolve and develop in the coming months

30 September 2026

The second staircase requirement becomes mandatory for new building regulations applications for in-scope residential buildings over 18m.

October 2026

The Building Safety Levy is scheduled to take effect, a charge on new residential development in England to help fund cladding remediation.

Spring 2027

Government due to launch its “professions” strategy, which will encompass new regulatory regime for construction professions

2027

Statutory five-year review of the Building Safety Act. The government is legally required to conduct a formal five-year review of the BSA. This review is expected to tighten competence requirements further and evaluate expanding the HRB definition to include smaller multi-occupancy buildings, care homes and schools.

30 March 2028

End of construction grace periods: All legacy projects approved prior to autumn 2026 must be “sufficiently progressed” or lose their transitional building regulations status, bringing every active site under full BSR regime enforcement.

2028-2030

The first major revalidation wave”. Professionals who joined competence registers under PAS 8671/8672 between 2023 and 2025 will hit their three-to-five-year reassessment cycles. Dutyholders will undergo their first mandatory revalidation audits to keep their practice licenses active.

‘It’s a passion I’ve got for construction’

Recently appointed to the APS board, Stewart McArthur of Bureau Veritas tells **Phil Clark** how his experiences in the built environment eventually led him to safety and how he hopes to represent Scottish members

Stewart McArthur was drawn to safety even prior to joining the construction sector as a teenager in the 1980s. He had a short stint in catering and was already noticing “they’re not the best at doing fire design” in the hotel he was working in before he decided to switch his career from the kitchen to the building site.

Construction has become a lifelong pursuit for McArthur and he retains his love for working in the building industry decades on from starting as a site manager. “I think it’s a passion I’ve got for construction. I love it,” he says, adding: “I don’t think I’ll ever retire from the built environment – there’ll always be something there for me to do.”

The 63-year-old is drawing on a varied career working in the industry for his new role as director at the APS. McArthur took up his post in February; he was appointed a board member at the same time as Stefan Mordue. He joined APS relatively recently as a member in 2023, initially drawn in by the CPD the association offers, which he describes as “really great”.

McArthur is brimming with positivity and ambition for the body as both a positive force for members

but also increasing its influence across the wider industry. “It’s a body that can show a lot of leadership and take things forward in a positive manner,” he says. “I think APS has got so much potential.”

McArthur’s early instinct for safety led his boss to suggest he become a building control officer. This was down to his communication skills, his close understanding of legislation and that “I was good at communicating this legislation to people in terms that they understood”. He worked in building control departments in Dumfries and Galloway and West Lothian before moving to roles that ranged from contracts management, certifying building guarantees for an insurance company and his current role as regional manager at consultancy giant Bureau Veritas.

Invaluable experience

Safety is given much more serious consideration in the industry now compared with the start of his career.

“It’s much more front of mind in the industry... it’s a lot, lot different from 40 years ago, where I think we value our people more now,” he says. In the 1980s, safety “wasn’t given much thought”, and McArthur points to early experiences of witnessing poor practice on sites as an indicator of carelessness and poor planning.

“I remember going to a site once and seeing one of the local labourers standing underneath a crane that was straight above his head with stuff falling out of it. No helmet, no high vis, no strategy.”

This contrasts with much greater care given and controls for those working on or visiting sites now such as requirements for PPE and risk and

Right: Stewart McArthur is an independent construction assessor at Bureau Veritas

also the emphasis on designers to consider project safety as an integral part of design, McArthur adds.

McArthur also points to an accident that occurred when he was a site manager, where a joiner fell from a scaffolding that he had set up himself and was not tied onto anything. The worker broke his hip in the incident and “I don’t think he ever went back [to work]”. “That reinforced my belief that you need to be safety aware,” McArthur says. “I think things like that do echo in the back of your head.”

McArthur believes his mix of site and office experience has been invaluable in understanding the daily challenges of working on sites and to inform how best to integrate and prioritise safety. He worked as a contracts manager in the social housing sector, which was “an eye-opener”. “I’ve never got my feet so wet in my life on that job,” he jokes, and points to preparation and proper planning as being crucial for good site practices. “It brought into emphasis the health and safety elements of what your scope of work is before you start on site,” he says.

Patience is a virtue

A key safety principle for McArthur is carving out time prior to entering a site. He cites a “golden rule” of his current employer Bureau Veritas is to devote two minutes “to review what’s there, and if you can say it’s not safe, you don’t go in”. This approach of standing back and taking on board the site environment is “something that’s always pertinent for people that work in construction”. “I think we will move to a better, safer industry... if we take that two minutes... and don’t rush ►

“I think we will move to a better, safer industry... if we take that two minutes... and don’t rush on to site. If you’re running late, you can phone the person and say ‘Look, I’m going to be two minutes late’





on to site. If you're running late, you can phone the person and say, 'Look, I'm going to be two minutes late'."

McArthur is originally from the Western Isles (he moved to the mainland at age 17) and has spent his entire career working north of the border, so will bring that experience and perspective to the APS. "I'm here as a conduit for any of our APS members in Scotland to take items to the board if they wish to do it. I will represent them as best I can."

He sees the different safety regimes across the UK as to an extent natural given their different environments such as varied weather conditions and building and material types that are used in different countries. "The push for high-rise development in Scotland is minimal compared to what's happening down south. In Scotland, we do a lot more timber frame construction, which means the evolution of that is going forward," he says, but adds that there is a broad direction of travel UK-wide. "They're [different UK territories] all evolving at different times, they're all looking at different aspects, but they're coming around to similar measures."

McArthur can also draw from extensive experience working for and

representing other industry bodies such as Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE), the Construction Industry Council (CIC), the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and he sees an opportunity for such groups to work together. "I think APS is great at bringing in the other professional bodies to look at what they're doing and to work in tandem with it," he says.

He identifies key challenges facing safety professionals, including fire prevention, citing the most recent tragedies and incidents such as Grenfell and the more recent and closer to home fire at Glasgow Central Station in March. "It's becoming a much more sensitive issue," he says, and adds that changes in technology – from EV vehicles to robotics and AI – will also change the face of construction sites and professionals will need to try and anticipate "future changes, problems and new risks".

But McArthur warns against overburdening the sector with more change. "I think the industry needs to take stock first and activate the measures that they've got in place. Once they've activated these, they can then look to anything required in the future," he says.

Above: Stewart McArthur believes the recent incident at Glasgow Central Station emphasises the challenges facing safety professionals

“I’m here as a conduit for any of our APS members in Scotland to take items to the board if they wish to do it. I will represent them as best I can

McArthur says he is still learning despite nearing the end of his full-time career. "Every day is a school day, no matter what anyone says," he says and adds that this ongoing education is from all experiences in the industry. One example is his interactions with Fran Watkins-White's CDM team at Bureau Veritas, who have widened his understanding of health and safety. "I'm still learning day by day and it's not just from the fully qualified people. It's from some of the youngsters – some of their ideas are actually more pertinent to what we do than someone that's been working in business for 40 or 50 years," he says. He sees this blend of experience and fresh ideas and perspectives and communication across the industry as critical to overcoming future challenges in safety practices and cultures. ■



CV: Stewart McArthur

Industry role:

● Bureau Veritas – regional manager for Scotland and the north, 2022-present

● Q Assure Build – risk surveyor and regional manager, 2018-2022

● Zurich Insurance Group – site surveyor

Industry bodies:

● Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE), former president

● CIC Scotland, member and vice chair

● RICS building control/standards professional group, chair



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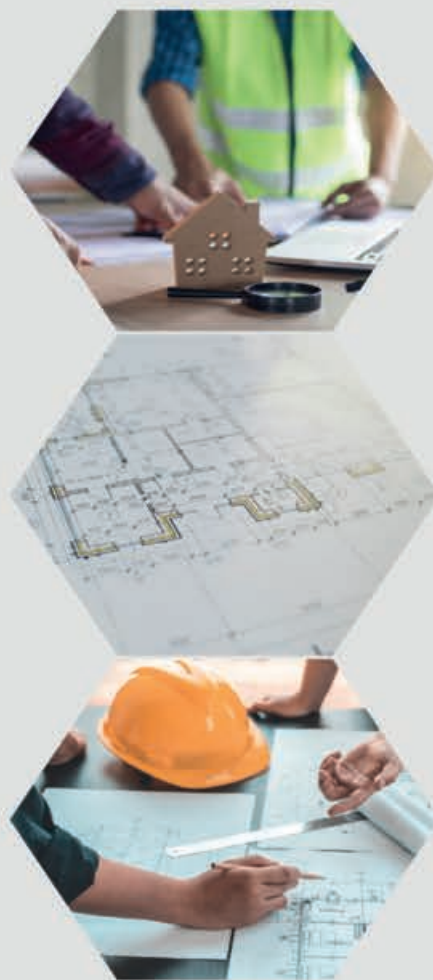
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SSE and Balfour Beatty join forces to close safety gap

Client SSE is championing an integrated approach to how it works with supply chain partners such as Tier 1 contractor Balfour Beatty to help reshape safety culture on high-pressured and high-risk infrastructure projects. This case study looks at how reframing the client/contractor relationship can encourage behavioural change and continuous improvement in individual and team practices

Left: Training offered SSE employees a realistic environment in which they could discuss how decisions are made under pressure

It is a scenario every site manager recognises. A project is behind schedule, a crucial piece of paperwork has not been signed off, and the pressure to move forward is quietly mounting. In the high-risk world of power transmission and distribution, these moments matter. Teams are working every day in environments with fatal risks that affect day-to-day operations, live electricity, utility avoidance, working at height, lifting operations, excavations, people and plant interface, stored energy and driving. Procedures and processes are in place to keep people safe, however, as Balfour Beatty's head of health, safety and wellbeing assurance, Graham Boyd, puts it: "Human factors remain the biggest challenge."

Across the electricity sector, those day-to-day pressure points are where safety culture is most exposed. They are also where the relationship between client and contractor can determine the outcome. Instead of reinforcing compliance alone, one of the UK's leading electricity companies, SSE, is taking a more collaborative approach with its partners, moving towards what Balfour Beatty describes as "shared responsibility" for health, safety and wellbeing.

This case study explores how that approach is playing out on major UK energy projects and why it is strengthening culture on both sides of the relationship.

A partnership built over decades

The relationship between SSE and Balfour Beatty dates back more than 100 years to when Balfour Beatty constructed the Rannoch Power Station for the Grampian Electricity Supply Company, which later became part of the SSE Renewables portfolio. Today, the partnership spans overhead lines, cabling and substation works across the UK, involving specialist engineering teams operating in some of the sector's most challenging environments.

While Balfour Beatty has a mature internal health, safety and wellbeing management system, the company highlights SSE's role as an "informed and engaged client" that strengthens operational discipline and encourages open dialogue. This is not positioned as a client exerting pressure. It is the opposite – a client willing to challenge constructively, set clear expectations and engage consistently with teams on the ground.

Moving from compliance to collaboration

A recurring theme in this partnership experience is the value of SSE's clear and consistent SHE specifications. Rather than creating additional administrative burden, the specifications provide clarity around expectations and promote earlier planning and risk elimination. According to Balfour Beatty, SSE "raises the bar"



Graham Boyd
Head of health, safety and wellbeing assurance, Balfour Beatty



Mark Patterson
Group SHE Director, SSE

“The result is ‘excellent’ engagement between the two organisations, with multiple working groups focused on improving health, safety and wellbeing

by aligning everyone on what good looks like before work begins.

This has created more robust conversations at project level. It has also strengthened the relationship between senior leaders. The result is "excellent" engagement between the two organisations, with multiple working groups focused on improving health, safety and wellbeing. This means the collaboration is not limited to isolated initiatives; it is built into business-as-usual delivery.

Human factors: understanding the real challenges

One of the most compelling aspects of the partnership is its emphasis on real-world pressures that sit behind procedure. Both organisations share the same mantra: "If it's not safe, we don't do it." However, even the best people make mistakes. People sometimes make the wrong safety choices that they believe at the time are for the right reasons.

Balfour Beatty's behavioural safety programme, Make Safety Personal, encourages health and safety as a value and for employees and supply chain partners to take personal responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing. The programme goal is to build a safe inclusive environment where people:

- Care for each other;
- Encourage a "speak up" mentality;
- Help everyone make safer choices;
- Support and value each other;
- Succeed together as a team; and
- Are happy and healthy.

Continual improvement and development of these programmes is key to achieving and keeping a good health and safety culture.

For example, Balfour Beatty reflects on situations explored through the immersive learning programme at SSE's Faskally Safety Leadership Centre. These scenarios included:

- Paperwork delays creating knock-on pressure;
- Poor communication over digital channels amplifying confusion; and
- Cost or schedule pressures travelling down the delivery chain.

These examples resonate with frontline teams because they mirror ►



Left: Immersive training was delivered at SSE's Faskally Safety Leadership Centre by Active Training Team (ATT)



the situations they face daily. The immersive training, delivered by Active Training Team (ATT) “gave people the skills to change the outcome,” according to Boyd, offering a realistic and relatable environment that prompts discussion about how decisions are made in moments of pressure.

A recent collaboration on continual improvement was the establishment of the Pathway to 2030 Steering Group in SSE’s transmission business. The Steering Group comprised senior managers from both SSE and its contract partner organisations (typically those acting as principal contractors on their sites), along with health safety and wellbeing professionals. The Steering Group created six working groups: Performance Matrices, Transmission Essentials, Gold Standard of Wellbeing, Plant and Pedestrian Interface, Safety By Design, and Construction Site Digitisation.

Through these groups, SSE is now collaboratively developing several SHE Specification requirements, with enhanced supervisory requirements and human form recognition on plant being some recent examples.

Collaboration in practice: the Port Ann – Crossaig example

The Port Ann – Crossaig project offers a practical illustration of collaboration shaping culture beyond policy documents and processes. Both organisations conducted regular joint site inspections and maintained open dialogue throughout delivery.

However, the initiative that stands out is the creation of a joint trainee forum, psychological safe space for trainees. Working with SSEN (Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks), Balfour Beatty supported a space where trainees could meet outside of site hours in a more relaxed setting. Shared meals created an informal environment for people to talk openly about their experiences, challenges and concerns they faced both inside and outside of work. More experienced colleagues joined as guest contributors, helping to build confidence and strengthen engagement.

This is a small, human intervention, but its impact is meaningful. It reinforces psychological safety, encourages early intervention and creates a culture where speaking up and learning from others is normalised rather than feared.

Above: Balfour Beatty believes SSE is ‘raising the bar’ by aligning everyone on what good looks like before work begins

Below: The result of the partnership is ‘excellent’ engagement between the two organisations

“We are incredibly pleased with how this collaboration is evolving and it remains a blueprint for how we intend to work with our partners to raise industry standards

**Mark Patterson,
Group SHE Director, SSE**

Wellbeing as part of safety performance

Another insight into successful collaboration is a willingness from the client to invest in wellbeing as a critical part of safety. On certain projects, SSEN allocated budget specifically for wellbeing initiatives, recognising that fatigue, stress and isolation are genuine safety risks, particularly on remote sites.

One tangible example is the installation of onsite gym facilities where local infrastructure is limited. This support is described as “making a real difference” by improving physical and mental health and reinforcing the message that people’s wellbeing genuinely matters.

The impact: a more consistent and people-focused approach

Three areas that have seen the greatest influence through Balfour Beatty’s partnership with SSE include:

- Stronger planning and risk elimination driven by clear specifications;
- Greater openness and earlier intervention supported by visible leadership and constructive challenge; and
- A healthier, more engaged workforce through wellbeing investment and cultural initiatives.

While both organisations already had strong foundations, this partnership has provided an additional layer of assurance and accountability. Mark Patterson, Group SHE Director at SSE, says the focus on shared responsibility and collective wellbeing across clients and contractor is creating a more resilient environment that protects their people while delivering the UK’s critical energy infrastructure.

He adds: “We are incredibly pleased with how this collaboration is evolving and it remains a blueprint for how we intend to work with our partners to raise industry standards.” ■





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Lessons from the PIR: bridging the gap between intent and reality

Following May's long-awaited CDM review, **PSJ staff** examine its key findings and recommendations while unpacking the legal implications to the proposed changes, and look ahead to what happens next

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) second Post Implementation Review (PIR) of the CDM Regulations 2015 is an important moment to reflect on how CDM is working in practice in the UK construction sector. Standard statutory reviews serve to ask a simple question: did the regulations achieve their objectives, and do those objectives remain fit for purpose? And whilst the PIR concludes that the overarching principles of CDM 2015 remain sound and that the legislative framework continues to support positive health and safety outcomes, the reality experienced on the ground paints a far more nuanced picture.

For practitioners, clients and safety leaders, the review highlights systemic structural frictions. The regulatory framework is not slated for statutory amendment; instead, any realignment will rely on strengthened guidance and industry-led standards.

To navigate this landscape, we must examine where the original intentions of CDM 2015 diverged from practice and particularly around dutyholder competence, information management, client capability and the cross-over with the evolving building regulations regime.

Competence and role clarity: the core friction

A primary ambition of the 2015 reforms was deregulation with a purpose: removing the independent CDM coordinator (CDMC) role to ensure health and safety coordination was embedded directly within the active design team via the principal designer

“
For practitioners, clients and safety leaders, the review highlights systemic structural frictions

(PD). A decade on, evidence suggests this structural transition has not unfolded entirely as hoped. In practice, the PD CDM duty continues to be outsourced to external consultants in a considerable number of projects.

Simultaneously, the reduction of explicit, prescriptive legislative criteria for competence, which was intended to streamline compliance, has created some unintended consequences:

- **Lower barrier to entry:** reduced prescription has led to a dilution of competence expectations. Ill-suited individuals or entities often assume the PD CDM role without possessing the requisite safety-critical capabilities.

- **Market undercutting:** a lack of clear, statutory benchmarks enables commercial undercutting on both price and quality, placing qualified health and safety professionals at a competitive disadvantage.

- **Confusion with building regulations:** the arrival of the principal designer under the building regulations (PD BR) has compounded role confusion. The PIR re-confirmed that PD CDM and PD BR are distinct statutory functions requiring distinct competencies, yet industry practice frequently blurs the boundaries.

To mitigate these risks, industry feedback points toward formal mechanisms, such as explicit registration or licences to practice for safety-critical dutyholders. In response, the Association for Project Safety (APS) strongly supports the PIR's call for greater clarity and is proactively developing a dedicated competence framework to uphold professional standards.

The client gap and the rise of the CDM advisor

Client capability remains one of the most significant vulnerabilities highlighted by the PIR. While clients hold ultimate accountability for setting project parameters, a lack of understanding regarding their legal duties continues to hinder effective delivery. Clients frequently seek prescriptive clarity to understand exactly what compliance requires.

Where lead designers or clients struggle to fulfil or oversee these complex coordination duties, industry has stepped in to bridge the structural capability gap informally. This has given rise to the CDM advisor – a non-statutory role, often filled by former CDMCs, hired to support clients and PDs.

The informal CDM advisor role successfully plugs a critical expertise gap, yet because it lacks statutory recognition, setting consistent competence expectations across the market remains difficult.

Furthermore, principal designers themselves regularly stretch their scopes to educate and guide clients on statutory responsibilities. To address this, future guidance must clearly define pre-construction complexity and reinforce the necessity of appointing competent principal designers early in the project lifecycle. While early appointments are increasingly driven by risk-aware and repeat clients who recognise value, late appointments remain a widespread barrier to effective risk prevention.

Information management: overwhelmed, not informed

Information flow during pre-construction represents another major theme within the PIR. Despite digital advancements, construction risk management remains plagued by a paradox: projects are inundated with data, yet critical safety information is frequently lost.

Key failure points identified include:

- **Information overload:**

transmitting vast volumes of generic documentation through project management platforms without context or targeted delivery.

- **Lack of risk prioritisation:**

obscuring significant, high-consequence hazards behind low-level routine safety compliance paperwork.

The consensus among safety professionals is clear: industry must refocus on delivering the right information to the right people at the right time. Clients must take ownership of defining information requirements and systems early on. The industry is shifting toward lifecycle-based information models that dynamically integrate risk management with digital information management, so data is an active safety tool rather than a compliance exercise.

Guidance and systemic industry challenges

The PIR reinforces that the construction sector does not suffer from a scarcity of guidance; rather, it suffers from an accessibility and usability deficit. Existing guidance is often overly complex, generic, and unhelpful for non-experts or time-poor

“**Industry must refocus on delivering the right information to the right people at the right time**”

clients. Practitioners instead rely on peer dialogue, direct experience, and targeted sector-specific frameworks. If the regulations themselves are not to be revised, existing guidance must be streamlined – potentially through strengthened Approved Codes of Practice (ACOP) or practical, actionable toolkits.

These regulatory delivery issues are further exacerbated by systemic, long-term workforce challenges:

- Persistent skills shortages across technical disciplines;
- Weak diversity and inadequate talent pipelines into construction and safety roles; and
- Fragmented training pathways and uncoordinated engagement with educational institutions.

The path ahead for dutyholders

The second CDM PIR demonstrates that while the legislative foundation of CDM 2015 remains fit for purpose, its real-world execution requires rebalancing. The regulation itself will not change, meaning the burden of improvement falls squarely on guidance, professional standards and industry culture.

For project safety professionals, the direction is clear. We must move beyond passive compliance and focus on proving verified competence, embedding early influence, demanding clear client requirements, and driving concise, risk-focused information management across the entire project lifecycle. ■



CPD: The potential of solar PV in social housing

Rooftop renewables are no longer just about net zero, but compliance too. **Simon Berry** explains the regulations and legislation governing solar PV installations in social housing

Solar photovoltaic (PV) systems have moved rapidly from niche technology to mainstream building infrastructure. Once associated mainly with eco-homes and demonstration projects, PV is now appearing across local authority housing stock, retirement schemes, extra care developments and large-scale housing association portfolios.

For providers operating in the social housing sector, the drivers are clear: decarbonisation targets, tenant affordability pressures, improved EPC ratings, funding incentives and the need for long-term asset resilience.

However, as adoption accelerates, a more difficult question is emerging. Are housing providers treating PV systems as strategic building assets with defined lifecycle responsibilities, or as bolt-on technologies installed to meet short-term sustainability ambitions?

In today's regulatory environment, poor oversight of electrical systems is no longer simply a technical failure. Increasingly, it is viewed as a governance failure, with reputational and financial consequences that can extend far beyond the roof itself.

From specialist technology to housing infrastructure

Photovoltaics began life in the mid-20th century, originally developed for satellites and specialist scientific applications. Early systems were expensive and inefficient, but steady advances in silicon cell design, manufacturing scale and global supply chains led to a dramatic fall in cost per kilowatt. Over time, PV moved from experimental deployment to widespread commercial use.

The UK was relatively slow to adopt compared with sunnier European nations, but policy mechanisms such as the Feed-in Tariff (FiT), operating between 2010 and 2019, sparked mass installation across domestic and social housing rooftops.

FiT was later replaced by the Smart Export Guarantee (SEG), reflecting a transition away from subsidy-driven expansion and towards self-consumption and export-based incentives. By the early 2020s, solar had become one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation available.

Today, PV is no longer an "alternative" technology. It is infrastructure. Increasingly, it is

“Increasingly, PV is being installed on buildings that house society's most vulnerable residents, where safety, reliability and compliance are paramount

Right: Solar PV is used widely in social housing

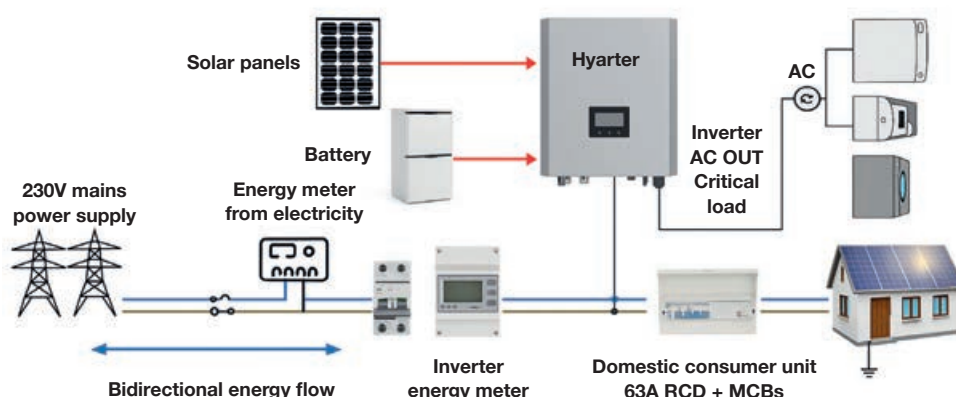
Below: Hybrid solar systems in UK housing typically combine PV panels, a hybrid inverter and battery storage

being installed on buildings that house society's most vulnerable residents, where safety, reliability and compliance are paramount.

PV systems are no longer just panels

The technical landscape has also evolved rapidly. In the social housing context, a "solar installation" may now involve far more than roof-mounted modules. Hybrid systems increasingly combine PV panels with hybrid inverters and battery energy storage systems (BESS), alongside export limitation schemes, monitoring platforms and, in some cases, backup supply configurations.

This matters because PV is no longer simply rooftop generation. It is embedded electrical infrastructure, integrated into building services and distribution networks, introducing additional risks and responsibilities. Hybrid systems can improve tenant affordability and resilience, but they also bring new considerations around fire safety, electrical isolation, ventilation, grid compliance and long-term maintenance, asset management data and associated additional replacement costs.



Compliance: mandatory duties and practical benchmarks

One of the most misunderstood areas in housing is the distinction between legal duties and industry standards that become enforceable through contract, insurer expectation, or regulatory scrutiny. For PV and BESS systems, mandatory duties include the requirement to maintain electrical systems safely under the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. This duty is mandatory: electrical systems must be constructed and maintained so as to prevent danger.

Similarly, roof access and inspection activities fall under the ►



“ Good records are no longer ‘nice to have’, they are governance evidence. A PV installation without traceable documentation is not simply untidy. It’s a compliance vulnerability

Below: The roof and the PV system should be seen as one combined engineered asset

Work at Height Regulations 2005, also mandatory, requiring safe planning, competent personnel, and appropriate equipment. Note that the most expensive part of solar PV installation isn’t the panel – it’s the scaffold access.

Fire safety obligations arise under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 for common parts and non-domestic areas, where PV-associated equipment may form part of the fire risk assessment landscape.

Grid compliance is also fundamental. Connection of generation equipment to the distribution network must be notified and approved under ENA Engineering Recommendations G98 and G99. These requirements are often overlooked in legacy installations or during later system alterations, but non-compliance can, in principle, lead to

disconnection or enforcement action.

Alongside these legal duties sit the benchmarks that competent contractors, insurers and building control bodies will expect. BS 7671 (the IET Wiring Regulations) remains central to safe installation and inspection. BS EN 62446 is an advisory standard that provides structured frameworks for commissioning, documentation, inspection and periodic testing of PV systems.

The IET Codes of Practice for grid-connected solar PV and electrical energy storage systems provide practical guidance on safe operation and maintenance regimes. PAS 63100:2024 offers best-practice guidance on fire protection for domestic battery storage, while MCS standards such as MIS 3002 and MIS 3012 increasingly form contractual baselines for installation quality and handover documentation.





Above: Old roofs may be unsuitable for PV installation

In practice, these standards are not academic. They form the basis of what a housing provider may need to evidence in the event of an incident, audit, insurer query or regulatory engagement.

Documentation, monitoring and the 'golden thread' mindset

Housing providers are now asking uncomfortable, but essential questions. Where are our PV systems? What roofs are they installed on? Where are the commissioning certificates? Who maintains the inverters? Do we have emergency isolation information? Could we demonstrate compliance evidence quickly if challenged?

This is where PV intersects with the emerging "golden thread" principle: the duty to maintain accurate, accessible, up-to-date building safety information. While golden thread duties apply directly to higher-risk buildings under the Building Safety Act 2022, the direction of travel is clear. Good records are no longer "nice to have", they are governance evidence.

A PV installation without traceable documentation is not simply untidy. It is a compliance vulnerability.

Asset management: the roof is the system

For social landlords, one of the greatest risks with rooftop solar is not technological failure, but asset misalignment. PV panels are typically marketed as 25-year

assets, with long-term performance warranties. Inverters may last 10-15 years. Battery systems often require replacement or significant intervention within similar timescales.

But the roof beneath them may tell a different story. Many providers installed PV rapidly during the FIT era, often on buildings with ageing roof coverings, limited remaining waterproofing life, unclear refurbishment plans and incomplete as-built documentation. This creates an extremely common scenario: the PV array has 12 years of life remaining, but the roof beneath it needs replacement now.

At that point, solar becomes less of an energy project and more of an access and lifecycle cost problem. Scaffolding, edge protection, temporary works and resident safety controls routinely outweigh the cost of the PV modules themselves.

The correct asset management mindset is therefore that the roof and the PV system are one combined engineered asset. Planned separately, providers risk premature replacement of one component, wasted access costs, repeated scaffold mobilisation, disruption to residents, and increased compliance exposure.

Lifecycle alignment is one of the simplest interventions that can save millions. Asset teams should be asking: what was the age of the roof at the time of PV installation? What is the remaining service life? Are PV arrays integrated into roof renewal programmes?

12 A common scenario is that the PV array has 12 years of life remaining, but the roof beneath it needs replacement now

Do we have removal-and-reinstatement specifications ready? Is the system documented well enough to be safely altered?

Alterations are not neutral. Inverter replacement, adding battery storage, increasing array capacity, or changing export characteristics may trigger fresh requirements under G98/G99, updated commissioning documentation, revised fire risk assessment inputs, and renewed inspection evidence. Poorly planned lifecycle intervention can therefore create compliance breaches.

The Regulator of Social Housing: why solar now sits under governance

The most significant shift is that PV compliance is no longer only about engineering. It is about organisational control.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) oversees registered providers' performance in governance, financial viability, consumer standards, and safety compliance. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 has strengthened consumer regulation and expanded the regulator's ►

“Solar PV has enormous potential in social housing... However, with that potential comes responsibility

visibility and enforcement reach.

Regulatory judgements often reveal only the visible tip of wider governance, financial and reputational impacts.

Under Housing and Regeneration Act powers, the regulator can issue enforcement notices, impose financial penalties, require compensation, appoint new management, and publish regulatory judgements. These outcomes are not private. They are public, and they land directly in the sector's “name and shame” ecosystem.

While the RSH has not yet issued high-profile judgements solely about solar PV systems, it has taken extensive action on electrical safety compliance failures, including large backlogs of overdue EICRs and communal inspection deficits. PV systems form part of the fixed electrical installation. As hybrid systems proliferate, scrutiny will inevitably extend into this space.

A key governance risk is the impact on ratings. A provider's

hard-won G1/V1 (Governance/ Financial viability) rating is not simply a badge of honour. It underpins lender confidence, borrowing costs, insurance positioning, partnership opportunities, and sector credibility.

Regulatory downgrades can trigger higher financing costs, insurer exclusions, operational remediation burdens, and reputational damage that can take years to recover from.

Conclusion: the compliance future of net zero housing

Solar PV has enormous potential in social housing. It can reduce tenant costs, support decarbonisation, improve resilience and align with ESG expectations. However, with that potential comes responsibility.

The era of informal retrofit is closing. The era of regulated infrastructure is here. The question for housing leaders is no longer: “Can we install solar?” It is: “Can we prove we are managing it safely, competently, and transparently for the next 25 years?”

Because the regulator will not be asking about carbon. They will be asking about control. Remember that net zero is not the finish line – compliance is. ■
Simon Berry FCIOB MIFireE is technical standards and specification manager for Anchor Housing. He delivers courses on solar PV systems.

Below: Solar PV can help to reduce tenant costs



CPD questions

1) Which of the following is advisory and not mandatory?

- a) EAWR 1989 – maintain electrical systems safely
- b) Work at Height Regulations 2005 – safe roof access
- c) BS EN 62446-1 – PV inspection & test framework

2) Which legislation applies to the maintenance of electrical systems for safety?

- a) Building Safety Act 2022
- b) Electricity at Work Regulations 1989
- c) Housing and Regeneration Act 2008

3) Which engineering recommendations are fundamental for notifying and approving PV connection to the distribution network?

- a) ENA G98 and G99
- b) BS 5250 and BS EN ISO 13788
- c) PAS 63100 and MIS 3012

4) What is the PAS best practice guidance on fire protection for domestic battery storage?

- a) PAS 63100:2024
- b) PAS 9980:2022
- c) PAS 2030

5) What is a common mismatch in legacy social housing PV installations?

- a) PV panels often fail within 5 years
- b) PV arrays may outlast the roof beneath them
- c) Battery systems require replacement every 2 years

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x

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x

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Wales reforms building safety regulations

Updates to framework aimed at driving higher standards across the sector

Reforms to Wales's building control framework officially took effect on 1 July 2026. Enacted under the Building Safety Act 2022 and accompanying Welsh regulations, these updates alter how building work is designed, managed and approved. While there is a particular focus on higher-risk buildings (HRBs) the changes apply to most forms of controlled building work, including many domestic projects such as extensions, loft conversions and structural alterations.

What has changed?

The central update is the creation of a stringent oversight regime for HRBs – defined as buildings at least 18 metres or 7 storeys tall containing at least one residential unit, hospital, or care home. Key structural changes include:

- **Local authority Gateway Control:** Local authorities now act as the sole Building Control Authority for HRBs. Building cannot start until full pre-construction plan approvals are granted (with a standard 8-12 week determination period).
- **Universal dutyholder and competence rules:** Applied across all construction projects in Wales, not just HRBs, a formal dutyholder framework establishes legal obligations for clients, (principal) designers and (principal) contractors to ensure continuous compliance.
- **Golden thread and change control:** HRBs must maintain an electronic "golden thread" of information and

follow statutory change-control procedures for any design deviations.

- **Strengthened enforcement:** Local authorities hold expanded powers, including mandatory compliance notices, stop notices and extended enforcement windows.

The operational impact on safety professionals

For safety managers and construction consultants, these reforms move compliance away from end-of-project checks and place it firmly into active design and pre-construction planning.

- **Competence verification:** You must ensure and document that dutyholders (principal designers, principal contractors) meet statutory competence criteria before appointment.
- **Mandatory occurrence reporting:** Safety teams on HRB projects must establish systems to capture and report structural or fire safety risks that present potential threats to life.
- **Strict design freeze:** Commencing work without approved plans or deviating without prior formal approval is now a regulatory offense.

Transitional arrangements

To avoid disrupting existing projects, transitional provisions under Schedule 3 apply.

Projects where initial building control notifications or applications were submitted before 1 July 2026 – and where physical work has "sufficiently commenced" – can continue under



the previous building control procedures rather than transitioning to the new HRB framework.

If delayed work fails to meet the legal threshold for commencement, the project must resubmit under the new 2026 regime. ■



Dr Bryn Wilde
APS president-elect

APS commentary

The regulations represent the most significant overhaul of the Welsh building control framework in many years. They introduce clearer legal accountability, more rigorous approval and record-keeping requirements, enhanced controls for higher-risk buildings and stronger enforcement mechanisms. These are all aimed at driving higher standards across the construction sector and ensure building safety is considered from the earliest stages of project planning. The reforms are intended to strengthen accountability, improve compliance with building regulations, and enhance public safety throughout the build process.

Left: While both frameworks stem from the Building Safety Act 2022, key operational differences exist between Wales and England

Feature	Wales	England
HRB regulator	Local authorities act as the sole Building Control Authority	The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) acts as the unified authority
Scope	Includes care homes, hospitals and residential buildings (18m/7 storeys tall)	Excludes care homes/hospitals from the in-occupation safety regime
Gateway process	Pre-construction gateway approval handled directly by local councils	BSR administers a rigid three-gateway process with multi-disciplinary teams



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Looking beyond compliance at the APS annual conference

Regulators, policymakers and industry leaders will come together to explore how the industry can embed competence, accountability and positive cultural change, says **Andrew Leslie**

The construction industry has spent the past few years adapting to significant regulatory change. New dutyholder responsibilities, enhanced building control processes and increased scrutiny of competence are reshaping how projects are delivered.

Yet there is a danger that we view compliance as the destination rather than the starting point.

Meeting legal requirements is essential, but regulations alone will not create a safer built environment – they only set minimum standards. The real challenge for clients, consultants and contractors is building collaborations where competence, culture and accountability are embedded throughout every stage of a project. Whole systems change is still on the agenda.

The post-Grenfell landscape has rightly focused attention on individual and organisational competence. The introduction of new frameworks, standards and guidance has helped establish clearer expectations of what good looks like.

However, competence cannot simply be demonstrated through qualifications, memberships or CPD and training records by themselves. It must be actively managed, and be evident in decision-making, behaviours and the ability to recognise and manage risk.

Clients and employers must create environments where concerns can



be raised, challenged and addressed without fear or hesitation. In particular, effective safety and risk management considerations should drive the process, not cost constraints or “value engineering”.

The most successful projects are rarely those that simply tick compliance boxes. They are the projects where information is shared effectively, responsibilities are clearly understood and teams work together to achieve safe, high-quality outcomes.

This is particularly important as digital information management becomes increasingly central to construction. The industry is moving towards a future where information must be accurate, accessible and capable of supporting informed decisions throughout design, construction and occupation. When managed effectively, information becomes more than a regulatory requirement; it becomes a critical tool for assurance, accountability and continuous improvement.

The question construction professionals should be asking is not, “Are we compliant?” but “Are we confident that the decisions we are making today will deliver

“The future of construction safety will not be defined solely by regulations. It will be shaped by industry professionals promoting higher standards

safer outcomes tomorrow?” That shift in mindset and ambition is at the heart of this year’s APS National Conference, Beyond Compliance: When Regulation Is Only the Starting Point. Taking place on Wednesday 9 September in Birmingham, the conference will bring together regulators, policymakers and industry leaders, including Dame Judith Hackitt, and the event will explore how the sector can continue raising standards through competence, leadership and collaboration.

The future of construction safety will not be defined solely by regulations. It will be shaped by industry professionals promoting higher standards, challenging poor practice and leading positive cultural change.

Compliance remains essential. But, to deliver a safer built environment for all, we must go beyond compliance – further, faster and together as an industry. ■

Other APS Events

● APS is running an extensive programme of webinars this autumn, from lunchtime sessions in September to half-day webinars in October and November. Full details aps.org.uk/events

● Our Building Regulations series continues with

two sessions on ICC Principles & ITFG Guidance; one aimed at medium businesses on 15 September and one for large businesses on 20 October. And you can access any webinars you missed here aps.org.uk/category/webinars

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APS Accredited – Building Safety Act & PD Building Regulations 2023 (2 Days)	Online	21-22 Sept 8-9 Oct 26-27 Oct	£595 +Vat
APS Accredited – CDM Awareness	Online	21 Aug	£250 +Vat
APS Accredited – The role of the Principal Designer under CDM 2015 (2 Day)	Birmingham	8-9 Sept	£695 +Vat
APS Accredited – CDM 2015 for Principal Contractors	Online	6 Oct	£275 +Vat
APS Accredited – CDM Client	Online	12 Oct	£295 +Vat
APS Accredited – The role of the Principal Designer under CDM 2015 (2 Day)	Online	15-16 Oct 26-27 Oct	£595 +Vat