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FIS

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representing the finishes
and interiors sector

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MY FOCUS AS FIS PRESIDENT

As FIS President I have learned a lot about the wider industry, and the struggles, battles, and triumphs that together shape our community. I have also learned a lot about myself as being President does have its challenges, however, it has never been a chore as the team at FIS is both talented and dedicated.

FIS President is not a job I am paid to do. Like most of you, I also run an SME contractor business. I offered my services and believe I was successfully elected into the role, as it is clear that I love this industry, in fact, you could say it's in my blood. One of my many aims was to share with others my years of experience to help spare them a few battle scars. I also wanted to support FIS members and the wider sector to get on the front foot, to elevate the respect and pride we feel in the industry and to ensure that our industry is attractive for young people to join.

Never in my wildest dreams as a 15-year-old starting on my journey as an apprentice did I believe that I would firstly be running my own company and secondly be serving and helping to shape the overall direction of the sector for a proactive, innovative and progressive trade body that is FIS.

In many ways I have seen the industry improve however, somehow these improvements are not being recognised and by most, the industry is still not seen as the exciting career choice we know it to be. As this is the case this is creating a shortage of people coming into our sector. This is going to be a big challenge in the next decade unless we can shift the dial.

In my first year, there has been a lot of focus on regulation and the Building Safety Act is starting to scale up. I know FIS has risen to this challenge and will continue to work tirelessly to provide you with support and guidance. I am optimistic that this will

support you in addressing some of the negative behaviours.

As we move into my second and final year as FIS President, I want to ensure that, despite wavering Government policy, we continue to move forwards with our sustainability efforts. We must not keep borrowing from the future and piling up problems. The latter is equally important as we cannot pretend to care about their futures if we really want to influence their decisions.

We must also ensure that the next generation of Philip and Philippa's see this industry for the amazing and awe-inspiring sector that it is and get the opportunity that I did.

I was concerned to read that recent research supported by FIS as part of the City of London's Skills for a Sustainable Skyline identified that 45% of teachers and 30% of students rated their familiarity with opportunities in construction as one or two out of five. The fragmented message delivered into a disjointed careers advisory system is failing our industry and failing our young people. The system is also failing to deliver the key message that joining the construction sector can be a step towards helping to make the environment in which we live, work and play, healthier, more attractive, and more sustainable for all.

We are a creative sector, designing and reimagining buildings. We are in the engineering sector, delivering ever more complex and enhanced experiences as



PHILIP BROWN
President Finishes
and Interiors Sector

people enter the buildings, we are a sector still built on trades and qualifying in a trade has always been sound advice as there is still craft at our core. We know we need trade operatives, surveyors, estimators, contract managers and all the other specialists that exist within delivering building fit-out. We need people to realise that our industry welcomes diversity, encourages endeavour, entrepreneurship and ultimately provides opportunities that are financially rewarding and leave a lasting legacy.

I will be making sure FIS continues to focus on these areas and 'step's up' to the challenges ahead. However, this is not enough as we all need to 'step up', we need to harness the influence you bring as individuals and as a community, to be open to how we engage and train so we can shift the dial and build the apprenticeship numbers we vitally need across the Nations of the United Kingdom.

My promise to you is that the talented team at FIS will do all we can to support you, but you need to play your part. Together we are stronger.

Welcome

SPEC FINISH

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Repurposed reception desk at the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership

SpecFinish magazine wrapper

Please recycle the wrapper this magazine was delivered in. It is recyclable plastic.



FIS Scottish Awards, Project of the Year and Specialist Installation – Over 1m Winner was Indeglås (L-R) Brian Taylor (Guest Speaker), Iain McAlpine, Jeanette MacIntyre and Iain Mudie of Minster

WELCOME

TO THE NOVEMBER ISSUE OF SPECFINISH

When writing my welcome, I always feel I should pass comment on the news that is dominating our industry, economy, or the world however, on this occasion, I wanted to discuss something a little more light-hearted and that's the Rugby Union World Cup. This was in full swing and the home nations were lighting up the tournament with some amazing performances. When you are reading this maybe one of them will actually win the Webb Ellis Cup.

As a grassroots coach, I constantly refer to England RFU core values of **Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline** and **Sportsmanship** to help nurture a player in their sporting and personal lives. More important than Rugby (if that's possible) I believe that these values can be used to create the foundations of a successful business.

- **Teamwork:** Work selflessly as a team and not for yourself alone. Take pride in your team, rely on one another and understand that each individual has a part to play.
- **Respect:** Hold in high esteem the business, its values, and traditions and earn the respect of others in the way you behave.
- **Enjoyment:** Encourage each other to enjoy and thrive during your time at work. Use this time to grow and develop your skills.
- **Discipline:** Ensure that you and the business are honest and fair. Obey the rules of the business and laws of the governing bodies to protect the staff, business and clients.
- **Sportsmanship:** Camaraderie, fair play, being dignified, recognise endeavour and achievement. Taking an interest in the wellbeing and development of your colleagues.

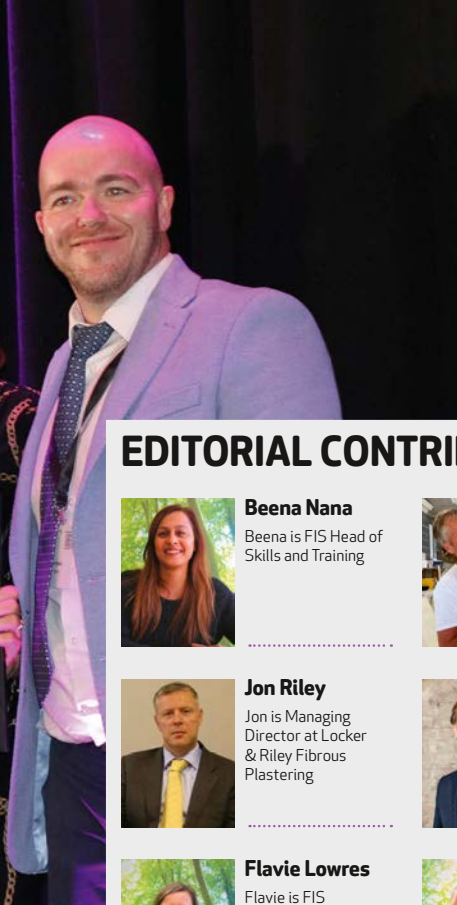
Fitting in with the Teamwork and Respect values on page 18 we share some inspirational stories where the success was attributed to the businesses being fair, inclusive and respectful.

Demonstrating the Discipline value on page 24 we take a look at the implementation and impact of mandatory occurrence reporting which is now a requirement of specific duty holders since the recent introduction of secondary legislation to the Building Safety Act.

Meanwhile, on page 26 we see the values associated with Sportsmanship and Enjoyment as we celebrate the FIS Scottish Awards recognising excellence whilst supporting compliance.

Please let us know about your projects and company news as we do like to feature members as much as we can. No project too small... david.crowson@warnersgroup.co.uk
www.thefis.org





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Feature

We take a look at some of the highlights which FIS has been undertaking throughout 2023.



The great debate: The future of CAT A Fit-out

In the July issue, we heard the opinions of industry experts Duncan Morris, Head of Sustainability at Fourfront Group, Penny McCallum, Environmental Manager at BW: Workplace Experts and Adam Strudwick, Corporate Interiors, Principal at Perkins & Will on the very topical and divisive subject of the future of CAT A Fit-out. What do you think?

Duncan said: "The ongoing balance between marketability and sustainability is an important consideration when developing commercial space".

Penny explained that by 2030 it will be a legal requirement for all commercial and leased buildings to have an EPC rating of B. We believe this requirement, along with addressing the gap between predicted and actual environmental performance, should be seen as an opportunity for all CAT A projects both now and in the future".

Adam passionately explained that as a philosophy, the idea of putting in place millions of sq ft of virgin building materials only for them to be stripped-out without ever being used is absurd in a time when we are facing a climate emergency.

We would like to hear your thoughts on the subject. To join the debate visit:

<https://survey.alchemer.eu/s3/90570592/The-Great-Cat-A-Debate>



Fifth of office space fails EPC energy efficiency rules

Offices need to have an energy performance certificate rating of at least an E, but Carter Jonas found that 17 per cent of them were in bands F and G.

Nearly a fifth of the UK's office space cannot be let to the "overwhelming majority" of tenants because it does not meet new energy standards, according to a survey of the sector.

Under energy efficiency rules that came into effect in April, all tenanted commercial property buildings, from offices to shops and warehouses, need to have an energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of at least an E. A is the highest and G is the lowest. The regulations are known as the minimum energy efficiency standards, or Mees. Measuring the supply of office space by EPC rating, the property agent Carter Jonas has found that 17 per cent of it sits in bands F and G and is therefore legally unlettable unless remedial action has been taken.

The agent's report did note, however, that in reality, this figure will be lower given that exemptions will apply to some properties and others will be in the process of being modified.

Carter Jonas's Office Market Sustainability Index compares the average sustainability level of the office stock across 12 markets. It has been found that Oxford, Cardiff and Edinburgh have the highest percentage of low-quality offices. Cities including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Birmingham and Bristol could find that 70 per cent of their stock will be unlettable by 2027 without capital investment, potentially increasing to 90 per cent and above in 2030.

Only 28 per cent of the total UK office supply is high quality and this is where most of the demand is now focused, Carter Jonas added.

Source
<http://tinyurl.com/4z2yw2r3>

The sad passing of Didac's Jon Gibson

On the St Peter's Hospice website Jon's family commented on his passing. It reads, Jon was the most loving, hardworking and compassionate person and I am privileged to have spent so many years making memories with him.

He would do anything for anyone and was dedicated to training and helping others. He made time to listen to everyone else and was always on hand with a cuppa when it was needed. Jon was unfortunate enough to be diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer at the end of May and passed away five and a half weeks later.

Although he never made it to St Peter's Hospice, we would like donations to go to the hospice so they can continue their wonderful work making people comfortable in their last few days. www.stpetershospice.org/tribute-funds/jon-gibson

FIS CEO, Iain McIlwee said: "I was so sorry to hear of the passing of Jon. His passion for the timber industry and support for both Health and Safety and Training was unsurpassed. Jon's efforts at Didac helped to hold up and revolutionise the training landscape and deliver quality apprenticeships in the sector. Above that he was just a lovely



bloke. His premature passing is a huge loss to the timber and training landscape and a sad day for all who knew him. My sincere condolences to his family".

"May Jon rest in peace" 1967 - 2023

FIS launch guide to the Building Safety Act

The Finishes and Interiors Sector (FIS) has launched new guidance – Introduction to the Building Safety Act – to help introduce the basic concepts of the Building Safety Act to all businesses and explain why it will promote a culture of safety and accountability in the construction industry.

The most significant piece of new legislation in a generation, the Building Safety Act (BSA) will fundamentally change the way in which buildings where people live are designed, constructed and maintained and records are kept of what was built, by whom and how. The Building Safety Act comprises of primary as well as secondary legislation which has complicated new responsibilities and processes.

This guide is designed to help businesses understand the definition of higher risk buildings, roles and responsibilities, and the new bodies including the Building Safety Regulator and New Homes Ombudsman. It explains the importance of organisational competence and how liabilities have changed under the Act. The guidance brings clarity to the three stop-go gateways at key stages of a higher risk building project. Furthermore, it discusses the importance of maintaining the ‘golden thread’ of information throughout the life of a building.

Commenting on the guide, Iain McIlwee, Chief Executive of FIS said: “The Building Safety Act represents a huge improvement to the regulatory landscape and will, without question drive a healthier culture centred on improvements in the exchange of information, better design and specification, considered procurement and ensure key details are decided before we are stood on site, scratching heads.”

We hope that this new FIS guidance brings clarity and provides a basic understanding of some of the more complex and complicated elements of the Building Safety Act. With the Act now law, we need as a sector to ensure we have robust processes in place to meet the exacting competency requirements.”

You can download the Guide - Introduction to the Building Safety Act here www.thefis.org/membership-hub/publications/sector-guides

For further information or for any questions please contact FIS at info@thefis.org or call 0121 7070077.



Surge in labour costs expected to hit construction industry

Labour costs are set to overtake the cost of materials as the biggest challenge facing the construction industry, according to new analysis from the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS).

As part of its quarterly data briefing on construction inflation, BCIS is forecasting a 10 per cent uptick in labour costs over the next year, as high inflation and the cost-of-living crisis put pressure on wages.

The impact of inflation is compounded by ongoing labour shortages across the industry, with 69 per cent of British civil engineering firms reporting difficulties finding skilled operatives for infrastructure projects that include HS2.

According to data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) analysed by BCIS, there has been a declining trend in total employment in construction since the pandemic, mostly driven by a fall in

self-employed workers.

Although the number of insolvencies is high with more than 1,000 construction firms going bust in the last quarter the total number of construction businesses operating has grown exponentially, from just under 200,000 in 2014 to approximately 375,000 in 2022, despite recent crises.

BCIS forecasting data and figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS)¹ show total construction work output is now above pre-pandemic levels, at £46,409m for Q1 2023, driven by growth in the repair and maintenance industry. However new work output has declined in the last quarter and remains below levels recorded in 2017, at £27,822m for Q1 2023.

Source

1. www.ons.gov.uk

UK Government overlooks construction in extension of CE mark use

The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) announces an indefinite extension to the use of CE marking for UK businesses, but the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC which regulates Construction Products) have indicated that this extension will not apply to construction products.

The DBT has announced a package of smarter regulations designed to “ease business burden” that includes recognition of the CE mark in the UK beyond the 2024 deadline. This means British firms will be able to continue the use of CE marking alongside UKCA in perpetuity. However, FIS has been informed that this easement relates only to the 18 sectors that fall under DBT – it does not apply to construction products.

Announcing the change Business Minister Kevin Hollinrake stated: “The Government is tackling red tape, cutting burdens for business, and creating certainty for firms

– we have listened to industry, and we are taking action to deliver. By extending CE marking use across the UK, firms can focus their time and money on creating jobs and growing the economy”.

DLUHC have indicated to the Construction Products Association (who are leading representation on this matter through the Construction Leadership Council) that recognition for construction products will continue until 30 June 2025 only. The rationale offered is that the Government remains committed to ensuring the testing regime for construction products is effective and inspires public and market confidence. DLUHC has indicated that it will set out its proposals for reform of the construction products regime in due course.

To read more visit: www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-government-announces-extension-of-ce-mark-recognition-for-businesses

WE ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING TIME-HONoured CRAFTS

Construction companies face a growing challenge in sourcing experienced and qualified staff for their projects, particularly when they require specialised skills such as traditional and heritage plastering. This skills shortage has left many companies concerned about the future impact on their projects.



Beena Nana, FIS Head of Skills and Training

Beena Nana, FIS Head of Skills and Training spoke with three business owners who are at the heart of this work and are noticing the skills shortage in these traditional trades. They share with us their thoughts on the scale of the issue, the challenges their businesses and the industry face and what solutions could be explored.

Adrian Attwood, Executive Director of DBR, explains the importance of moulding a new generation of skilled craftspeople to protect our heritage assets.

He said: "The construction industry is at a crossroads, facing a severe shortage of fresh talent, particularly in specialist roles like historic building conservation and traditional craft skills. Each year we are seeing fewer young people entering the profession, while at the other end of the spectrum, skilled stonemasons, leadworkers to gilders are retiring which is leaving a looming skills gap.

"Not only will this place historic buildings and monuments at greater risk of disrepair, but it also runs the risk of time-honoured crafts being lost forever. Now is the time for the construction industry, as well as educators and policymakers, to cultivate the next generation of talent.

It's institutional

"But first, we need to tackle the institutional roots of the problem, which I believe are twofold:

- 1. The education system:** Particularly at the secondary school level, which fails to promote or support careers in conservation and traditional craft skills.
- 2. The heritage construction niche itself:** This is not doing enough to champion the work it does or invest time and resources in succession planning.

"It's a challenging situation and one which is, unfortunately, putting our skilled workforce at risk. Bluntly, if the situation continues, we may well lose these time-honoured crafts forever.

"Personally, I would like to see more of the UK's young people made aware of the myriad skilled professions within conservation and the rewarding career paths it offers. However, it can only happen if we as an industry come together with educators to engage with them."

Going public

Adrian explained that the good news is that there's still time to take matters into our own hands, inspiring young people and ensuring we have a strong pipeline of skilled workers to deliver an increasing amount of restoration projects for years to come.

He commented: "What we need now is a public discourse to bring this issue to the mainstream. Sadly, many teachers, parents, and children see these professions as dead-end career paths with low prospects. They couldn't be more mistaken."

Let's shout about it

Adrian explained that many of our readers will have spent the majority of their careers in construction and will know what a worthwhile one it is, not just financially, but socially too.

Heritage construction holds a diverse range of rewarding roles, from small-scale maintenance to the complete restoration of monuments. It also offers exciting opportunities to collaborate with architects and engineers working on site, learning from a variety of disciplines.

Get inspired

Adrian passionately said: "We need to get to these career influencers and win over their hearts and minds, at the earliest possible juncture.

"As well as getting young people inspired, it will be important for the industry to commit substantial inward investment to train the future generation of skilled tradespeople. This requires a structured framework; while many routes into the profession exist, they're siloed and fragmented.

"Joining them up would create a more cohesive and compelling voice, and that's what has inspired us to launch a campaign, set to run over the next academic year: The Year of the Master Craftsperson (YMC)¹. The YMC is an opportunity to inspire more young people to enter the conservation sector, simultaneously protecting our heritage and championing current practitioners."

Less talk more action

He concluded by saying: "Ultimately, we want to protect and preserve the legacy of our own sector, futureproofing it for years to come.

"We can only do this if we join forces to directly engage and communicate with Britain's youth, drawing their attention to the fantastic apprenticeships and targeted vocational education and training schemes available."

www.dbrlimited.com



Students and apprentices visiting a DBR site



Keith Langton a master craftsman at work

Keith Langton from K L Langton Decorative Plasterwork, covers all traditional and heritage plasterwork. He has an impressive background in this field and shared with us his experience and thoughts on the skills shortage in traditional trades.

Keith explained that he is about to enter his 46th year in the trade.

He said: "I've been lucky to work on some amazing projects including Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle to Apethorpe Palace. I've also travelled the world from USA to China and most of Europe. I was mostly teaching and helping others in the hand craft.

"I regularly teach 'master classes' at building colleges around the UK, including 'teaching the teachers' which is where I want to spend more of my time in the future.

"More recently, I have been helping teach at this year's Summer School in Manchester for Historic England and this year helped teach on the National Trust and Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) Coleshill two-day course with the talented Michal Wolf and Sean Wheatley."

Challenges facing the industry

Keith said: "The scale of the shortfall of all traditional skills in construction is massive, more so in the more 'physical' trades such as plasterwork and masonry.

"Practical 'traditional' plasterwork is in more of a pickle, as it isn't really taught at colleges either due to budgets, knowledge, time or necessity. Except for a small handful of 'traditional plasterers' under 40 years old that can carry on and teach the skills, the trade is in peril of being lost forever. Fibrous plaster is finally back in the curriculum of sorts, though basic traditional work such as, lime putty finishes, uses and mixing of hot lime are disappearing fast.

"The biggest 'barriers' are cost, the lack of working craftspeople, teaching of teachers, and the correct promotion of all the crafts. The challenges are simple things such as getting the younger generations interested in getting to the site early, pulling on damp overalls, and climbing behind ceilings on dark cold days."

Inspiring the next generation

Keith went on to explain that he believes getting young people inspired is the solution to the problem.

As mentioned most recently he had the honour to teach at the Historic England Summer School. Keith said: "In colleges, there's a large contingency of students who show no interest in the classes, no respect for the lecturers or the students wanting to progress and no interest in becoming a tradesperson after money and time has been spent which is wasted on them. The Summer School, however, was full of people wanting to learn.

"Construction work is hard, dangerous, exciting, bleak, well-paid, well-travelled so basically a life changer.

"Except for the obvious, construction can provide a person with a wealth of life experience as you can travel the length and breadth of the UK and the world, working in both stunning and harsh environments, help people and save properties, work on some amazing homes, halls and palaces."

Conclusion

Keith said: "We all need to promote construction, especially 'heritage/traditional handcrafts' with a passion and not simply as a 'stop-gap'.

"Without 'collaboration' we will lose what is left of people wanting to enter heritage works and all trades."

www.kllangton.co.uk

Jon Riley, Managing Director at Locker & Riley Fibrous Plastering, also provided us with some insight into the shortage of traditional skills.

Jon said: "In my opinion, the skills shortfall has been declining ever since the introduction of the self-employed status and this is when training effectively stopped in the construction sector.

"The principal barrier for heritage plastering is the rapidly expanding and successful, film industry. This Government-funded sector does not train sufficiently to supply the needs of its own sector.

"We need to find a cohesive and funded training plan to cover the needs of both sectors. This could either be done independently, with training contracts being implemented and adhered to, to ensure the trainees remain in the sector in which they trained. Alternatively, the film industry could consider employing plastering companies (rather than individuals) who will offer training with specific Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to ensure there is a sustainable growth of a trained workforce.

"A collaboration would provide a huge marketing opportunity to attract new entrants into the world of plaster and traditional skills, combining the roles of working on both film sets and the country's most beautiful historic buildings. I would suggest it is better to work together to create a bigger and better training offering.

"Hypothetically where the film industry and construction industry collaborate, the volume of specialists would increase and provide the training providers with the numbers of trainees required to make a worthwhile training provision."

www.lockerandriley.com

Source

1. <https://tinyurl.com/yyhffyfw>



Learning to become a master craftsman at Locker & Riley

IS REUSE THE NEXT BIG THING IN CONSTRUCTION?



Flavie Lowres,
FIS Sustainability
Champion

The UK Government's commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 100% by 2050 is challenged by the current linear approach of take, make, use and dispose by the construction industry. Roughly 10% of the UK carbon emissions are associated with the extraction, manufacturing, transport, installation and disposal of construction products.

The finishes and interiors sector's market value is £11bn a year, playing a major role in the UK economy through manufacturing and use of products in the built environment. There are inherent inefficiencies in how products are managed throughout their lifecycle; products used in construction account for over half of resource extraction and waste production. 90% of waste is recycled, typically for low value applications at a high energy cost. Products with a service life of 25 years are often replaced when space is refitted, ending up as waste.

Commercial buildings are usually refitted every five to seven years. In some cases, products can be replaced when they are virtually brand new e.g. luminaires and suspended ceilings in transition from CAT A (raised access flooring, ceiling finishes and luminaires) to a fully fitted space (CAT B). Internal fittings will often change when tenancies change and clients usually require 'make good' in leases.

However, the pressure to reduce carbon emissions from projects is starting to have an impact on the industry which is looking at ways to improve. Many Tier 1 contractors have made commitments to net zero and find that the biggest issue is related to their scope 3 emissions – in particular: emissions from the purchasing of goods and services. This has led to a number of conversations on the possibility to reuse products.

First, it is about diverting products from buildings that are being stripped out or demolished, higher up the waste hierarchy. It is also about using reused products on new projects. Reuse products have indeed a much-reduced carbon footprint, but they can also reduce the amount of waste generated from sites. The Delivering, Innovative, Steel, ReUse, Project (DISRUPT), led by The Alliance for Sustainable Building Products (ASBP)¹,

shows the reuse of steel could lead to 85,000 tonnes of carbon savings. A report from the Green Alliance estimates that 22.3 MtCO₂e of GHG emissions could be saved by 2032 by increasing the reuse of construction products.

Currently, the reuse of products is very ad-hoc and many products are diverted towards the charitable sector. Any opportunity to extend the life of a product further is very valuable.

Surveys from FIS members have shown that there is a real desire from contractors to source and install reused products in commercial projects.

Product manufacturers and FIS members ISG, Optima and BW:Workplace Experts have shared with us some projects where products have been reused. The carbon emission savings that have been made is very impressive.

Reuse of materials in the Entopia building

Peter Kelly, group director of sustainable operation at ISG, explained setting new global standards in retrofit the Entopia building is an internationally leading, fabric first, sustainable retrofit of a 1930s, five-storey concrete frame structure with

a basement, located in a local conservation area in the historic Cambridge city centre.

The Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL)² acquired 1 Regent Street, Cambridge, to serve as its new headquarters.

With the buy-in from CISL and the design team, three main successes were achieved when it came to materials reuse:

1. Circa 350 LED lights were sourced by ISG from a speculative CAT A fit-out. ISG arranged for Collecteco to collect and store the lights, and the manufacturer, Specials Lighting tested and honoured the existing warranty for the lights. The reuse of these lights led to the award of a BREEAM innovation credit.
2. The PV canopy on the roof has been constructed using reclaimed steel sections. Steel from a movie studio was sold to Cleveland Steel and Tubes. These sections were a good fit and ISG arranged for their structural engineer, CAR Ltd to rejig the design to accommodate. The fabrication subcontractor purchased the steel, cut it to suit the design, galvanised and installed it at the Entopia building. A total of 3.79 tonnes of steel were reused, saving an embodied carbon equivalent of 2 tonnes of CO₂e.



Repurposed reception desk

3. A bespoke fluted oak reception desk with a travertine stone top was sourced by ISG from the Copyright Building, London. Originally designed by Piercy & Company and manufactured by Benchmark Furniture, it was removed and taken back to Benchmark's workshops, to be stored and later adjusted to provide a wheelchair accessible section, that fits into the space in the reception at Entopia.
www.isgltd.com

Leading by example on the Mazars project

Optima takes the possibility of reusing the product very seriously and has demonstrated that this can be done in the Mazars project, located in London³.

By reusing about 60% of the Optima products already in the building, such as Revolution 100 glass partitions and Edge Symmetry doors, 13.4 tonnes of CO₂e were saved. This is the equivalent of burning 4.7 tonnes of charcoal.

The project was crowned a winner in the Partitioning category of the 2023 FIS Contractors Awards and the judges said: "On inspection, it is hard to see that the high-quality installation is formed from preloved elements. Overall, an excellent finish was achieved by Optima."

Optima has also engaged with Tunley Environmental to calculate some of the carbon emission savings on other reuse projects. Another customer reused Optima's products in a new London location which utilised a smaller floor plan. This enabled them to reuse over 80% of their products in the new design. This represented a carbon saving of 17.7 tonnes of CO₂e.

In fact, on all new design estimates Optima are now able to quote carbon emission values for their products. This gives contractors, designers and building owners access to all the information they need to make informed decisions on carbon reduction. These figures

will include the use of Hydro's CIRCAL aluminium which uses the lowest amount of carbon currently available on the market with a 75% minimum content of post-consumer scrap.

Christian Mabey, Managing Director at Optima Products, told us: "As a business, we are committed to lowering our carbon emissions, not only by reducing the amount of carbon in our products but also by enabling the reuse of those products within new fit-outs, and by providing information for our customers to make informed decisions."
www.optimasystems.com



Exploring ways to adopt a lift and shift approach

Sara Lopez, Head of Sustainable Operations at BW:Workplace Experts, explained that last year her organisation was working on a project in London where the client required that 80% of materials was reused following a lift and shift approach.

Sara said: "We were able to work with the client to meet the brief and have since been exploring ways to adopt this approach on more projects."

"There is a growing demand from clients to reduce the embodied carbon emissions of projects and reused products can support

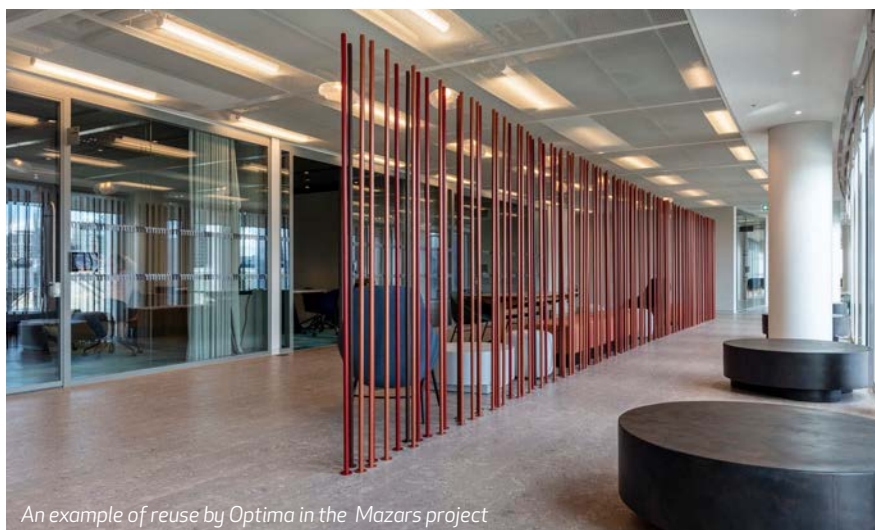
this agenda as their carbon impact is much reduced. I believe that Contractors need to think outside the box to make it happen and early engagement is key to success. Reusing products also makes sense in an industry where products are often stripped out from offices before the end of their useful life. At BW:Workplace Experts we have been exploring ways to do more and will share case studies with you all in due course."
www.wearebw.com

It is great to see more and more examples of reuse of products and real change in the industry. FIS has been working with its members to find means to support the industry in this journey. As such, FIS has been working on a number of initiatives, including:

1. The development of a pre-fit out audit⁴: this document will guide the industry in the best practice approach and the importance of recording the inventory of products in a building before it is stripped out or demolished.

2. The publication of a list of platforms where products identified during the pre-fit out audit can be advertised – giving them a chance to get a second life⁴.
3. Partnering with the ASBP to support its Reuse Now campaign⁵. The event was held on 18 October in London and was a great opportunity to hear from industry leaders on the topic. Examples of projects and focus on specific products gave the audience a real taste of the art of possible.

FIS is also currently in discussions with some of its members to pilot a physical storage facility in London to act as a buffer to match the supply of products from a donor building with the demand of a receiver building. The pilot project will focus on a limited number of products with the aim of creating the volumes needed by the industry to be used in a new commercial space.



An example of reuse by Optima in the Mazars project



Source

1. www.asbp.org.uk/disrupt
2. www.cisl.cam.ac.uk
3. www.optimasystems.com/projects/reusable-glass-partitions-mazars
4. www.thefis.org/knowledge-hub/sustainability/sustainability-related-to-your-activities/circular-economy
5. www.asbp.org.uk/workstream/reuse-now

THE CCPI MARK: A BENCHMARK FOR MANUFACTURERS AND PRODUCTS THAT CUSTOMERS CAN TRUST



Joe Cilla,
FIS Technical Director

Three FIS member's have decided to gain the Code for Construction Product Information (CCPI)¹ mark for their submitted products. Two members shared with us how they secured the CCPI accreditation for their products and their thoughts on why they support the introduction of CCPI and why users should trust the mark, and one member talks about their progress to date.

The CCPI was created to promote an urgent positive culture and behaviour change in the way the construction product manufacturing industry manages and provides information on its products. It was initiated by the Construction Product Association (CPA) as a direct response to Dame Judith Hackitt's review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety setup in the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

The CCPI will help organisations drive higher standards in the presentation of construction product information, prioritising building safety.

Whether written in a brochure, a presentation, on a website or social media, CCPI will help users of product information to have more confidence when making decisions about specifying or installing verified products.

There are eleven Clauses of the CCPI which cover a wide range of matters from responsibility for product information, to accuracy of and clarity of performance claims made, general information and competency of all those involved in preparing or delivering information and assistance. The objective of the Code is that any claim made about a Construction Product must be substantiated by appropriate, clear, and unambiguous evidence. The CCPI is built around these five 'acid tests' - product information must be Clear, Accurate, Up-to-date, Accessible and Unambiguous.

How the code will work

1. Organisations will undertake an online organisation assessment to validate leadership and culture of the organisation and their commitment to the ethos of the CCPI.
2. Evidence and information to support the organisation's compliance to the



Dave Robinson, Head of Technical Support at British Gypsum



Andy Hackett, General Manager of the Dry Lining Division at voestalpine Metsec



Jimmy Collins, Head of Technical for Knauf UK & Ireland

3. When the organisation's product sets successfully completes the verification processes to prove conformance with the CCPI, then a unique numbered, time-limited licenced mark will be awarded to demonstrate that the 'Product Information' provided by that company conforms with the CCPI.
4. The initial licenced mark will be valid for two years. If there are changes to how Product Information is managed for verified product sets, and/or actual or potential product safety issues, there will be a requirement to inform the CCPI. Depending on the significance of the change, there may be a need to re-verify the product/set which could result in an additional charge.

Eleven robust ways of working and ensuring compliance

As the FIS Technical Director, I was invited to be a part of the working group which helped to develop the Code. The Code is very straightforward and apart from being built on five steps to code conformance it has eleven clauses.

The clauses are:

Construction product: Information creation

1. Have in place a documented sign-off process for creating 'Product Information'.
2. Have in place a formal version control process for all 'Product Information'.
3. Do not use mis-leading or ambiguous wording, phrasing or imagery and embrace the use of plain English to ensure accurate representation of 'Product Information' and performance claims.

Construction product: Core information

4. Provide valid and demonstrable documentation where claiming compliance to, or achievement of, any Certification, Classification or Industry Standard.
5. Provide specific documentation when making any product performance claims outside of Certification, Classification or Industry Standard tests; which must be made available on request and shared in an appropriate timeframe.
6. Make available on your website the descriptive and physical characteristics of the 'Construction Product'.
7. Ensure all changes affecting 'Product Information' resulting from changes to the 'Construction Product' are identified and reflecting in revised 'Product Information'.

Construction product: Associated information

- 8. Publish on your website and make easily accessible, clear information on handling, installation, operation, maintenance and disposal of 'Construction Products'.
- 9. For any guarantees/warranties used in 'Product Information', your website must state what is: covered, excluded and required to comply with its terms. The guarantee/warranty should be transparent and in a format recognised by the relevant sector of the industry.

Construction Product: Support and competence

- 10. Ensure technical helpline contact details (telephone and/or email) are visible on your website.
- 11. Have in place a robust training programme (for new and existing personnel) to ensure that anyone conveying 'Product Information' is competent to the level of knowledge required for their role.

Full details about the CCPI and how to apply to become Code Compliant can be found at: www.cpicode.org.uk/ways-of-working

FIS members British Gypsum, voestalpine Metsec and Knauf have invested time and money to be early adopters of the CCPI mark. It highlights that they aim to be recognised for their professionalism and commitment to being compliant.

Dave Robinson, Head of Technical Support at British Gypsum, explained it is their responsibility to 'do the right thing' and set standards for their industry partners to follow. He said: "Data integrity has always been top priority for us, as evidenced by the fact that we have been publishing the White Book for more than half a century.

"We ensure that our test data is shared openly and transparently on our website. "Obtaining the CCPI mark for our non-loadbearing metal stud plasterboard partition systems helps to provide further assurance to our customer base that the information we supply is clear, accurate, accessible, up-to-date and unambiguous."

Dave explained that they are committed to providing their customers and construction partners with a 'golden thread' of information to ensure that they support them with complete transparency of drylining product and system information and do their part in building better.

Dave said: "In essence, the CCPI mark provides a benchmark for manufacturers and signifies to customers that the product information they're being supplied with is trustworthy and adheres to the high standards set out by the CCPI.

"We're proud to be working proactively with the CCPI to raise standards in our own product information management, as the construction industry adapts to a new and improved building safety regime. We'd now like to see our partners within the industry and the wider sector join us in securing CCPI accreditation for their product information and taking responsibility for building better and safer."

www.british-gypsum.com

Andy Hackett, General Manager of the Dry Lining Division at voestalpine Metsec, explained they achieved CCPI verified status for their dry lining metal framed components for gypsum plasterboard systems. Andy said: "We see it as not only an important thing to do but the right thing to do to ensure that higher standards are achieved in the way the industry presents its information to the marketplace prioritising building safety.

"We have to ensure that the building community makes informed choices about the products they choose for their buildings. The eleven clauses of the CCPI and the five acid tests should not only bring confidence but be the fundamental backbone of any future decisions they are looking to make."

Andy explained the substantiation of any claim is the fundamental heartbeat of the CCPI. The five acid tests of product information being clear, accurate, up to date, accessible and unambiguous allows the industry to make better informed decisions.

In conclusion, he said: "We absolutely welcome this drive to ensure building safety is improved by making well informed decisions.

"The Mark is aimed at product manufacturers and the users should value manufacturers who have obtained the mark. The CCPI mark helps to give assurance that those who have obtained it in their verified product sets are supplying the assurance they need to make informed decisions."

www.metsec.com

Knauf is supporting and embracing the CCPI and is currently finalising its application explained, **Jimmy Collins**, Head of Technical for Knauf UK & Ireland.

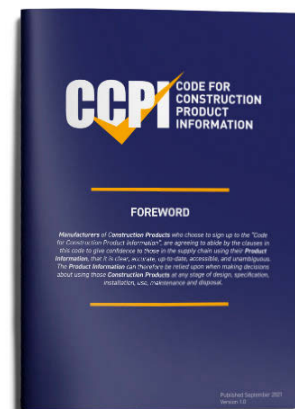
Jimmy said: "The objectives of this code are straightforward. They ensure that construction product manufacturers present their product information in a way that is reliable, clear and accessible. "Adherence to the Code will also require independent verification to ensure conformance.

He explained that Knauf has always been committed to providing accurate

and accessible product information. Even with their entrenched culture, they are continually looking to develop further and will look to support and engage with the Code. In doing so Knauf absolutely recognise that manufacturers have a role to play in improving standards in the supply chain and that for the Code to meet its ultimate objective of improving the safety of the built environment, every stakeholder within a project chain needs to take on ownership and responsibility.

He concluded by saying: "Our contribution to this new Code is only one part of the process and it is good to see, with the publication of the Building Safety Act, legislation is starting to tackle the overriding issues for our industry – competence and responsibility.

www.knauf.co.uk



FIND OUT MORE

To read more about the CCPI visit: www.cpicode.org.uk

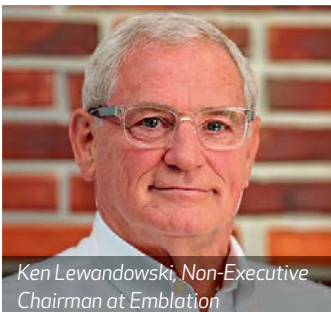
Source

1. www.cpicode.org.uk

EUREKA! UNFAIR PAYMENT PRACTICES CAN BE SOLVED

SpecFinish researched an innovative payment method and the features and benefits of Project Bank Accounts (PBAs) as many leading experts believe these payment solutions can solve unfair payment practices.

We continue to discuss the need to change how payments are treated in the construction industry and a change must bring transparency so everyone involved feels respected and is paid correctly for the work done. This change will drive the build quality up, eliminate the need to hold retentions, have all parties rewarded for the value they add to the project and ensure that cash flow is maintained in businesses to allow them to thrive.



Ken Lewandowski, Non-Executive Chairman at Emblation

Ken Lewandowski, Non-Executive Chairman at Emblation, shares with us his forthright views on the current payment problems and his successfully tried and tested innovative payment method that he believes can solve the problems faced by subcontractors who are not paid on time or in full.

When we spoke to Ken the first thing he said was: "I will tell anyone that is listening that all too often, where there are unethical power relations...bullying exists and in the construction industry paying late or not at all is a ruthless tactic, motivated by corporate greed. There needs to be a radical and dramatic change in attitudes and culture within the sector from the top to the bottom. The disgraceful construction industry payment practices MUST change".

This is a strong statement however, it appears many of us would agree with Ken as they have or are experiencing the impact on their businesses of late or no payment for work they have completed. As a direct consequence, this has damaged their business's cash flow, which then impacts their relationship with their staff, suppliers etc. and sadly we continue to hear stories that this is the cause of many businesses failing and going into liquidation.

Ken has been passionate about this subject for many years and several years ago wrote a comprehensive report titled "Make construction shine again" which was presented to a number of working groups and Ministers in the Scottish and Westminster Government.

He explained the report proposed that the implementation of a new payment

method would bring courtesy and respect between parties back into the sector, by providing absolute transparency to all parties in the chain and improve quality immensely to a point where the practices of withholding retentions were eliminated and where subcontractors would be paid for their work on time allowing them to invest in their businesses, generate employment, recruit and train apprentices and importantly grow the economy.

Change to Construction Contracts

To provide a solution requires a relatively simple change to construction contracts of which there are many and generally modified to pass risk down the chain. It also must be an absolute requirement that the main contractor (project manager/professional construction manager) together with the client's representatives fulfil their job functions and contract conditions in full and in a timely fashion. No one body would be asked to do anything or incur additional costs, which they should not already be delivering to the client as part of their own contractual conditions.

Notwithstanding the fact that there are many styles of construction contracts, no contract condition would be required



to be changed. Simply remove all and any reference to Payment Terms from the body of the relevant document and replace it with a Payment Methodology Document. This new payment document should be the same for any contract whether it be for a £100,000 or £100,000,000 project.

The innovative payment method

This method does not ask for any special tasks to be carried out by the client or the main contractor, only for them to do the jobs they are contracted to do, but efficiently and on time.

This is a workable method where the client, rather than the main contractor will be in control of monthly payments. Payment is made directly by the client to each subcontracting party.

Benefit: This will ensure the subcontractor is paid promptly and in full for the work they've carried out. This will mean there is no need to ever take retention money as the work is being certified at each stage of the build and this, in turn, will incentivise good quality.

The main contractor becomes a professional construction manager and gets paid for the work they do, and will be paid an agreed project management fee on a monthly basis. They will choose all the subcontractors that work on the project. The professional construction manager will order all the materials and when they are delivered to site, they will check the quality, quantity and make sure everything is present. The invoice comes from the supplier of the materials in the client's name. As soon as the

materials have been checked and the invoice is signed off this is provided to the client who will then pay the supplier directly.

Benefit: The main contractor will not hold the supplier's money.

There are no applications for payment and the client expects to be invoiced every month. There is an impact on an internal procurement department as they will have to pay a few more people directly.

Ken said: "The report received a positive response and I have yet to meet any politician who disagrees with the magnitude of the problem, and the fact that something MUST be done to rectify the issue, yet nothing has happened".

Trialling the method

Ken explained that he was presented with an ideal opportunity to test his method on a major refurbishment and fit-out project worth £1m - £1.2 million. The project was to build the new UK headquarters for Emblation in Stirling, Scotland.

Ken recalls initially he had some very disappointing conversations with prospective main contractors who said they wouldn't carry out the Emblation project because of the proposed payment method. Ken however, spoke to Neil Porteous Building Contractors and he was delighted that Neil was prepared to commit and be radical in the way that we managed the project.

As the project commenced Ken said: "As a client, we understood that things have to be done, we agreed to the purchases and the process has worked so much smoother.

"Neil has a great reputation now with the local supply base because they know where he's working, what's happening, and how they're going to get paid.

"Because of the relationships Neil's building with the subcontractors, if there is an issue at the end, these guys will come back and fix it. They know they've worked with somebody who's treated them with respect.

"There remains scope to deal with issues that crop up during projects that weren't accounted for at the tender stage. An example was the unexpected discovery that six new boilers would be required. Neil was given the go-ahead to order the boilers and these were delivered within 48 hours and the invoice was sent to Emblation".

Ken concluded by saying: "The project is now nearing completion and although this is radical for the construction industry this payment method is now tried and tested. I am delighted to say it has worked like a dream and will work regardless of the value of the contract.

"Collectively, I now challenge you to discard your existing payment methods which we know are not fit for purpose and use this

new method. I will continue my journey in an attempt to influence the Government to overhaul the existing procurement process.

"This is an appropriate time in history for you all to make a difference".

Len Bunton, industry consultant and professor **Rudi Klein**, former CEO of the Specialist Engineering Contractors' Group, are among those who have been supportive of Ken's payment solution.

Len said: "For many years Ken and I have discussed payment issues in the construction industry, and how these could be resolved. We kept coming back to the same solution - a radical overhaul of the procurement process was necessary.

"When Ken spoke to me about his new project, we had already discussed on many occasions the concept of not having a main contractor, with the project being run by a professional construction manager, and with the supply chain being in direct contract with the client. I am pleased Ken has adopted this method very successfully on project Emblation, and he has demonstrated that a procurement route like this can work very successfully, however it is quite clear that extensive client involvement is necessary.

"The concept of a professional running the project, without any vested financial interests is the key and the subcontractors respond to prompt payment, by ensuring that they progress the contract effectively. The constant monitoring of quality control on site is key as well.

He concluded by saying: "In my mind, this form of procurement strategy has everyone pointing in the right direction to ensure the successful delivery of a project on time, on budget, and constructed to a high level of quality. I remain absolutely convinced that the days of the main contract in the industry are numbered and more projects should be procured in this way."

Rudi explained that having security of payment in construction should mean that the "four certainties" are present. The certainty of timing, amount, robust enforcement and that your cash is safe. Direct payments from clients to subcontractors will address all four.

He said: "This was provided as an option for member states in EU legislation in 2014 but was never taken up by the governments in London or Edinburgh.

"Now Ken who is a fervent fair payment champion has led the way in implementing this option on the Emblation project. The Scottish Government should revise its procurement legislation and require that direct payments are made by contracting authorities to subcontractors."

www.emblation.com →



Chris Barber, Co-Founder & Chief Visionary Officer at Construction Link

Chris Barber, Co-Founder & Chief Visionary Officer at Construction Link, explained that he strongly believes PBAs in the UK are ensuring fairness and efficiency in construction and is calling on the UK Government to make PBAs mandatory for private and public construction projects over the value of £1m.

Chris said: "As someone deeply involved in the construction industry in the UK, I've witnessed first hand the challenges and complexities of managing finances and the struggles of our customer base. Since the collapse of Carillion, there was an urgency around PBAs for public contracts, however there is nothing incentivising PBAs for in the private sector which makes up three-quarters of the overall output. In the last couple of years, the market condition, labour shortages, and material cost price increases have highlighted how fragile the industry really is.

"PBAs are not a new concept, but their adoption in the UK construction industry has been slower than would have been hoped. These specialised accounts are set up to address some of the longstanding issues that have plagued the sector, particularly regarding payment delays and disputes.

"At its core, a PBA is a financial arrangement that provides a dedicated and transparent way to manage funds in a construction project. The key idea is to ring-fence the project's financial resources,

ensuring that payments are made fairly and promptly to all parties involved, including contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers."

PBAs – The main features and benefits

Fostering fairness and prompt payments

One of the most significant advantages of PBAs is their role in promoting fairness and prompt payments in the construction industry. As any construction professional knows, payment delays and disputes can be all too common, leading to financial strain, disputes, and project disruptions.

With PBAs, payments are made directly from the account, cutting through potential delays and disputes. This direct payment mechanism helps ensure that the funds allocated for the project are disbursed as intended, reducing the risk of non-payment or diversion of funds.

Transparency and accountability

Transparency is another critical feature of PBAs. Every transaction related to the project is recorded, creating a clear and accessible financial trail. This transparency can help prevent disputes by providing an indisputable record of payments and receipts.

Moreover, it enhances accountability at all levels. Parties involved in the project can easily track the flow of funds, ensuring that payments are in line with contractual agreements. This level of transparency goes a long way in fostering trust among stakeholders.

Mitigating the risk of insolvency

The construction industry outperforms all industries when it comes to insolvencies, and we are the industry leaders in late and non-payments. PBAs help mitigate this risk by ensuring that funds are available to pay subcontractors and suppliers even if the main contractor faces financial difficulties.

In essence, PBAs act as a financial safety net, reducing the impact of insolvency on the entire project. This is particularly important in an industry where numerous stakeholders rely on timely payments to sustain their operations.

Reducing the mental burden of late payments

90% of construction bosses have experienced mental health issues directly from payment issues, with 10% considering suicide. Construction has one of the worst mental health records compared to any other industry, and payment issues affect everyone in an organisation and something needs to change.

Awareness and Education

Widespread adoption of PBAs in the industry requires awareness and education. Many construction professionals may be unfamiliar with this financial mechanism, necessitating efforts to inform and train stakeholders.

Chris explained that they are closing in on 1,000 signatures on the petition and are engaging with other tech companies to look at possible solutions to help bring technology into play and make PBAs a more attractive and scalable offering.

He said: "While we have made great progress so far, there is so much more that we can still do."

To sign the Make PBAs mandatory in the UK petition visit: www.weallprosper.co.uk/petition/make-PBAs-mandatory

In conclusion, Chris said: "As a former QS deeply invested in the UK construction industry, I see Project Bank Accounts as an essential solution to this long-standing inequality and revolutionising our antiquated culture. They have the potential to transform the way we manage finances in construction projects, promoting fairness, transparency, and accountability.

"The construction sector is the biggest contributor to our economy and we have achieved this despite unethical payment practices being endemic throughout the industry. The majority of construction organisations, whether main contractors or subcontractors have been hamstrung by poor cash flow, meaning investment in their businesses is restricted and as a result, they have never reached their full potential. PBAs would unleash the real potential of the sector and be a major contributor to an economic recovery."

www.c-link.com
www.weallprosper.co.uk



FIVE CONSTRUCTION TRENDS THAT WILL SHAPE THE INDUSTRY IN 2024

In a recent blog for National Business Capital their Chief Operating Officer, **Phil Fernandes**, shared five trends that they noticed across the construction industry in 2023 that will likely carry over into 2024.



Phil Fernandes, Chief Operating Officer at National Business Capital

Phil explained 2023's business landscape hasn't been easy to navigate, but opportunities don't wait until you're ready. Despite the hiring challenges and inflationary pressures plaguing the construction industry, many business owners made great strides by simply keeping their focus off the headlines and on their growth plans.

Operating a successful business means identifying trends and positioning yourself ahead of them before your competitors have a chance to catch up.

1. Equipment, equipment, equipment

From wearable equipment to mining dump trucks, it's no secret that equipment is the key to succeeding in the construction industry. Technology will undoubtedly shift how the industry approaches each project, but the tried and true ways of making it happen are still as important as ever.

We've seen an increase in construction businesses purchasing equipment and leveraging the Section 179 tax deduction to lower their 2023 tax liability. In short, the deduction allows you to depreciate nearly the entire value of a newly purchased/financed asset in year one rather than over a few years. For anyone with growth plans, it's been a great way to preserve liquidity for future opportunities.

2. High demand for green building

The shift away from traditional materials and toward sustainable building dominated 2023 and will likely continue to evolve as we move further into 2024.

This is partially due to heightened consumer focus on the environment and government-sponsored plans to build sustainable infrastructure and cities for the

future. Research suggests that more than half the population will live in cities by 2050, and the push for climate change reform extends beyond government regulations and into the private sector. Before long, many construction companies will need to use these materials to stay competitive.

However, these materials cost more than their counterparts, and inflation doesn't do us any favours. Although inflation is expected to subside, smaller companies that can't afford the upfront cost might be priced out of major contracts unless they have relationships in place that can provide liquidity.

3. Technology adds a competitive edge

From 3D printing to robotics, construction technology has undoubtedly changed the industry forever. It's allowed for greater efficiency when building, streamlined project management, and more transparent surveying, all of which greatly benefit a business's bottom line.

The construction industry stands as the second least digitised industry, but it won't stay that way for long. In 2023, around a third of construction companies reported to have used AI and prefabrication technology in the last 12 months. Two out of five industry professionals have plans to purchase/upgrade their construction management software in the next year. Both numbers are expected to grow immensely in 2024.

Soon, the disparity between those with this equipment and those without will be a major pain point for startups and newer businesses looking to compete. While some might be able to get around it with creativity and intuition, it's easy to see how having this equipment can streamline a project.

4. Training employees

Almost every construction company has dealt with an open position that remained unoccupied for far longer than they anticipated. Challenges surrounding finding and retaining quality talent will continue into 2024, but businesses are starting to get creative instead of frustrated over the wording of their job descriptions.

Training, apprenticeships, and certifications will help construction companies build the workforce they need to succeed. Inexperienced team members can be transformed into experts in their craft, and business owners can reward their loyal employees by furthering their professional development.

It's a win/win that you'll likely see much more of in 2024.

5. Worker safety

Worker safety has often fallen to the wayside in exchange for higher productivity and efficiency, but this is unlikely to continue. Simply put, too many workers have suffered injuries on job sites in situations that could have been prevented, which is pushing unions and business owners to make a change.

From more frequent inspections to better safety guidelines and equipment, expect job sites to become much safer in 2024. Technology, certifications, and having the right people will drive this trend. It won't be cheap, but doing it the right way will yield positive ripple effects across the industry that will save lives, time, and money.

To read the article in full and see how you can keep up with the trends visit: www.nationalbusinesscapital.com/blog/construction-industry-trends

www.nationalbusinesscapital.com

EMBRACE INCLUSIVITY: CULTIVATING A FAIR, INCLUSIVE AND RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE



Cathryn Greville, Head of Fairness, Inclusion & Respect (FIR) at Supply Chain Sustainability School

Cathryn Greville, Head of Fairness, Inclusion & Respect (FIR) at Supply Chain Sustainability School shares why in today's rapidly evolving world, fostering an inclusive and inspiring workplace culture is not just a moral imperative, it's also a smart business move.

Cathryn explained you should care about inclusion as FIR helps businesses gain a competitive edge to be able to deliver on their business goals.

Research shows that businesses are currently struggling with four key areas, all of which can be addressed through implementing FIR:

- **People:** Attracting, recruiting and retaining talent. People want to work for organisations that are serious about FIR. People also stay in happy environments that meet their needs. It widens your talent pool, bridge the skills gap, and help secure the future prosperity.
- **Winning work:** Ensuring an ongoing pipeline, particularly impacted by current events and the health of economy. FIR is critically important for clients. It is an expected part of doing business.
- **Time:** Businesses often don't have enough of it, and time costs money. FIR saves time, through increased innovation, happier people and reduced turnover.
- **Profitability and growth:** FIR also heightens innovation and profitability. When employees feel valued and included, they're more inclined to contribute fresh ideas and solutions, ultimately propelling business growth. Therefore, FIR is not a 'nice to have', they are an essential part of doing business and intrinsic to meeting the challenges of the future.

What does the FIR programme offer?

The Fairness, Inclusion, and Respect (FIR) programme¹ is an industry-led, industry-wide initiative designed to transform workplaces into environments where everyone can thrive. Driven by a collaboration of industry partners committed to developing clients and supply chains throughout the sector, the programme is available to Supply Chain Sustainability School² members free at the point of use.

Cathryn said: "We are committed to helping create workplace environments that operate

fairly, inclusively and respectfully every day. We do this by empowering organisations to attract, retain, and engage a diverse workforce, tackle workplace cultural challenges, enhance innovation and productivity, and bolster their industry reputation, all while championing diversity and inclusion."

How can you get involved?

Cathryn explained that these are some steps you can take to embed FIR in your business.

- **Benchmark:** Firstly, you need to understand where your business sits on FIR. Benchmark your FIR maturity by completing the FIR Growth Assessment³, an online structured assessment tool for businesses to track your FIR journey, identify blind spots and receive a 10-point action plan for progressing FIR.
- **Commit:** Next, embrace inclusion as critical to success and commit to action. This involves reviewing practices, policies and governance structures, and considering where you could make your business more inclusive for your workers, clients and stakeholders.

Reflect on your current company culture and policies. Are your policies inclusive? Do employees feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences? How diverse is your workforce? Are you representative of the customers you serve? Do you understand stakeholder needs? How can you embrace diversity and inclusion for your success?

- Some resources to get you started:
 - **Why FIR Matters⁴:** Why FIR is vital to becoming a contractor or supplier of choice in the construction industry.
 - **Tips for promoting fairness, inclusion and respect⁴:** Short video with top tips on promoting FIR in the workplace.
 - **Achieving business success through FIR⁴:** Explore the meaning of FIR, why it is vital to your business, and the implications for the workplace.
 - **FIR: Inclusive Attraction⁴:** Learn about attracting individuals from a wider pool



of talent and how to develop an inclusive job advert. Aimed at anyone involved in recruiting people, particularly SMEs without in-house human resource expertise.

- **Learn:** Increase your knowledge by using our extensive resources library, training and tools. Dive into our FIR Toolkit⁵. Learn about what businesses in the sector are doing in our FIR Case Studies⁶. Attend an event or workshop⁷. Consider upskilling as a FIR Ambassador. Set learning pathways for your team.
 - **Measure:** Use the Diversity Tool⁸ to capture essential diversity data to benchmark your business against the sector. This tool helps you determine if your work is having impact and target the right areas to improve, with access to in-depth interactive dashboards to report on diversity in your business.
 - **Improve:** Implement proactive improvement measures. Evaluate, assess and amend your approach as necessary. Continue to commit, learn and measure to have the most impact. Use the FIR programme to continue your business journey and reap the advantages of a fair, inclusive and respectful workplace. She concluded by saying: "Embrace FIR and unlock the potential of your organisation. You can read more about the impact of FIR through our FIR Culture Impact Report 2023⁴ and follow us on LinkedIn or X (Twitter)".
- www.supplychainschool.co.uk

Embracing and exhibiting the principles of FIR

Cathryn has talked passionately about FIR and clearly by implementing some if not all of these points amongst other things this will transform workplaces into environments where everyone can thrive and businesses succeed. We wanted to share with you three inspirational stories where FIS members as part of their existing culture and values have embraced and exhibit the principals of FIR.

UK's Best Workplaces for Women 2023

Great Place To Work UK⁹ recently unveiled the companies that have earned a spot on the UK's Best Workplaces for Women List. These are exceptional organisations that have redefined workplace culture, setting a new standard for gender equality and inclusion. From robust talent development programmes to fair pay and benefits, these workplaces prioritise the success and wellbeing of their female employees.

FIS member Workplace Interiors Company was voted in the top 100 for the UK's Best Workplaces for Women 2023 – Medium (51-200 employees). Great Place To Work found that 82% of employees at Workplace Interiors Company said it is a great place to work, compared to 54% of employees at a typical UK-based company. 100% of employees said that people here are treated fairly regardless of their race or ethnic origin, gender, or sexual orientation and when you join the organisation, you are made to feel welcome. 98% said people celebrate special events around here.

This is an amazing accolade and in a recent LinkedIn post **Amy Hough**, Marketing Director said: "Our Great Place To Work UK certification is based on 100% positive employee experience, with feedback from different departments. "Above all else, we prioritise our people. We all look after each other and love nothing more than celebrating our successes.

"By sticking together, we're proud industry leaders in employee retention rates."

www.workplaceco.co.uk



Rylie Sweeney winner of One to Watch

The National Federation of Builders: Top 100 Women in Construction Awards¹⁰ listed Willmott Dixon's, Rylie Sweeney as One to Watch and she won.

This category is for individuals who are relatively new to the industry (as a guide three years or under) and are blazing a trail in championing equality, diversity, inclusion, and equity within the construction industry.

Rylie is a strong advocate of equality, diversity, inclusion, and equity which she demonstrates in her roles as an Apprentice Site Manager at Willmott Dixon, Chair of Youth Advisory Group at The Careers Enterprise Company, Chair of Edge Foundation Youth Network and NAWIC North East & Tees Valley Committee.

Rylie said: "Someone pinch me!" I had such a lovely night surrounded by truly inspiring people. It was great to be part of such a prestigious event with so many passionate people. "Congratulations to all winners, finalists and everyone who made The Top 100." I would like to thank the National Federation of Builders and Danny Clarke CMIOSH for putting on such a great evening. Interclass for sponsoring my award, Willmott Dixon for their massive continued support and all the organisations that I work with which make it possible for me to make a difference in education and promote apprenticeships."

www.willmottdixon.co.uk



Just the job - Go Interiors named a Sunday Times Best Place to Work 2023!

Go Interiors has been named a Sunday Times Best Place to Work 2023¹¹ for medium-sized organisations of 50-249 employees.

The survey spotlights companies that foster engaged and inclusive workplace cultures – where employee happiness and wellbeing is prioritised. In order to be recognised, companies were scored based on anonymous colleague feedback to 35 questions which measure employee experience. The questions covered the Sunday Times six key drivers of engagement; Reward and Recognition, Information Sharing, Empowerment, Pride, Job Satisfaction and Wellbeing.



Go Interiors were scored an outstanding overall score of 84%, a whopping 12% above the Construction Industry Standard.

Gerard Abbott-Drake, Business Owner and Director said:

"We are committed to creating a workplace where our colleagues are valued, respected and supported, and we are extremely proud that this has been recognised by The Sunday Times. The business received exceptional scores from colleagues stating they have a good relationship with their manager. Furthermore, colleagues said they feel respected and that they have the tools to do the job. We are thrilled to have been scored so highly in these areas.

We believe that fostering a great working culture is essential for creating a happy and productive workforce, which is reflected in the industry benchmark service levels achieved by the business.

"We are grateful to our colleagues for their feedback and for helping us to achieve this recognition. We are excited to continue to build on our success and to create an even better workplace for our team in the future."

www.gointeriors.co.uk

Source

1. www.supplychainschool.co.uk/topics/fir
2. www.supplychainschool.co.uk
3. www.supplychainschool.co.uk/topics/fir/fir-assessment
4. <https://tinyurl.com/y3py8rtt>
5. www.supplychainschool.co.uk/topics/fir/fir-toolkit
6. www.supplychainschool.co.uk/topics/fir/fir-case-studies
7. <https://tinyurl.com/ck3estvf>
8. <https://tinyurl.com/5dt7zztp>
9. www.greatplacetowork.co.uk
10. www.builders.org.uk/awards-conferences/top-100-influential-women-in-construction
11. www.thetimes.co.uk/static/best-places-to-work-2023

'INTELLIGENT' FIT-OUT IS THE NEW NORMAL FOR BUSINESSES IN OUR SECTOR

In this series about why and how Digital Twins can revolutionise construction and the fit-out sector. **Dr Bola Abisogun OBE**, Digital Director at BIM Academy (Founder & Chairman of DiverseCity Surveyors and Chair of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee at the Construction Industry Council) talks about the diversity of thought which is, and will become, the silver bullet that we all need to acknowledge and feed into if we are to address the growing challenge of carbon reductions amidst the wider net zero ambition of 2050.



Dr Bola Abisogun OBE, Digital Director at BIM Academy (Founder & Chairman of DiverseCity Surveyors and Chair of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee at the Construction Industry Council)

Bola explained that whilst he is unashamedly 'purpose-led', his everyday business capacity of strategic advisory at the BIM Academy¹, has morphed into his complimentary role which in many ways lay in contrast, given the focus of his 'charitable activity and social values' as the Founder and Chief Excitement Officer at the Digital Twin Skills Academy CIC, aka the 'DTSA'².



The DTSA is all about 'disruptive change', initially with the new mindset that is required to co-exist, which then feeds into the wider structural and collaborative change that needs to happen to unlock this huge and growing commercial opportunity. Bola said: "As we move seamlessly into the fourth industrial revolution, which is largely focussed on the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), it is clear to me that it is time for us all to upskill and collaborate in order to deliver better societal and circular outcomes for our clients and governments across the world."

Bola went on to say: "In the previous feature I defined a digital twin as a virtual representation/digital replica, of an intended or actual real-world physical asset or product, system or process and explained the importance of them, when deployed as a strategic business tool, to create inform and

facilitate better 'real time' decision making.

"By using BIM enabled workflows to deliver a construction project, the clever and inter-related use of Internet of Things (IoT) to simulate, integrate, test, monitor and maintain (in this use-case) the fit-out of commercial office space, is just one pillar of value creation – albeit a very important one.

"The fit-out sector must continue to stay abreast of this fast-paced evolution called the digital twin and attempt to redefine themselves and their commercial offering. I am also making a call to every responsible reader who has a clear and unconditional concern for the mental health and well-being of their most important corporate asset, your people. "But what on earth has 'your people' got to do with intelligent fit-out, you might ask?" Well, everything really; allow me to explain."

Linking Digital Twins to the Golden Thread

It's now October 2023, and the recently enacted Building Safety Act has now become enforceable, rendering the Principal Accountable Person to become duly acquainted with the day to day operation of his/her asset. Irrespective of the asset class, the overarching requirement is for the Golden Thread of Information Management to be created and maintained, whilst simultaneously mitigating any perceived or actual risks to the occupier, with a focus on structural collapse and spread of fire.

Most commercial office fit-out projects take place in a building where the owner appoints 'an expert' who essentially manages the asset in a third-party capacity, these are the Asset, Premises and/or Facility Manager. With the additional layer(s) of communication for any occupier to deal with and in many ways contend with, both within and beyond the business itself, the chronology and detail of the 'base-build' process OR existing building, has become even more critical.

The interface between the aspirational CAT B and the CAT A/Base Build is often a challenge, even for newly built assets. "How many times have the 'as-built' drawings shown one thing and the reality has been quite different?" Such revelations and other similar 'design -v- build' conflicts, should never occur and that is where 'stress and conflict' often begins for the project team.

In a post-Grenfell, Building Safety Act environment, we need to ensure and de-risk the likelihood of such 'errors' making their way into the final 'as-built' information pack, which ideally (and in the case of a Digital Twin) would have been clash detected and federated within the 'final' BIM model. Managed and maintained by the Principal Accountable Person, it is this 'final iteration' of the BIM Model that should be given to the client (i.e. the future occupier) and in turn handed to the appointed design team, effectively as the baseline or 'ground-zero', for the fit-out company to then begin their work.

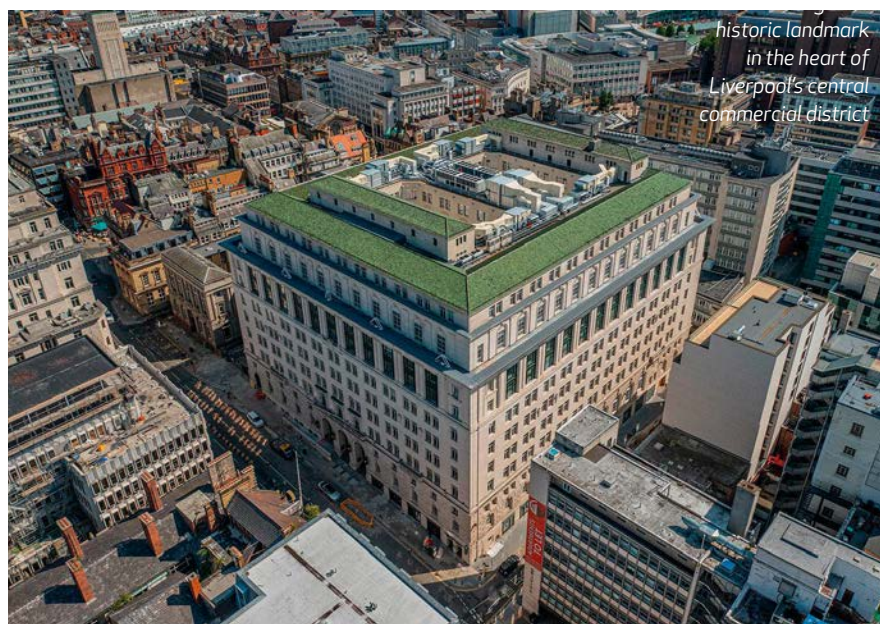
bimacademy

The value proposition and green benefits

Bola said: "Based on my vast experience of the construction process and working with all types of client groups during the last 30 years, from technology firms to professional services businesses, to retail and 'fine-dining'; I conclude that 'intelligent fit-out', is simply an attempt to provide the asset owner and incoming tenant/occupier with an opportunity to do at least three things:

1. Equip the occupier with a 'digital representation' of their own space that will serve as a strategic business tool to ensure optimisation (and conversely, detect under-utilisation of space, whilst undertaking IIoT - condition based monitoring);
2. Provide the occupier with an opportunity to actively assess, monitor and feed into their own carbon measurement strategy (citing both embodied carbon and operational carbon credentials); and
3. Allow the principal accountable person/ asset owner to stay abreast of the nett position of change within the entirety of the asset which will go some way towards a wholesale reduction of green-house gas (GHG)/carbon emissions, enhance overall asset value and capture any consequential insurance risk, on an asset-by-asset basis.

Bola explained a perfect case study to demonstrate BIM Academy's involvement in a project, the restoration and redevelopment of Liverpool's India Buildings³ which is a historic landmark in the heart of Liverpool's central commercial district. Originally built in 1926, this magnificent building is now Grade II listed and operates as the HMRC Regional Centre and 'largest' Government Hub, accommodating more than 4,000 HMRC staff.



historic landmark
in the heart of
Liverpool's central
commercial district

Project Overview

Now part of the Ryder business, the team at Ward Robinson⁴ worked with HMRC for several years, and was commissioned to 'retrofit' the entire building and design the interiors to accommodate organisational growth. They were to provide a modern, inclusive, flexible environment with improved technology.

Intelligent Delivery

At a cost of £30m, the project was seen an economic boom for the Liverpool business district with HMRC committed to remaining there for many years. With its large arched ceilings and wealth of natural light, the building remains a beautiful example of modernised historic buildings that hopes to foster well-being and productivity in its staff.

Bola said: "At BIM Academy, our digital advisory team (supported by Lewis Johnson, overseen by Paul Thorpe) was brought on board to support Ryder and interior designers Ward Robinson, to help manage the coordination and digital information on the project, in line with the Government's information requirements.

"Our sector expertise in information management and the curation of the required digital strategy helped to set up the project from day one which was a very positive experience with FIS member Overbury⁵, the appointed fit-out contractor.

"We also instructed the project teams on what was required from the project data and continued to quality assure and audit their work; such activities also included continuous 'clash detection' of the design and construction process.

"Above all, the team helped to create specifications of each piece of information, noting the data required to be collated and what format it needed to be in. Additionally,

an assurance was made to collect the relevant information during the design and construction process. As a team, we also supported the project teams in the setup of a Common Data Environment (CDE), which was delivered using Autodesk's BIM 360 – and was deployed to manage all of the information on the project.

"The finished product was stunning and this project certainly met that criterion."

Creating 'Digital Twins' of internal fit-out, with a focus on optimisation

Bola went onto say: "In summary, the first 12 months following any 'practical completion' stage of a construction project, needs to evolve beyond the latent defect's conversation. The current post-Grenfell, Building Safety Act environment has now tempted the era of the 'intelligent client', a new paradigm where the criticality of e.g. carbon emissions, must be seen as important as the flexibility of heating and cooling equipment of the entire space to ensure optimal working conditions for all end-users.

"Having delivered a fit-out project that spoke of and engrossed the circularity of material choice and installation with minimal waste; the space itself must now be assessed by way of a detailed Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) exercise, with relevant dataflows that have been synchronised by the IoT architecture, threaded into the new work space.

"The 'use-case' for the digital twin will drive the visualisation required, but in short, a 5D BIM model should be so rich in metadata so as to ensure that the occupier themselves can suitably and easily empower their FM teams. In fact, every stakeholder/ user of the space, should have interoperable 'secure' access to varying levels of functionality of the digital twin, that could e.g. literally ensure 'real time' availability of desk space and/or meeting rooms."

He concluded by saying: "The era of the intelligent client has 'officially' arrived and in direct response to the growing appetite of 'remote' digital asset management, the need to 'sweat' the office space to ensure optimisation and generate the highest return on capital employed for the client, is important for every reader / FIS Member. This new paradigm has to become a new contract deliverable, and part of BAU.

If you'd like to learn more then please email: bola.abisogun@bimacademy.global

Source

1. www.bimacademyglobal
2. www.digitaltwinskills.academy
3. www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1218481
4. www.wardrobinsondesign.com
5. www.overbury.com

INDUSTRY STILL BLIGHTED BY SERIOUS PAYMENT ISSUES, CICV SURVEY REVEALS

The Construction Industry Collective Voice (CICV)¹ cashflow and payment survey², revealed that businesses are still suffering the scourge of late payments, outstanding retentions and unexpected charges. In this article, SpecFinish looked into what guidance is being offered by the CICV to address these concerning results.



The in-depth survey was undertaken to help establish an accurate picture of the current financial landscape in the Scottish construction industry. The results are concerning as some 68% of respondents to the poll said their payment terms were altered negatively, with 60% claiming adjustments to payments were made with little or no explanation. And 69% of those surveyed said the time and cost of chasing outstanding moneys was their most significant problem when it came to payment.

Len Bunton, Industry Consultant and Chair of the CICV Pipeline and Commercial sub-group, said: "From these findings, it is clear and also rather depressing that cashflow and payment issues are still major problems in the construction industry in Scotland".

The CICV devised a series of measures to help combat issues highlighted in the survey, including the publication of the best practice guide³ and an online webinar⁴, offering contractors practical advice to help them avoid payment pitfalls.



Best Practice Guide

The guide is to help contractors and subcontractors improve cashflow and prevent costly and damaging disputes.

Compiled by more than a dozen industry experts from a range of industry bodies the guide looks at a number of areas of interest, including: tender qualifications, contract amendments, payment schedules, payment applications, payments received and value, variations, retentions, fluctuations, notices, record keeping, quality/defects and conflict avoidance process.

Len said: "Our highly-experienced contributors have walked through the construction process, giving their best recommendations on how to do things better day-to-day. A lot of the problems we deal with are self-inflicted, so we have gone back to the basics of improving the way in which commercial activities are carried out.

"This is not rocket science, but it's clear the whole process needs a massive shake-up. Following the publication of the guide and our webinar to take the supply chain through it, I am confident we can get change into the UK industry."

Ian Honeyman, Commercial Director at the Scottish Building Federation⁵, explained that agreeing a mutually beneficial and collaboratively agreed contract is the first vital stage in any construction project and an area in which can lead to costly and damaging disputes.

He said: "The CICV has therefore looked at the most common reasons for payments being delayed and changed, and has prepared this guide to help companies and individuals understand how to avoid them."

CICV Chair **Alan Wilson**, who is also Managing Director of electrical trade association SELECT⁶, said: "Being paid on time and receiving what you're due in full is essential for the survival and growth of every business, so this guide and accompanying webinar will help contractors and subcontractors improve the commercial management of building contracts."



FIND OUT MORE

To read these recommendations in full visit: <https://tinyurl.com/yvamy3n8>

Webinar - Weathering the Financial Storm

Experts, **Len Bunton** and **Graeme Bain**, Restructuring Director at Johnston Carmichael⁷ looked at the responsibilities and obligations of directors of construction businesses and outline the risks of wrongful trading, the potential impact on personal liability and the warning signs that indicate financial distress. They also looked at payment and cashflow issues in the construction industry in Scotland. Some key points that were discussed included.

Len: Since the beginning of the year, we have seen people with really critical cash flow problems. "How are the banks approaching cashflow problems in the industry and how do you think directors should deal with the banks?"

Graeme: In almost every corporate restructuring the bank, or other lender/funder will be a major stakeholder in the outcome. They will only look to take action when they perceive there to be an issue. A lot of insolvencies are not being driven by mainstream and clearing banks. Having said that a lot of the COVID-19 debt that remains out there has been provided by banks. It's unlikely that a purely COVID-19 related debt due to a bank will result in a bank taking action. What we are seeing is that the non-clearing bank funding providers feature more regularly than the clearing banks do.

I suspect that the banks don't really want to pursue insolvency action unless absolutely necessary however, they will do so to protect their position if required. I don't think there is a single company I have dealt with from an insolvency perspective in at least the last six months when COVID-19 debt has not been included on the list of creditors.

HMRC's approach to debt as a policy decision was not to pursue in every case and provide appropriate breathing space, however, we are seeing more day-to-day debt recovery-type work with HMRC which is resulting in additional pressure on companies.

Advice: I would tell a director to communicate with their Bank if there is an issue, and be proactive, upfront and transparent at as early a stage as possible.

Len: Companies need to focus on their debt recovery as they have done the work and are entitled to be paid within a time scale. "Do you agree with that?"

Graeme: Absolutely, directors have a responsibility to plan ahead and make the decisions that are in the best interest of shareholders when the company is solvent or in the best interests of creditors if it is in an insolvent position. Without that diligence and robust approach to debtor collection, it is very hard to do that effectively.

Advice: Ensure the process of recovering debts is robust.

Len: "What does trading while insolvent mean and what are the issues directors should be looking out for?"

Graeme: There are two tests for insolvency, the first is a balance sheet test where the value of a company's liabilities exceed the value of its assets. The second is a cash flow test which means that you can't pay your debts as and when they fall due.

Most businesses when in a start-up phase will meet the first test whilst they are reliant on support and able to continue trading as well as taking on new and profitable work.

The second test is more of an issue and what we see more often as a demand for payment has been made and the company has not met the payment. The creditor can use that as evidence to go to court to demonstrate that the business is insolvent and should be wound up.

Advice: If there is any doubt the directors need to be very careful because the point at which a company becomes technically insolvent is very often not the same point as when it becomes formally insolvent. It is an important consideration for directors as when the company becomes technically insolvent the financial interest is then with creditors and, as long as that exists, the director should only be making decisions that are in the best interests of creditors.

It is also useful to know that if you are having difficulties receiving payment from a customer and you are concerned about their insolvency position however, you see them continue to trade you know these are the types of things that apply in every scenario.

Len: When I am asked to help a business, I ask the director a question I believe they need to face up to. "In the worst case scenario, you are not going to collect the money you are owed, what is the impact going to be on the survival of the business?"

Graeme: If the answer is that it will affect the solvency of the recipient company.

Advice: The director is to document this issue and take advice. Waiting to take advice leads to fewer options.

Len: "Do you think there is a reluctance from companies to bring in someone in like you to identify their problems?"

Graeme: Yes, often we get brought into situations at the last minute.

Advice: The key point is that the sooner you take advice the better as more options are available at an earlier stage. The word Insolvency may put people off, there is, however, a lot we can offer from our experience in advising stakeholders in distressed financial situations.



FIND OUT MORE

To hear the webinar in full visit: <https://bit.ly/watch-storm>

Source

1. www.cicvforum.co.uk
2. www.cicvforum.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CICV-Payment-Cashflow-survey-300123.pdf
3. <https://tinyurl.com/yvamy3n8>
4. <https://bit.ly/watch-storm>
5. www.scottish-building.co.uk
6. www.select.org.uk
7. www.johnstoncarmichael.com

CICV

FREE WEBINAR: WEATHERING THE FINANCIAL STORM

GRAEME BAIN
Johnston Carmichael

LEN BUNTON
Industry expert

Watch again at bit.ly/watch-storm

MANDATORY OCCURRENCE REPORTING

Further to the recent introduction of secondary legislation to the Building Safety Act, mandatory occurrence reporting is now a requirement of specific duty holders to capture and report certain fire and structural safety issues called “safety occurrences” to the Building Safety Regulator.



James Parlour, FIS
Technical and Vetting
Manager

The provision is designed to ensure that the Building Safety Regulator is able to capture any risks that could have a potential impact on fire and structural safety during the design, construction and occupation of higher-risk buildings, as well as to promote safety-conscious culture change and improve safety standards and best practice across the built environment.

‘The Building (Higher-Risk Buildings Procedures) (England) Regulations 2023’ gives provisions for a number of processes relating to higher-risk buildings including but not limited to:

- Building control applications
- Building control approval
- Change control
- Golden thread
- Information handover
- Completion certificates
- Inspections and regularisation etc.

Mandatory occurrence reporting is one such provision that puts a responsibility on the principal contractor to put in place, communicate and maintain a mandatory occurrence reporting system.

The associated mandatory occurrence reporting regulatory text extract is as follows:

- 1) The principal duty holders must –
 - a) before the construction phase begins, establish a system that enables as far as is reasonably practicable the prompt reporting of every safety occurrence to the principal duty holders by reporting persons, and
 - b) maintain the system throughout the construction phase
- 2) The principal duty holders must take reasonable steps to ensure each reporting person is provided with adequate instruction and information on the system established

by virtue of paragraph (1) and the incidents or situations that should be reported by the reporting person through the system –

- a) in the case of a designer or contractor, before beginning any work;
- b) in the case of any other person, as soon as reasonably practicable after first entering the site of the work.

What subcontractors need to understand is that whilst the responsibility for establishing and maintaining these systems lies with the principal contractor, it is clear that almost any contractor on site is expected to report using these systems regardless of whether the non-compliances are in their scope of works, or how they become aware of them.

The definition of a “reporting person” covers this as follows:

- a) any designer (including the principal designer),
- b) any contractor (including the principal contractor), and
- c) any other person who is a periodic visitor on the site of work.

The scope of what should be reported is not constrained to typical health and safety observations but is defined much more broadly to include any construction detail that does not meet the manufacturer’s instructions or industry standards/best practice.

The definition of a “safety occurrence” covers this as follows:

- a) in relation to a design, an aspect of the design relating to the structural integrity or fire safety of a higher-risk building that would, if built, meet the risk condition;
- b) otherwise, an incident or situation relating to the structural integrity or fire safety of a higher-risk building that meets the risk condition.

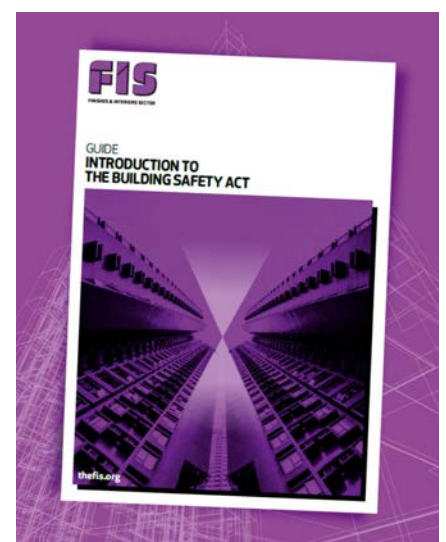
Crucial in all of this is to speak to the principal contractor about the process for mandatory reporting and how to engage with it on any given project. It is easy to doubt yourself when identifying problems with the work of another contractor, and maintaining relationships is vital so it is essential that all operatives feel empowered to ask or raise concerns.



legislation.gov.uk

The full text of the regulation is available at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2023/909/contents/made

FIS has published its own plain language guide to the Building Safety Act which is available to download: www.thefis.org/membership-hub/publications/sector-guides



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2023 FIS SCOTTISH AWARDS – THE WINNERS

The FIS Scottish Awards showcase the quality of work and range of projects carried out in Scotland. The Awards were held on 15 September at the voco Grand Central Glasgow and were hosted by broadcaster, writer, Herald columnist and former BBC Political Editor Brian Taylor.

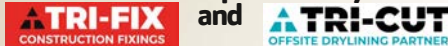
Comments from judges Steve Neilson and James Parlour: “It was an absolute pleasure to visit and formally assess such a variety of projects in different market sectors throughout Scotland. We were highly impressed by the projects submitted for consideration in this year’s FIS Scottish

Awards and have enjoyed meeting the companies, clients and architects on our visits. The passion that the companies had for the projects, their teams and their companies was very evident.

The levels of quality, finish and the skills required to deliver such projects were clear

to see; all entrants should be very proud of what they and their teams have achieved in delivering such excellent work. Tight scoring made it difficult to decide winners for the various categories, and so our congratulations go to all entrants.”

Interior Fit-Out – sponsored by



Winner - Scotwood Interiors
Contract - Kin & Carta, Edinburgh
Architect - HKSD

Scotwood Interiors undertook the fit-out for global digital transformation consultancy, Kin & Carta. Working with long-term client HKSD, the office at 132 Princes Street in Edinburgh has been designed to exude character and promote socialisation and collaboration.

Scotwood Interiors created a mixture of solid and glazed meeting rooms, open plan areas, a staff café and agile working areas.

The design incorporates industrial style exposed services and bespoke oak panelling, created by Scotwood.

Forbo Allura flooring and Ocula banded glazing with pre-finished lacquered doors, complete the light, contemporary atmosphere of the space. The installation was completed within seven weeks.

The judges said: “A first-class high quality interior fit-out project in the heart of Edinburgh, within sight of the castle. This project is a clear example of the contractor’s understanding of the designer’s concepts and details, and successfully converting that into a physical solution for the client, Kin & Carta, to support their new hybrid working arrangement.”



Specialist Installation – Under £1m

Sponsored by

Winner - DV McColl
Contract - National Robotarium, Edinburgh
Architect - Michael Laird Architects

The National Robotarium Building constructed within the grounds of the Heriot Watt University Campus, was not only a very aesthetically unique project but also the first of its kind in the UK.

This innovative design by Michael Laird Architects, especially on the suspended ceilings, captures the technological and futuristic feel of the project immensely.

An array of different ceiling types were installed throughout the building, ranging from high level perforated plasterboard triangular sections, floating ceiling grid rafts, hygienic metal ceilings and long acoustic raft sections installed to an exposed soffit.

Effective coordination between DV McColl and the Robertson Construction site team ensured that these complex details were completed on time, within budget and safely.

The judges said: “A complex project with several specifications and feature designed suspended ceilings in the new stunning National Robotarium.

The project was completed in 20 weeks involving a daily interface and, at times, nonsequential working, with a demanding M&E services contractor in multiple rooms and open two-tier height areas. The project has exceptional designed reception spaces, open plan offices, cellularised laboratory spaces and more.”



Specialist Installation - Over 1m Sponsored by



Winner - Indeglås
Contract - Advanced Research Centre, University of Glasgow
Architect - HOK International

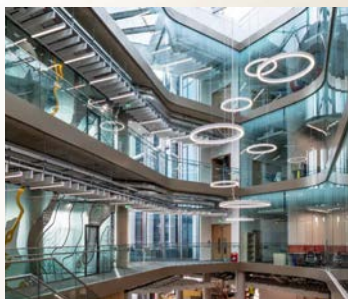
Indeglås designed and constructed an internal glazed atrium, as well as creating high performance rooms in the university's Advanced Research Centre (ARC) building.

HOK's design called for significant amounts of glass to promote connectivity and collaboration. By using a range of solutions - including modular secondary steel in the atrium and facilitating the crane install of 4.3m high glass panels to the atrium on levels one, two and three - Indeglås ensured a high standard of workmanship.

Its work included smoke and acoustic-rated atrium glazing forming a 4.4m high protective barrier; single and double-glazed screens and framed glass doors; access control; aluminium panelling; and a large scale, bespoke artwork package.

The judges said: "A first class project featuring a visually stunning atrium, that deserves the merit of winning the Specialist Installation - Over 1m and being Project of the Year. Innovative design and delivery of exceptional quality tell a successful story of how the architects and client's needs were met and delivered by Indeglås."

Working with Glasgow University's chosen contractor Multiplex, architects HOK International and their supporting engineering designers, Indeglås has created a magnificent building on the university campus for them all to be very proud of.'



Project of the Year Sponsored by



Winner - Indeglås
Contract - Advanced Research Centre, University of Glasgow
Architect - HOK International

(L-R) Brian Taylor (Guest Speaker), Iain McAlpine, Jeanette MacIntyre and Iain Mudie of Minster



The event raised a fantastic £2,000 for the Lighthouse Club, a Construction Industry Charity that provides emotional, physical and financial wellbeing support to construction workers and their families. To donate please visit: www.lighthouseclub.org

The headline sponsor for the awards was



Apprentice of the Year - sponsored by



Winner - Jay Miller, Ceiling Installation Apprentice at D V McColl

Jay started his NVQ level 5 in Ceiling Fixing in 2021 and achieved this in August 2023. Throughout his training, Jay has showed consistency by completing units to a high standard. He has demonstrated enthusiasm for learning and has excelled in all elements of his learning.

Jay's hard work and dedication have been recognised and appreciated by both his colleagues and contractors.

The judges said: "Jay has made a positive impact in his role and has a promising future ahead. His strong work ethic, attention to detail and willingness to support the team set a great example for others and contribute to a positive working environment."



(L-R) Brian Taylor (Guest Speaker), Jay Miller and Barry Dawson of CITB

Lifetime Achievement Award

Winner - Len Bunton, Owner of Bunton Consulting

Len has dedicated his career in the pursuit of fairness in the construction industry. An inspiration to many, Len has been unrelenting in his efforts to champion a fairer supply chain, unafraid to call out the worst behaviours. He's been a powerful advocate for SMEs and an absolute rock that they can lean on. Len qualified as a quantity surveyor in the early 70s and took the bull by the horns, setting up his own practice in 1979. By the mid 80s, this was a 50-strong practice focused on project management, surveying and dispute resolution. This business was acquired, and they went on to serve on the main board of a number of firms specialising in contract advisory services and dispute resolution.

Len is an industry man exemplified by his standing as a:

- Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators
- Honorary Fellow of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland
- Panel member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

In all of this, Len has been a huge ambassador for the conflict avoidance process. He was also instrumental in establishing the Construction Industry Collective Voice in Scotland. This is a group that was quickly developed to address issues arising from COVID, and to encourage collaboration and industry sharing. It was a beacon of hope, and has now moved on to look at wider sector problems in Scotland. The group recently published the Guide to Contractual Best Practice, which again was driven and largely written by Len.

Len has also worked closely with FIS to directly support members in difficult times, sharing his blogs as best practice guidance and helping to develop a new

contract review service that is launching this month for FIS members. Len has been described as a true champion of the industry, whose dedication for better payment practices in the sector is unmatched.



(L-R) Len Bunton, Philip Brown, FIS President and Iain McIlwee FIS CEO

Etex appoints new Head of Sustainability

Etex has appointed Oliver Cripps as its new Head of Sustainability, UK&I, to support its brands including Siniat.

In his role, Oliver will be focused on driving the company's sustainability agenda, heightening its environmental credentials for its operations and product solutions, decreasing reliance on raw materials, and sharing his expertise to develop the capabilities of the entire Etex team.

He brings 25 years of experience in sustainability across a variety of sectors, including tourism, land management and manufacturing. His previous roles include Senior Sustainability Manager at Dyson Technology where he led sustainability for the New Product Innovation and Research teams. He also has experience working with global furniture manufacturer, MillerKnoll to support R&D and corporate sustainability.

Oliver said: "One of the largest factors that drove me to consider the opportunity with Etex is its dedication to building a better, more sustainable future. The building materials industry relies heavily on raw materials which have a significant environmental footprint. However, Etex takes responsibility for the challenge, has a group-wide programme to reduce its footprint and is committed to using innovation to meet its ambitions.

"In fact, Etex has already committed 50% of its innovation fund to focus on sustainability, which is a clear example of how it uses sustainability as a guiding compass of business transformation and makes concrete investments to reach its goals".

www.etexgroup.com



Oliver Cripps, Head of Sustainability UK&I at Etex



A very impressive new HQ for Formula One's Aston Martin



Komfort plays an important part in creating HQ for Formula One's Aston Martin

A brand new headquarters was to be created for the Aston Martin Racing Formula One team, based at Silverstone Race Track. This was to be a state of the art building solely designed to build, run and service Aston Martin's Formula One racing vehicles.

Jim Smith, Managing Director at Komfort explained the requirements of the project demanded good DB ratings, full height doors, privacy for Mission Control with smart glass, an executive area with blinds, and an atrium to flood light into the 'street' below. Plus, offices, meeting rooms, a Mission Control racing hub, a large atrium screen over indoor areas, open plan design offices, breakout and communal areas.

Jim said: "Prior to the start of the project we had numerous pre-start meetings with the design team and H&S visits with our external advisors to ensure the project would run smoothly from the start.

"To achieve a system and design the client desired, we built a mock-up sample office onsite during the design stage to highlight the design elements such as acoustic double glazed glass in Polar 100 and our deflection head system. We also supplied samples of our blinds, with the system in situ to

demonstrate the operating fixtures and fittings. All samples were supplied in the client's choice of colour including matt black blinds to match the trackwork".

Jim explained that the double glazed full length atrium required teams working on both sides of the glass, installation from the office side and safety (fall arrest) from the street side. The atrium glazing over the machine shop area required glass lifting equipment, to ensure the fire rated glass could be sealed properly from both sides.

He said: "The client made numerous changes to the design during installation, which had to be accommodated. The final project involved 800 sqm of glass and 50+ Sonik doors throughout the building site. It was a challenge and one that Komfort rose to admirably.

"The end result meant we had created modern open plan offices with a selection of meeting rooms. Large executive offices with blinds/locks for privacy. A large full length atrium from the offices above to the workshops and indoor street below. All areas of the racing team on one floor (design office, HR, exec offices, Mission Control, finance etc)".

www.komfort.com

EE Smith Contracts celebrates another year in the UK's Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers

EE Smith Contracts has made the UK's highly esteemed Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers for the fourth consecutive year. The Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers celebrates England's outstanding apprenticeship employers, recognising their commitment to creating new apprenticeships, the diversity of their apprentices and the number of apprentices who successfully achieve their apprenticeships. The rankings are produced annually by the Department for Education, in partnership with High Fliers Research, which independently assesses and rank the nation's top apprenticeship employers. To read more visit:

www.topapprenticeshipemployers.co.uk

Victoria Bottrill, Pre Con Coordinator & Assistant PM at EE Smith said: "We are thrilled to have achieved another year in the UK's Top 100 Apprentice Employers. After decades of investment and evolution, we are very proud that our outstanding training programme is recognised in all its glory. I would like to say well done and thank you to our team of apprentice mentors and education providers as we couldn't do it without you".

www.eesmith.co.uk



(L-R) Victoria and Neil Bottrill celebrating EE Smith Contracts amazing achievement



CCF is on the road to lower carbon deliveries with HVO fuel

As part of its commitment to reducing the environmental impact of its business operations, insulation, drywall and ceiling product distributor CCF has invested in a new sustainable fuel source to cut carbon emissions across its delivery fleet.

CCF has now introduced hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) refuelling sites at several of its branches across the country to provide part of its delivery fleet with a low carbon alternative to the use of diesel fuel. The shift to a more sustainable fuel source is part of CCF's commitment to decarbonise its deliveries to customers by steadily reducing the carbon footprint generated by its lorries by up to 92 per cent when compared to the use of diesel.

The HVO used by CCF is sustainably sourced and made from waste materials such as used cooking oils and other waste oils. In addition to reducing carbon dioxide, it also has the potential to reduce other emissions, including nitrogen oxide by up to 30% and particulates by up to

85% and requires no modification to existing diesel engines. As well as bringing tangible environmental benefits, CCF has made the move to HVO fuel to support customers who are working on low carbon schemes or simply wish to reduce the embodied carbon within their supply chain. The move also supports CCF's growing involvement in the public sector where the distributor is working with main contractors and specialist contractors to deliver the decarbonisation ambitions of the Government's Net Zero strategy.

In addition to this, CCF's move to a 100% renewable electricity tariff in November 2021 is now generating an average of 45 tonnes less carbon emissions per month across CCF's operations and to mitigate emissions of the company's estate further, the installation of energy saving solutions, such as utilising LED lighting and solar panels is well under way.

www.ccfstd.co.uk

Rockfon opens its new training facility

Rockfon recently opened its new training facility in Daventry. The training facility is designed for distributors, installers, designers or anything in between. They have eight 'standard' courses to choose from or they can mix and match courses to suit an organisation's needs. They range from half day taster sessions through to deep dives into advanced Rockfon systems.

Mark Tarrant, Technical Trainer at Rockfon said: "We are very proud to have opened our new training facility in Daventry.

"All courses are a mixture of theory and hands-on practical training. All abilities and levels of experience are very welcome and our aim is to help you expand your knowledge and expertise to benefit your clients and your business - and have some fun whilst you're at it".

Beena Nana, FIS Head of Skills and Training said: "The launch event for the new Rockfon training centre in Daventry was a resounding success, filled with excitement and enthusiasm from all that attended, highlighted by informative presentations, including one by FIS CEO Iain McIlwee. Those present were left highly impressed by the centre's capabilities.

"The new centre promises to be a valuable resource for Rockfon teams, providing opportunities for upskilling and professional development. Additionally, it holds the potential for future training that could benefit the wider sector, demonstrating Rockfon's commitment to advancing knowledge and expertise in their industry."

To find out more about the courses on offer visit: www.rockfon.co.uk/training

PPG 140th anniversary Colour of the Year is Limitless

As part of PPG's 140th anniversary, they showcased the latest innovations across their businesses and announced their 2024 Colour of the Year which is Limitless, PPG1091-3, in a new, state-of-the-art Customer and Employee Experience Centre, at their global headquarters in Pittsburgh.

Limitless is a contemporary honey beige shade which offers infinite design and styling possibilities for residential and commercial interiors and exteriors, consumer products and industrial applications. Subdued, sophisticated and calming, Limitless reflects a shift in consumer preferences towards warmer, less saturated colours for everything from automobiles to architectural elements.

Sarah Trowse, Customer Sustainability Business Partner - Global Architectural & Traffic Solutions at PPG said: "At PPG (NYSE:PPG) we work every day to develop and deliver the paints, coatings and speciality materials that our customers have trusted for 140 years. Through dedication and creativity, we solve our customers' biggest challenges, collaborating closely to find the right path forward. We serve customers in construction, consumer products, industrial and transportation markets and aftermarkets. "Here's to many more decades of partnering with our customers to create "Limitless" possibilities for sustained growth together, protecting and beautifying the world".



www.ppg.com



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FIS AGM and Regional Meeting

Hill Dickinson LLP, London
7 November

Training Awards Lunch

Plasterers Hall, London
21 November

FIS Regional Meeting

Manchester
29 November



The Worshipful Company of Plasterers

FIS Conference

Business Design Centre, London
27 - 28 February 2024

Workspace Design Show

Business Design Centre, London
27 - 28 February 2024

FIS Awards Lunch

Royal Lancaster Hotel, London
6 June 2024

For further information of these events visit:
www.thefis.org/events

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workspace design show

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At the event the FIS Conference will take place over two days and will include the FIS Innovation Awards. This event is a must-attend for anyone in the sector and is free to attend.

- Unparalleled networking opportunities
- Drinks party
- FIS Conference, 27 - 28 February
- FIS Innovation Awards, 27 February
- Immersive, experiential features
- 300+ interior products



workspaceshow.co.uk

WHAT A YEAR SO FAR, THERE'S A LOT TO CELEBRATE!



Michelle Armstrong,
FIS Head of
Membership

Michelle Armstrong reflects on her first year as FIS Head of Membership and highlights some of the key work FIS has been undertaking throughout 2023

When I joined FIS last summer, it took me a long time to get my head around all that we do. FIS is dedicated to supporting its members; by helping navigate legal and contractual issues and assisting with technical queries. FIS also lobbies Government for change, which is crucial to ensure the interests of the sector are represented at the highest levels and we work tirelessly to ensure that members' voices are heard.

We also provide a range of other services to members, including free credit checks and promotion through SpecFinish. The team host a range of events from awards and conferences to regional events and sector-specific working group meetings. These provide members with the opportunity to connect with others in the sector, learn about the latest developments and innovations and celebrate the successes of the industry.

Ross Howe, Managing Director, Howe Ceilings and Interiors said: "The last FIS Regional Meeting was packed with expert speakers providing practical tips. The next day I was back in my office making changes. The support and advice we get through FIS is invaluable".

In my first 'cycle' of membership, I've reflected on what we've achieved so far this year and there's a lot to celebrate! Here are just some of the highlights.

Technical guidance

We've developed a raft of technical guidance to support the sector, including:

- **FIS Guide to the Building Safety Act:** Created to help members understand their obligations under the Building Safety Act¹.
- **Site Guide to Drylining:** A practical guide for the construction team to provide specialist knowledge in relation to health and safety, storage, handling, fixing and sequencing with other trades².
- **Client Guide to Fit Out and Refurbishment:** To assist clients with the task of fitting out or refurbishing their offices and to promote

best practice in the fit-out process³. FIS has also worked in collaboration to establish the new Passive Fire Knowledge Group to help drive a better supply chain approach to compliance.

"FIS as a trade body has brought a high degree of professionalism to a group of specialist trades. These guides are a great example of how the supply chain can collaborate to provide quality information", commented **Peter Rogers CBE**, Co-Founder of Lipton Rogers Developments.

A Powerful Voice

FIS and the University of Reading published inciteful new research into procurement to support interaction with Government, civil service and the wider supply chain⁴.

We joined the new Home Building Skills Partnership Sector Panel and joined the RICS Conflict Avoidance Coalition Steering Group.

Work on the interim review by the Migration Advisory committee saw Drylining as the only trade reviewed and moved to the skilled worker list and a number of FIS trades added to the shortage occupation list.

Brian Sheppard, Commercial Director, AT Jones Group, commented: "We really do appreciate the unstinting dedication and stamina that FIS demonstrate in representing members and our community. It does not go unappreciated".

Skills and Training

Earlier in the year, we launched new guidance on competency management, closely followed by the launch of the new sustainability learning pathway 'FIS Sustainability Awareness: Doing Business Better'. There's been great collaboration with Skills Development Scotland, CITB and Scottish members on the review and development of existing apprenticeships in ceilings and partitions, providing a structure for any future review and development of apprenticeships and vocational qualifications.

Kate Hawkins, Pre-Contract Projects Director, Stanmore Contractors said: "The competency management plan launched earlier in the year by FIS is simple and straightforward. At a time where there are so many unknowns around the BSA, such clear and concise guidance on competency is invaluable".

Delivering Service

Our new QS helpline has been instrumental in positively resolving a number of disputes.

New best practice guidance is helping contractors and subcontractors improve cash flow and prevent costly and damaging disputes.

We have also launched new member benefits, including discounts on lease vehicles through Crusader Vehicle and discounted consultancy fees through our risk management partner, RBMC.

Our community continues to be strengthened by a record number of applications. So far this year we have welcomed 62 new members.

This ongoing growth is built on a foundation of active engagement, open communication and dynamic support. To see which companies are part of our growing membership, visit:

www.thefis.org/members-directory

As you can see, there's been a lot going on at FIS and we're looking forward to finishing the year with another strong quarter!

Moi Bliss, Managing Director from Berkeley Integra said: "FIS is a beacon of hope when things get tough. I know if we ever hit a technical or contractual issue, they are at the end of the phone, ensuring I don't feel alone, always seeking to understand, offering practical support and where necessary fighting our corner. They embody the potential of collective wisdom and we are stronger as a business and as a sector for having FIS on our side".

Source

1. <https://tinyurl.com/5n87p2py>
2. <https://tinyurl.com/3zu7wuwu>
3. <https://tinyurl.com/52622azv>
4. <https://tinyurl.com/3c73nupk>

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