

# SPEC FINISH

**FIS**

The magazine of FIS  
representing the finishes  
and interiors sector

[www.thefis.org](http://www.thefis.org)

## SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS REPORT - PUSHING THE CONVERSATION FORWARD



### **Sustainability:**

Pre-cycle  
agreements

### **Technical:**

Everybody is a specifier 'til  
they are punched in the face

### **Design:**

A healthy building, a  
healthy life



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# BETTER THINGS MAKE

## WE'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE, BUT THIS TIME IT IS DIFFERENT

With the Building Safety Act ratcheting up this month, we find ourselves at a pivotal moment to explore opportunities for both individual and collective change for the better.

The FIS Conference provided us with an opportunity to explore avenues for individual and collective change and the support needed to make it. We covered a lot of ground, but it really struck me that, regardless of the question, the obstacles and the answers were similar and lean into core principles that are highlighted in this edition of SpecFinish. These include:

- Instrumental to unlocking change is earlier supply chain engagement centered on better risk management and a clear Contractor Design Development Process.
- The Design Responsibility Matrix plays a crucial role here. It is imperative that it accurately reflects what is embedded in the contract and ensures absolute clarity regarding each party's responsibilities.
- The routine amendment of contracts has gotten out of hand. It has become more than an expensive and unnecessary process that damages relationships; the confusion and distortion of risk have a direct impact on the insurability of projects. A genuine, concerted effort is needed to outlaw the routine amendments that distort risk and mask problems.
- We have mistaken overlapping stages within the Plan of Works to mean that tasks can be completed last-minute. The point is that Design needs to be a circular and inclusive process that brings the key parties together as early as is practicable.
- We need to be clearer on the value in a job to help push back on lowest cost tendering. The capital outlay and design

intent have to be assessed better in the context of operational performance and, ultimately, demolition costs (from both a cash and carbon perspective).

- Stepping outside of the project is critical. We get sucked in and there is little energy and strained relationships at the end. Consequently, we fail to dedicate enough time to learning from the brutal lessons that construction presents. A more circular supply chain, built on partnerships, is critical for safety, productivity improvements and sustainability.

I genuinely believe we are at a tipping point. This month heralds the ratcheting up of the Building Safety Act. It doesn't mean everything changes from the 6 April, but we are turning the page to the next chapter for construction. In this chapter, the regulator, armed with stronger enforcement powers, truly begins to scale up.

The initial focus is on higher-risk buildings, but don't be fooled into thinking that the world will carry on as normal for everyone else. The Competency Requirements in the Building Regulations apply to all jobs. If you have more than one contractor working on a project, a principal designer and principal contractor will need to be appointed. If you are carrying out any part of the project's building work, you must consider how your building work interacts with other building work. You must inform the principal contractor if you are concerned that your building work makes other building work non-compliant or if other building work makes your building work non-compliant.

**IAIN MCILWEE**  
Chief Executive,  
Finishes and  
Interiors Sector



If you appoint other contractors to work on the project, you must ensure they have the required competence to carry out the work. If you are assuming any design responsibility, you must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the design work carried out by you or other designers you manage is effectively planned, managed, and monitored.

All companies need to provide competence declarations. How do you evidence that builders and designers under your responsibility are competent, and that you have robust control processes in place? At the end of the job, individuals will need to sign statements as principal contractor and principal designer to say that they have fulfilled their duties under the Building Regulations.

The construction industry has discussed early supply chain involvement since the inception of supply chains, and we've talked about transformation, but only paid lip service to change. Will the Building Safety Act bring about overnight change? Of course not. However, the risk of staying the same has significantly increased and ultimately, in the words of the formidable Tony Robbins: "Change happens when the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of change".

Welcome

# SPEC FINISH

## CONTACT US

### EDITORIAL

Editor:

David Crowson

Email:

david.crowson@warnersgroup.co.uk

SpecFinish

Warners Group Publications

West Street

Bourne

Lincs PE10 9PH

### ADVERTISING

Advertising enquiries:

Theresa Geeson

Email:

theresag@warnersgroup.co.uk

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

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## FIS

### FIS

Tel: 0121 707 0077

[www.thefis.org](http://www.thefis.org)

Email: [info@thefis.org](mailto:info@thefis.org)

FIS, Unit 4, Olton Bridge

245 Warwick Rd

Solihull, West Midlands

B92 7AH

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Scope 3 emissions report - Pushing the conversation forward

#### SpecFinish magazine wrapper

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(L-R) Daryl Lewis, Business Development Manager and SFS Manager at Protektor Group presenting the award to Vikki Randles, Marketing Consultant to IOBAC UK



# WELCOME

## TO THE APRIL ISSUE OF SPECFINISH

I recently attended the FIS Conference and Innovation Awards at the Workspace Design Show at the impressive Business Design Centre.

Over the two days, there was standing room only as attendees gathered to listen to all eight thought-provoking sessions. These ranged from the opening session, Conflicting trends: What to expect for the fit-out market in 2024, to the closing session, Delivering wellbeing through fit-out. On page 14, we feature the session Improving the fit-out process: A partnership approach, where two industry experts shared important messages, emphasising the significance of early supply chain involvement and re-imagining the fit-out process.

At the end of day one was the FIS Innovation Awards and drinks reception. The winner's innovations supported improvements in efficiency, productivity, performance, quality or perception of the finishes and interiors sector. There were four categories, Digital, Sustainability, Product - Fit-out, and Product - FF&E and then the overall 2024 Innovation of the Year. The winners of the four categories received their awards and were then invited to deliver a short pitch on their innovation to the audience, with the audience determining the overall 2024 Innovation of the Year. Congratulations to the winners and those who were shortlisted. To find out the winners go to page 26.

It was a pleasure to see and meet so many passionate individuals and reaffirm a strong relationship with FIS members and experts in construction and their fields.

Also, in this issue on page 16, we explore the results of the collaboration between FIS and The Condor Collective on Project Happiness to benchmark happiness, culture and engagement in the fit-out sector. The project aims to enable FIS to drive initiatives for their members and the wider sector, to make fit-out an even greater space to work in.

**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](mailto:david.crowson@warnersgroup.co.uk)**

[www.thefis.org](http://www.thefis.org)





## EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS



**Joe Cilia**  
Joe is FIS Technical Director



**Holly Tuffin**  
Holly is Co-Founder at The Condor Collective



**Beena Nana**  
Beena is FIS Head of Skills and Training



**Gavin Jones**  
Gavin is Senior Business Development and Relationships Manager at beAccredited



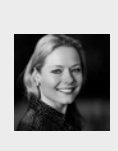
**Flavie Lowres**  
Flavie is FIS Sustainability Champion



**David Cant**  
David is safety + risk management professional, mentor, coach and Managing Director at Veritas Consulting



**Mark Randall**  
Mark is Managing Director at IOR



**Olga Turner Baker**  
Olga is Managing Director and Co-founder at Ekkist, and RICS East Chair



**Iain McIlwee**  
Iain is FIS CEO



**Damian James**  
Damian is Director at Damian James Delay and Quantum Experts



**Professor Stuart Green**  
Stuart is Professor at the University of Reading



**Iain Cavanagh**  
Iain is Managing Director at Independent Fire Safety Services

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### Community News

1 Victoria Street, London SW1



## High-quality materials available for reuse from 1 Victoria Street, London

1 Victoria Street is due to undergo a major refurbishment and now has multiple items available for reuse – this includes carpet tiles, kitchens, bathroom units, glass blocks, timber doors, radiators, ceiling tiles, luminaires/lights, and glass partitions.

The building was originally constructed in 1963, however successive refits mean that there are numerous fixtures and fittings dating back to the 1990s, and some more recent than that.

The items available can be viewed on the Excess Materials Exchange<sup>1</sup> where a brief summary is provided.

A soft strip commenced in February, so time is of the essence if you wish to register an interest in any of these items. Developers Stanhope, welcomes enquiries and interest

from all parties such as developers and design teams who are interested in taking these items for use in other projects (which will dramatically reduce your embodied carbon), together with community and charity groups.

Contact [simon@reusefully.co.uk](mailto:simon@reusefully.co.uk) to register your interest!

FIS Sustainability Champion Flavie Lowres said: "It would be amazing to see a new home for these products! There are so many items with potential, and this is a great opportunity to find low-carbon products. The time for action is now!"

[www.reusefully.co.uk](http://www.reusefully.co.uk)

Source

1. <http://tinyurl.com/47k7ax9v>

## CPA forecasts that construction output will rise by 2.0% in 2025

According to the Construction Products Association's (CPA) Winter Forecasts, construction output is forecast to fall by 2.1% this year due to falls in private housing new build and repair, maintenance and improvement (rm&i) which are the two largest construction sectors. The CPA forecasts that construction output will rise by 2.0% in 2025 in line with falling interest rates and a general economic recovery, which, in turn, could ease challenges in the housing and rm&i sectors. Recent disruptions in the Red Sea, however, have been identified as a key risk to the forecasts, potentially leading to supply issues such as delays and accelerating cost inflation.

Commenting on the Winter Forecasts, CPA Economics Director, Noble Francis said:

"The bad weather at the start of January has already affected the construction industry but there is still lots of time for a catch up in activity when the weather improves. The bigger problems for the industry are the hits to activity last year in its two largest sectors: Private housing and private housing rm&i. These are likely to continue into 2024. Even with expected falls in interest and mortgage rates in the second half of this year, rates are likely to remain relatively high and so demand in the housing market, house building sector and rm&i sector is likely to remain subdued overall.

"Given the importance of housing to the UK economy, it was disappointing that the Chancellor's Autumn Statement last year

## Boosting routes into industry

The Construction Leadership Council (CLC) has published a report from NOCN and CCATF (both education and skills bodies) setting out recommendations to improve the flow of skilled and competent talent into the construction sector.

The report highlights the challenges of ensuring competency of the workforce to comply with the new Building Safety Act, the overall decline in skills funding over the past 10 years and the need to upskill the workforce to embrace the green, digital jobs of the future. It suggests developing the CSCS scheme to support verification with competency under the Building Safety Act, improving diversity, and developing a more agile and consistent UK skills system for construction.

To read the report in full visit: [www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/news/boosting-routes-into-industry](http://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/news/boosting-routes-into-industry)



had little to help the beleaguered sector. It is critical that we see measures to help boost house building and homeownership from government in the upcoming Spring Budget. Furthermore, Government should do more on infrastructure delivery given that the sector is set for its third consecutive fall in output. This is despite announcements from Government on new projects to compensate for the cancelling of the Northern leg of HS2."

To read the report in full and hear about the top three largest construction sectors: Private housing, private housing rm&i and infrastructure visit: <http://tinyurl.com/3de6a87m>

[www.constructionproducts.org.uk](http://www.constructionproducts.org.uk)

# RISK CAN'T BE AVOIDED, BUT BEING AWARE OF IT IS THE FIRST STEP IN REDUCING IT

Risk comes in many guises, and the secret to maintaining the profit margin you planned for and getting paid can be lost if you overlook where the risks are.



Joe Cilia, FIS Technical Director

**J**oe Cilia, FIS Technical Director, explains what he refers to as the 'headline acts' when assessing risks in our sector.

## Contractors Design Portion (CDP)

CDP has become standard where the detailed design gets passed down and leaves the contractor open to liability, sometimes years after the event.

The problem is that liability sits with whoever takes on design even if it is unintentional and without appropriate Professional Indemnity (PI) insurance it's risk that ultimately could be the demise of the business.

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 state that "designer" means any person (including a client, contractor or other person referred to in these Regulations) who in the course or furtherance of a business:

1. prepares or modifies a design; or
2. arranges for, or instructs, any person under their control to do so

In all cases, the designer is responsible for ensuring that the design meets the requirements of the Building Regulations as well as ensuring the construction can be carried out safely and in accordance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations.

Designers often turn to the expertise of a specialist contractor for advice who in turn may look to past projects without realising the consequences of their advice.

To find out more about the unintentional designer visit: [www.specfinish.co.uk/the-unintentional-designer](http://www.specfinish.co.uk/the-unintentional-designer)

## The contract terms

Contract terms are full of risks and Len Bunton, Owner of Bunton Consulting, shares insights on the market, associated risk, and provides advice on how to navigate them in [Lens Blog<sup>1</sup>](#) in SpecFinish.

The FIS Contract Review Service<sup>2</sup> is there to provide pro-active support to identify onerous contract clauses before work starts. Although there is a small cost for this, it will help reduce your risks.

## Estimating

Estimating is your best guess on what the cost will be; often based on reconciliation from past projects. Estimators need to understand several facets, such as, the contract, the ability to understand and meet specification with all its interfaces and workmanship requirements.

Later this year FIS will produce a series of online bite-sized training modules. If you would like to help us develop these get in touch by emailing: [joecilia@thefis.org](mailto:joecilia@thefis.org)

## Procurement

Procuring carries similar risks and procuring the wrong materials can have devastating consequences such as not realising that the fire resistance requirements were for a classified system (EN) rather than a class (BS).

Further risks occur on site such as where additional sealants are required and the request isn't clear about the performance, for example, perimeter fire seals may indeed state 30 minutes integrity but the width or depth of the gap is larger than the field of the application allows, leaving a risk for remediation.

## Value engineering

Value engineering options, risks can be made without the full knowledge of the interface with the structure and other building elements, so any suggestions should be referred back to the principal designer for approval before confirming the cost and certainly before starting work.

## Performance gap

Performance of any system requires the components to be installed as tested and within the field of application, so be aware of the risk where the evidence isn't compliant with the interface that you intend to use it or even worse it's not been tested, shaft wall (asymmetric) constructions are currently good examples of this.

Risk mitigation should be high on all your agendas. Risk is higher now than ever with T&Cs and details, and quality being looked at with an ever-critical eye to tip the balance in final payment and retention claims. It's more important now than ever to be aware, question, confirm, check and look out for the advice that FIS has available such as the PPP initiative and the Risk Management Toolkit<sup>3</sup> which has been created to encourage a culture of scrutinising risk in a structured way.

FIS has further resources available to help you manage risk, visit: [www.thefis.org](http://www.thefis.org) for details.

## Source

1. [www.specfinish.co.uk/?s=Len+Bunton](http://www.specfinish.co.uk/?s=Len+Bunton)
2. [www.thefis.org/membership-hub/memberbenefits/fis-contract-review-service](http://www.thefis.org/membership-hub/memberbenefits/fis-contract-review-service)
3. [www.thefis.org/knowledge-hub/product-process-people](http://www.thefis.org/knowledge-hub/product-process-people)

# CITB ELABORATES ON QUESTIONS RAISED AT FIS AGM AND REGIONAL MEETING

**Tim Balcon**, CEO of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), addresses some thought-provoking questions from FIS members.



Tim Balcon, CEO of CITB

Tim was a guest speaker at the FIS AGM and Regional Meeting and spoke of the systemic challenges in the training landscape and the role of the CITB. A number of questions were posed by the delegates that **Beena Nana**, FIS Head of Skills and Training, sought to address with more comprehensive responses.

In his presentation Tim highlighted the manifold challenges in recruitment, not least that the labour market is highly competitive and there remain issues around the perception of construction. He also touched on the challenge of finding people to deliver the training.

Tim noted that there is an over-reliance on apprenticeships to achieve the required numbers of new entrants and it is not easy for either companies or individuals to identify alternative training pathways.

With the industry now having an increasing emphasis on competence driven by requirements such as the Building Safety Act, he referenced the need for a more modular skills system. He also referenced

the need to put employers in control and that Sector Plans would deliver a more targeted approach to delivering the support required to companies.

During the discussion, the shortfall in funding and the lack of alignment between the Apprenticeship Levy and CITB Levy were discussed.

The fact that the funding rewards outcome leaving employers to carry too much of the risk was raised, as was the challenge of funding in a market where there is a higher proportion of self-employment. There were also concerns about the cost of getting people onto a construction site so that training can begin - this remains a barrier.

A final question was asked about whether immigration was still something that we should be exploring more holistically. **Iain McIlwee**, FIS Chief Executive, reported that FIS had lobbied to get the majority of our trades onto the Shortage Occupation List but Drylining was the only occupation (off the back of FIS lobbying work) to be re-assessed as a Skilled Worker. However, policy has shifted again, the Shortage Occupation List is likely to be removed and replaced by the Immigration Salary List and much of this good work looks set to be undone. This is very much a political issue at the moment and to address uncertainty more needs to be done to take matters into our own hands - we need to train and recruit more effectively the indigenous workforce.

## The more comprehensive responses

### The cost of getting someone on site

Tim explained there is a cost if a recruit doesn't have a valid CSCS Card. CSCS Cards and the CITB Health, Safety and Environment (HS&E) test assure employers of a level of qualification and that the workforce can keep themselves and those around them safe on site. The CITB HS&E course is valid for two years while applying for a CSCS card, and can even be taken on-site at a mobile testing service.



CSCS cards, which aren't administered by CITB, provide proof that workers have the appropriate training and qualifications for the job they do. The CITB supports the cost of the training required to obtain the CSCS card however, there are no plans to allow companies to recover the administrative cost of applying for the card. The levy investment is to encourage training but this does not include administrative processes associated with obtaining the card.

Whether a company is employing people or utilising subcontractors, CITB offers a comprehensive range of grants, starting from £60 for short-duration training courses, up to £25,000 for largescale training programmes as part of our Skills and Training Fund. A team of advisors can support a company in finding the right funding options.

### The level of work the CITB undertakes in schools

Tim said: "This is always a tricky balance for us. CITB's remit is chiefly around post-16 training and entry to the workforce, so working directly with schools isn't our primary engagement tool. Of course, we want the best people to come into our industry and we work with the industry to inspire the next generation of construction professionals – but we do that through our careers products – the first of these being Go Construct<sup>1</sup>, which we operate on behalf of the entire sector. Go Construct actively promotes careers in construction to young people, educators and parents through various outreach programs, interactive resources and events. Our Educational Resources provide classroom activities, lesson plans and career guides to help teachers and career advisors teach young people about construction.

"In addition, the Go Construct STEM Ambassador programme takes construction into the classroom. Ambassadors engage with





young people across the UK, collaborating with schools to deliver workshops, career talks, and interactive sessions that showcase the diverse range of opportunities available in construction. Ambassadors have visited almost 1,000 schools so far – with many more to come.

“By working closely with our local and regional partners, CITB also raises awareness of construction careers, through over 20,000 work tasters every year, encouraging young people to make the right choices about a career in the industry”.

### The cost of apprentices

Tim explained that CITB believes that apprentices represent fantastic value for money for their employers. In fact, apprentice outputs usually surpass their associated costs, delivering a net benefit of up to £18,000 to employers during their training<sup>2</sup>.

He said: “CITB offers employer grants of £2,500 per year, per apprentice, plus £3,500 on successful completion of the apprenticeship. Ours is the only industry to provide this level of funding. We also have a dedicated New Entrant Support team to provide one-to-one support for smaller employers with every aspect of the apprenticeship. We provide extra grants for occupations with critical skills shortages, such as an extra £2,000 for interior systems installers apprentices in England, and £2,000 for drylining apprentices in Scotland and Wales. Additionally, we cover 80% of apprentice’s travel and accommodation costs under the Travel to Train scheme.

“SMEs often pay little or no CITB Levy, with exemptions in place for those with a wage bill of less than £400,000. Smaller employers are also eligible for Government funding which covers 95% to 100% of the apprentice training costs.

“Apprenticeships not only enable employers to develop skills specific to their company needs, but also allow them to earn more money. 78% of employers say apprentices

improve their productivity, representing a sound investment for the future”.

### Trainers and Assessors

Tim explained that the CITB recognises that the lack of trainers and assessors in our sector is a huge issue. He said: “At the start of 2024, we implemented a plan for tackling this shortage, which included increasing the funding and improved accessibility of trainer and assessor training. We will ensure that training is in place for all sectors removing the barrier for those who want to make the transition.

“The development of the Provider Network will provide the infrastructure to ensure that the existing workforce of construction trainers is kept up to date with new techniques and skill requirements and that individuals who are new to the profession are supported with the transition into education.

“We see the bigger challenge is encouraging people who are qualified in construction to then teach. CITB is working with the Department of Education (DfE) on an attraction campaign and funding the industry to pilot innovative approaches to identify and support skilled people who are leaving jobs on-site. However, there is clear evidence that the real barrier is the differential in wages. The Industrial Training Levy (ITA) does not allow CITB to utilise levy funds to supplement wages and the ongoing cost would be unsustainable. A further barrier is the nature of the work associated with teaching and assessing – a considerable amount of that work is administrative, which doesn’t generate the interest of the practical highly skilled people in our industry who we might seek to recruit.

“The CITB knows that a more fundamental solution is required so in the future we will look at options for changing how training is designed, delivered and assessed.

“As the skills system changes to create greater flexibility for the employer and the learner, there is also an opportunity to

review traditional training and assessment methods to change the type of training and assessment resource needed. This is integral to CITB’s plans for the creation of alternative training pathways. CITB wants to create training and assessment routes that work for the people in our sector, but also suit the specific needs of the three GB nations”.

Tim concluded by saying: “If you want to know more about how to get better value out of CITB, the best thing to do is to get in touch with our team:

**customerengagement@citb.co.uk**

If you are CITB registered and have trained your employees and/or subcontractors you are entitled to claim support from CITB. At FIS our expert team will review your past and planned training to ensure that you can optimise this claim. We will also help you to identify additional training available to you.

For further information and support, please contact: **marieflinter@thefis.org**

**www.citb.co.uk**

Source

1. [www.goconstruct.org](http://www.goconstruct.org)
2. [www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employers/understanding-apprenticeship-benefits-and-funding](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employers/understanding-apprenticeship-benefits-and-funding)



# NO MORE CONFUSION

## CODE FOR CONSTRUCTION PRODUCT INFORMATION (CCPI)

The CCPI was formed following the Hackitt enquiry to improve standards. voestalpine Metsec are proud to be amongst the first recipients. CCPI is built around 5 'acid tests' product information must be:

- » Clear
- » Accurate
- » Up-to-date
- » Accessible
- » Unambiguous

Our commitment to providing specifiers, installers and users with clear, unambiguous information about products and their performance with the CCPI.

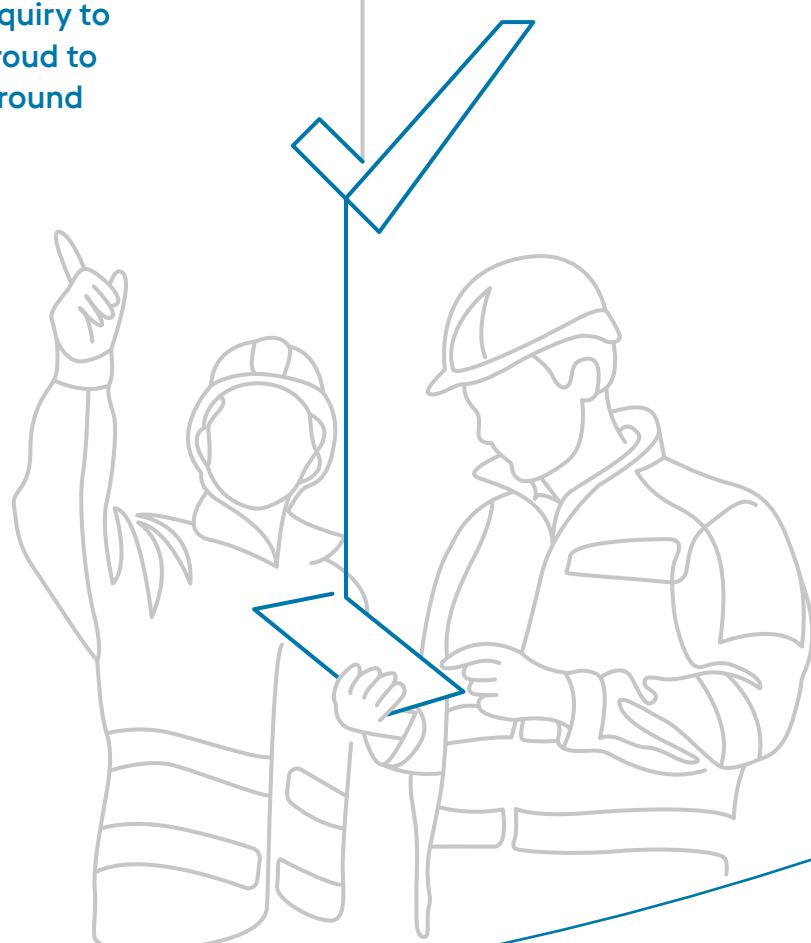
- » Prioritising building safety
- » Driving for higher standards
- » Providing confidence in the systems' capabilities and suitability for projects

### voestalpine Metsec's SFS Division

CCPI VERIFIED for SFS light gauge galvanized steel structural framing systems.

### voestalpine Metsec's Dry Lining Division

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ONE STEP AHEAD.

# PRE-CYCLE AGREEMENTS



Flavie Lowres,  
FIS Sustainability  
Champion

**Flavie Lowres**, FIS Sustainability Champion, explores how to support manufacturers in taking back control of the next life of their products and thereby reduce resource demand and waste generation.

According to the Green Construction Board, the construction sector is the largest user of resources and producer of waste in the UK (in tonnage). 60 million tonnes of waste per year are produced from construction and demolition. While the Green Construction Board also reports that an impressive 90% of those wastes are recycled, much of this recycled wastes are made of heavy materials, such as concrete and brick, and are crushed and used as fill which is a low value application. Once these wastes have been recycled, there are still nearly five million tonnes sent to landfills.

## A challenge and an opportunity

There is an opportunity to review the 60 million tonnes of waste coming out of buildings and to consider means to turn them into valuable resources through close-loop recycling or reuse. Some manufacturers have been looking at ways to take back some of these wastes to make new products through take back schemes.

The concept of take back schemes is not new, but they are not easy to operate. Some manufacturers only take back their products or the costs of transporting the products can be high. Some schemes have been so successful that they have created supply issues with the manufacturers that cannot recycle the products quickly enough. These issues have sometimes created bad publicity for take back schemes and confidence has been low.

In the last couple of years, there has been a significant shift in the industry mindset though. As many clients and contractors have made commitments to net zero, they have started

to measure their carbon emissions. Many contractors have reported that most of their environmental impacts were associated with Scope 3 emissions (see page 20 the Scope 3 emissions report - Pushing the conversation forward from Morgan Lovell) and, a significant portion has been more specifically associated with the materials they buy on site. They have therefore started to explore the possibility of using lower impact products.

For product manufacturers, that means that they may be asked more frequently for the carbon footprint of their products through environmental product declaration (EPD). Solutions provided to reduce the environmental impact of products are also sought after. These might include increasing recycled content or reusing products.

## Pre-cycle agreements

FIS has been exploring the concept of “pre-cycle agreements” for a while and is now in the testing phase of the scheme.

FIS Technical Director **Joe Cilia** said: “The pre-cycle scheme is new, after verification, it will allow a manufacturer to engage with individual clients at the point of sale and agree to take the product back, either into a closed loop recycling or for refurbishment and offered back to the market. It takes away the challenge of a take back all, which would currently be impossible, and it will encourage design for disassembly and the use of materials that can be recycled”.

A pre-cycle agreement is a two-stage process. The first stage is to create a manufacturer’s “declaration”. The manufacturer provides evidence that the

manufacturer has an active take back scheme, i.e. that they can take back products in the factory for close loop recycling or reuse. The evidence is checked by a third-party verifier appointed by FIS to confirm that the evidence meets the requirements of the scheme. The second stage is the actual “pre-cycle agreement” which is signed by the manufacturer and the user of the product. The agreement is site-specific.

The declaration provides a clear description of the product that is covered by the declaration, the requirements for the manufacturer to take back the product, e.g. logistics, packaging and which parts of the product are recycled or reused – the pre-cycle agreement only applies to close loop recycling so where the product is recycled within the manufacturer’s factory or reuse.

FIS has engaged with its members throughout the development of the scheme and feedback has been positive. It will enable manufacturers to engage with end users at an early stage. Once installed in a building, manufacturers lose control of their products making take back schemes difficult. The pre-cycle agreement will bring early engagement and, hopefully, give more chances for products to be reused or recycled through a more efficient process.



## FIND OUT MORE

If you want to find out more about pre-cycle agreement, please contact Flavie Lowres: [flavielowres@thefis.org](mailto:flavielowres@thefis.org)

# REFLECTIONS OF A 35-YEAR-OLD START UP

**Mark Randall**, Managing Director at IOR Group, commemorates his and IOR's 35th anniversary in the sector, and reflects on lessons learned and significant changes he has seen in the last 35 years.



Mark Randall, Managing Director at IOR Group

**M**ark Randall founded IOR in 1989 and is responsible for the successful delivery of the company's vision as well as key client relationships. He is very proud of IOR's achievements and being an important member of the British Council for Offices, The Institute of Workplace and Facilities Management and FIS.

Mark said: "During the past 35 years IOR has specialised in building assessment, office design, fit-out, refurbishment and furniture. At IOR we believe that the design of workplace interiors should reflect creativity and enhance efficiency and company performance. This is why we have an in-house team of RIBA architect-led specialists who combine a passion for office design with quality execution. From first draft to furniture, they deliver tailored quality workplaces with flexibility and speed.

"When I founded IOR, it was a time of huge Geo-Political movement and unrest. It was the year that the Berlin Wall came down, apartheid ended, Ayatollah Khomeini died, the protests in Tiananmen Square took place and it also saw the birth of another three lettered company - Sky.

"As we know, change is our only guarantee and it's very interesting to think about what some of the key changes look like over this period".

Mark laughed when he said: "I won't dwell on changes in technology, and will only say that my Motorola mobile phone in 1989 weighed more than my current laptop.

"I recently took part in a post-tender interview with a client that I first dealt with in March 1989 and the conversation clearly demonstrated a change in emphasis. During the interview, two questions struck me as unimaginable 35 years ago. Firstly, is your sustainability strategy science based? And secondly, how can you guarantee that your supply chain all receive the Working Wage at a very minimum? In 1989, the questions would revolve around price certainty and delivery performance and, whilst this is still the case, the dial has moved and moved for good".

Mark went on to say: "I believe there are a further three changes for the betterment of both industry performance and client experience. These are quality, health and safety, and acoustics.

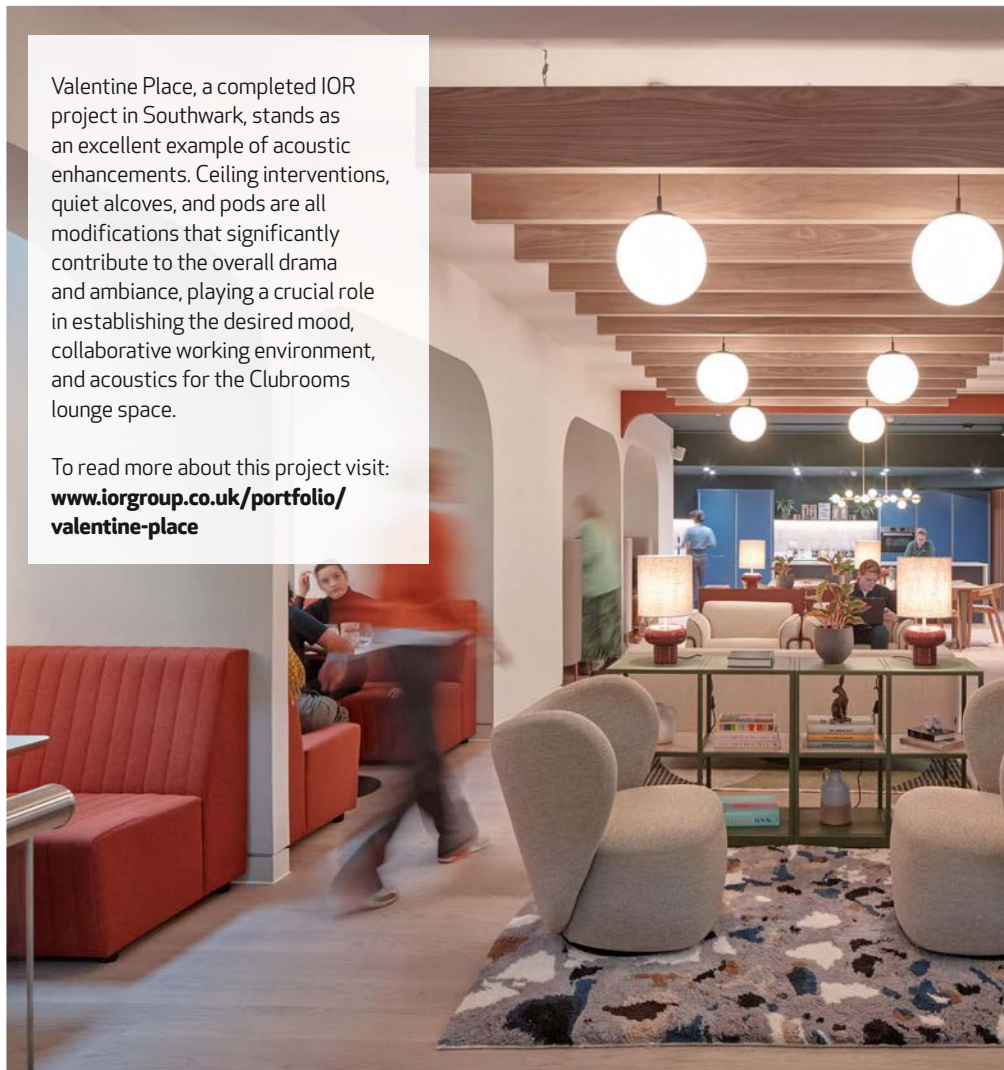
**Quality:** In terms of the design and build offer which is our core discipline. What is offered to clients now, frequently free of charge from an initial design perspective is quite incredible. We need to value our offer more.

**Health and Safety:** Sometimes good comes from bad. For example, the enhanced airport security following 9/11 stayed with us. Similarly, innovations required to work through the covid period have remained, making programmes more considered and sites safer for all.

**Acoustics:** 35 years ago, if a space was too noisy or too quiet, you simply moved somewhere else. The multitude of options

Valentine Place, a completed IOR project in Southwark, stands as an excellent example of acoustic enhancements. Ceiling interventions, quiet alcoves, and pods are all modifications that significantly contribute to the overall drama and ambiance, playing a crucial role in establishing the desired mood, collaborative working environment, and acoustics for the Clubrooms lounge space.

To read more about this project visit: [www.iorgroup.co.uk/portfolio/valentine-place](http://www.iorgroup.co.uk/portfolio/valentine-place)



# PEOPLE IN BRIEF

to change your experience on a local level and the understanding of how important this is was not a key consideration. WeWork's Global Office Trends 2024 report<sup>1</sup> suggests that 50% of new enterprise build-outs request focus pods and that the number one office request is for acoustic improvements, we have certainly seen a big agenda change in this field.

"I am sorry to say that a depressing constant is that despite quite brilliant SME's, who are the doers of deeds, being contractually flexible, innovative, and working at spectacular speed, we are expected to finance some global corporates through the entire process as project bankers. It is difficult to read Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategies on websites without a sardonic smile whilst this situation is allowed to continue".

Mark concluded by saying: "At IOR we have learned much over our 35-year trading period which is largely through our mistakes. We now start a new chapter combining that experience with the energy and dynamism of a new business. So here we are as a 35-year-old Start Up".

[www.iorgroup.co.uk](http://www.iorgroup.co.uk)

Source

1. <http://tinyurl.com/y2vn2ayn>



## Iain Holmes is appointed by the Encon Group

Iain Holmes has been appointed as the Regional Fire Protection Manager for the North and Midlands by the Encon Group. Iain will work closely with Encon's branches to support customers in the area of passive fire protection.

Iain joins with an abundance of industry experience, working in construction for over 30 years predominately in manufacturing and areas such as thermal insulation and light gauge steel. He thrives in both technical and commercial aspects and will be putting his expertise into practice to support customer projects.

To read more visit: [www.encon.co.uk/about/our-specialisms/fire-protection](http://www.encon.co.uk/about/our-specialisms/fire-protection)



## QIC welcomes Lynda Wood to the team

Lynda Wood has joined the QIC team as Sales Office Manager. Her wealth of experience and proven track record make her a valuable addition to the company, and the team is excited about the contributions she will bring to the organisation.

Lynda will play a key role in driving forward sales efforts and contributing to the continued success of QIC.

[www.qic-trims.com](http://www.qic-trims.com)



## BW: Workplace Experts announce a new Director of Health, Safety, and Wellbeing

BW: Workplace Experts has announced that John King has been promoted to the position of Director of Health, Safety, and Wellbeing. In his new role, John will bring his extensive experience and deep understanding of the company's operations to oversee and enhance its health and safety protocols. His leadership will be pivotal in ensuring that these crucial aspects are represented at the director level, reflecting the organisation's ongoing dedication to the well-being of its employees and the communities it serves.

[www.wearebw.com](http://www.wearebw.com)



## Minster welcomes new Fire Protection Manager

Minster has welcomed Fire Protection Specialist Simon Ward to its team. Taking up the position of Fire Protection Manager (North), Simon brings with him a wealth of technical knowledge and expertise to support its customers across the region.

With over 25 years of industry experience, Simon is well placed to offer unrivalled technical support, helping contractors and end-users navigate the evolving fire protection landscape, and contributing to the delivery of safer homes and buildings.

[www.minsteronline.co.uk](http://www.minsteronline.co.uk)



# IMPROVING THE FIT-OUT PROCESS: A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Industry experts shared with the audience at the FIS Conference strong messages of why they should adopt a partnership approach on all their projects.



Iain McIlwee, CEO at FIS



Professor Stuart Green, University of Reading

There was standing room only to listen to the eagerly anticipated presentations and panel discussion featuring **Guy McCoig-Lees**, Director and **Scott Bannon**, Divisional Director at Collins Construction **Professor Stuart Green**, University of Reading and **Iain McIlwee**, CEO at FIS who ably stepped in for **Richard Bartlett**, Director at Willmott Dixon.

In this feature, we gain insights from Iain and Stuart, with a future contribution from Guy and Scott who will share valuable lessons learned from their past experiences including not accepting contracts with onerous contract conditions, having honest conversations from the outset on the level of design required to manage the design and project more effectively, to more collaboration early in projects to enable all parties to discuss and agree what they want out of the project and how it's going to work.

## The importance of early supply chain involvement

Iain opened with a simple graph (Fig. 1) that mapped a project's progression to target price (courtesy of Willmott Dixon) through the stages of the RIBA Plan of Works. The journey was based on a two-stage tender initiated by the professional and consulting team at the concept stage with a target price. As the project brief is established, progressing ultimately into the planning application and Stage 3 design, the target price is maintained with a "high level" cost plan based on limited supply chain engagement.

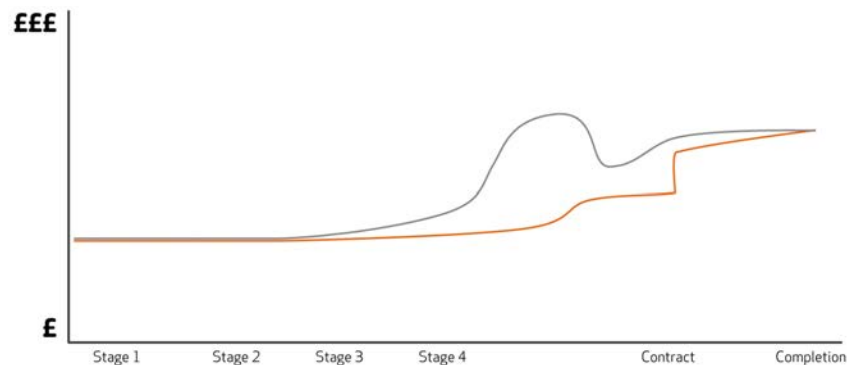


Fig. 1

Ideally, the planning phase is successful, and although there might be a slight price increase, everything remains within a cost envelope. At this stage it is all about staying in the tender race, the tendering contractor may not have a clear understanding or have shared all the risks. Pricing is based on informal market engagements, indicative costs, and cost plans, with the ultimate aim here being to make the cut and try to narrow it down to a one-on-one situation. During this phase, design development has not been executed in great detail, and there has been limited Contractor Design Portion (CDP), resulting in a lack of detailed knowledge deployment. Subsequently, the design continues to develop through to stage four, with the gaps starting to be filled by the supply chain. People then start to get into the detail, identify the gaps, and the price starts to rise (quickly!).

Do not fear, we have value engineering to get us back on track, which only reduces the quality of the building's function and finishes for limited cost savings. The opinions of all the parties become entrenched and although the project reaches contract, it is with a sense of relief, not satisfaction. Then we set about attempting to build it. Now all parts of the supply chain are involved in the process, and buildability issues start to mount up and with them variations. Eventually, after a considerable amount of conflict, we reach the end. The payment bun fight now starts with applications, payless notices hardball negotiations even a few adjudications. Some will walk away with a small profit and others may even have lost money, hopefully, everyone stays in business. The reality, however, is that insolvency in the construction supply chain is at record levels, relationships are soured and the post-project learning process is the biggest casualty of all.

## The search for an alternative

There has to be a better way than setting complex and restrictive procurement processes that don't really support an effective design development process and ultimately fan the fires of disputes, as everyone is trying to optimise their position in uncertainty. Iain demonstrated that this isn't reverting to the single stage where the shape is different only in the fact that all the changes happen far more rapidly and the risk is higher. The reality of this process of kicking the can down the road is that decisions are made under pressure, and where the perception is that whilst we have buried the risk and apportioned it through the supply chain, the truth is that if the risk materialises, it is unlikely the SME at the bottom of the heap has the insurance to cover it, and they certainly don't have the capital.

Construction by its nature is beset with risks, there will always be scope creep, cost overruns, and delays. However, this is worse if there is inadequate risk quantification ingrained in the early stages of the process if we don't utilise effective early supply chain engagement and select contractors on the lowest price. At times the process of identifying risks could lead to losing the job rather than being rewarded for efforts, but that might be the responsible thing.

## An optimistic note

The new Building Regulations make it harder to bury risk in a contract. They incorporate CDM requirements to ensure adequate time and resources. The details that, in the past, would have been reviewed now need far more robust fire engineering or testing. Sustainability too demands contractors to be involved in the deconstruction process and again this is helping to drive early engagement.

## Promptness of payment

Reflecting on the last 12 months, how long after your initial application for payment do you get typically paid?

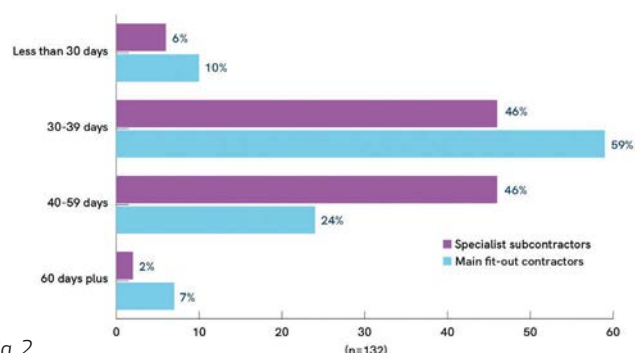


Fig. 2

### The strong recommendation

From the FIS procurement research, we now need to explore a more effective use of Pre-Construction Services Agreements (PCSA's) through the supply chain. This involves considering secondary options, supply chain frameworks that embrace specialists, provisions like the NEC4 X22, and integrated contracts that align risk and support a clear understanding of insurance provisions. In this way, CDP design and the integration between packages will be better understood and managed, and risks will be factored in as a transparent part of the tender return.

### The answer

Collaboration, communication, better risk management, and early contractor engagement. Unlocking this will help mitigate costs and risks, support the incorporation of Modular Construction Methods (MMC), and improve considerations such as sustainability and social value deliverables.

[www.willmotttdixon.co.uk](http://www.willmotttdixon.co.uk)

### Re-imagining the fit-out process

Stuart commenced by summarising the findings of the FIS-sponsored research report on procurement published in 2023. He was careful to emphasise that the UK fit-out sector is highly heterogeneous with a wide variety of lived experiences. But the overall picture is grim.

Procurement practices are too often characterised by: Exploitative payment and retention practices, routinely amended forms of contract, the systemic tendency towards risk dumping, top-down pressure to sign onerous clauses, cascading responsibility for design responsibility, and ridiculous lead-in times due to the accumulated failings of others.

He further argued that the dominant quality produced by the fit-out sector is remarkably good given the regressive way

in which the work is procured. He pointed especially towards the statistics relating to promptness of payment (Fig. 2).

The systemic tendency towards delayed payment is not new. However, it has accumulative adverse consequences for quality, safety, and effective supervision. Meanwhile, those on the gravy train of industry improvement continue to wax lyrical about modernisation and value-based procurement. Too often they offer little more than warm words and good intentions. The time for talking has long since passed; there is an urgent need for action.

Regressive procurement practices tend to be instigated by client advisors, and thereafter cascaded throughout the supply chain. Especially invidious is the tendency towards Dutch auctions. Specialist subcontractors too often submit a considered tender price only to find themselves subsequently pressurised into arbitrary reductions.

### Demise of standard forms of contracts

But perhaps of even greater concern is the demise of standard forms of contract. Contracts nowadays are routinely amended by the insertion of onerous clauses aimed at offsetting risk to the supply chain (Fig. 3). Such amendments are consistently replicated throughout the supply chain with critical implications for insurance cover. They further serve to blur design responsibility in a perennial fog of ambiguity. Many subcontractors find themselves bullied into signing heavily amended contracts, thereby perpetuating the much-maligned race to the bottom.

The rationale for standard forms of contract includes the fair and transparent allocation of risk. They also have the significant advantage of being understood by all parties. They hence minimise transaction costs and facilitate continuous improvement. Standard forms also ensure clarity in the allocation of design

## Contract amendments

If you are usually engaged on a standard form of contract, how often is it unamended?

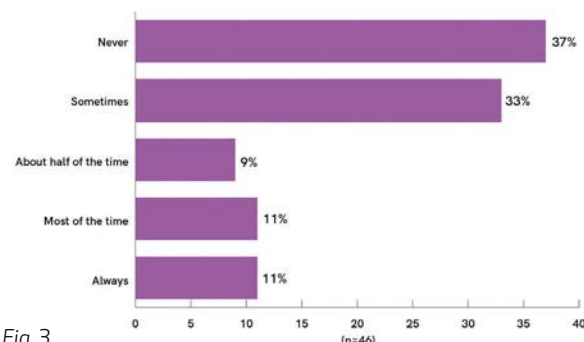


Fig. 3

responsibility. Perhaps most importantly, they are well understood by the insurance industry. If those responsible for procurement were sincere about 'collaborative working' they would not use heavily amended forms of contract. There is a straightforward test of sincerity here that needs to be applied. And those who work in the fit-out sector need to be schooled in the art of the 'Responsible No'.

### Procuring for value

Another over-hyped soundbite relates to 'procuring for value'. What clients most value in the buildings they occupy is the quality of the interior workspace. Crucially, the fit-out sector operates at the nexus between supply and demand. Yet buildings are rarely fixed and immutable; they are more often malleable entities that play out over time. Hence value is determined by the extent to which buildings remain responsive to changing demands. The fit-out for commercial buildings is typically reconfigured every five years in accordance with tenancy cycles. In the retail sector, the cycle tends to be much shorter. Buildings are ultimately best understood as long-term assets whose value can only meaningfully be evaluated in terms of through-life performance. Procuring for value hence becomes dependent upon a fit-out sector that can invest in its future capabilities. Yet those responsible for procurement rarely extend consideration beyond the cost imperatives of each successive project. They are seemingly forever trapped in a prison of their own making. Clients deserve better.



### FIND OUT MORE

To find out more about FIS-sponsored research visit:

[www.thefis.org/2023/02/27/procurement-research](http://www.thefis.org/2023/02/27/procurement-research)

# KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY; LET'S UNLOCK ITS POTENTIAL

**Holly Tuffin**, Co-Founder at The Condor Collective, shares some of the crucial findings in the Project Happiness report and looks at how this data can be utilised to enhance the fit-out sector.



Holly Tuffin, Co-Founder at The Condor Collective

**F**IS in partnership with The Condor Collective collaborated on Project Happiness to benchmark happiness, culture and engagement in the fit-out sector.

Holly explained to David Crowson Editor, that the aim of the project is to enable FIS to drive initiatives for their members and the wider sector, to make fit-out an even greater space to work in.

Holly said: "Our process with our clients often starts with our employee engagement tool, The Happiness Survey which measures current engagement in companies, to then set objectives to work towards. The data gathered enables The Condor Collective to target topics that will have the biggest impact on a team's happiness and performance at work. We have adapted our product for Project Happiness to better understand what topics will have the biggest impact in effecting positive change across the sector".

Over 600 people from the fit-out sector took part in the survey and responses were gathered from a diverse range of disciplines, including contractors and subcontractors, and span various genders, ages, ethnicities, and lengths of service. The responses provided were categorised: Happiness in fit-out, The future of fit-out and construction, Mental health, Stress in fit-out, Company culture and engagement in the fit-out sector and in companies, Career progression, Learning and development, and Improving engagement.

The full report is available at [www.thecondorcollective.com/projecthappiness](http://www.thecondorcollective.com/projecthappiness) however, some of the crucial findings are discussed in this article.

## Happiness in fit-out

67% of survey respondents indicated they are happy or very happy at work, which suggests a generally positive sentiment towards working in the sector. When asked to select the factors that positively impacted individuals' happiness, the top three reasons cited were relationships with colleagues (70%), interesting projects (65%) and salary/wages (50%).

When asked to select the factors that negatively impacted individuals' happiness, the top reasons cited were the skills shortage/lack of resource (58%) and speed of project (55%).

Interestingly, the statement "I believe there is enough being done to fill the skills shortage in construction" garnered the lowest score across all survey questions, with only 11% of respondents in agreement. This suggests an area of improvement that the industry needs to collectively address.

## The future of fit-out and construction (Fig. 1)

On average, respondents rated their intention to stay in the construction industry in five years at 4.01 out of 5 suggesting a generally positive outlook towards a long-term career in fit-out.

### Key insights

- Less than 5 years of experience: 71% see themselves working in the industry in five years.
- More than 15 years of experience: 72% see themselves in the industry in five years.

### Apprenticeship schemes

The presence of apprenticeship or graduate programs in 55% of respondent's companies suggests some investment in addressing the skills shortage.

## Happiness as a key factor

There is a correlation in the data between happiness at work and future intentions to stay in the industry. This reinforces the need for companies to prioritise employee satisfaction as a means of enhancing retention in-house and in the wider industry.

## The skills shortage in construction

Over half of the respondents (53%) would recommend working in the sector, suggesting a positive opinion of the industry among current workers.

The majority of respondents believe the sector is attractive to young people (57%). Despite a general willingness to recommend the sector and a belief in its attractiveness to young people, there is still work to be done to address human resources with only 11% agreement that enough is being done to fill the skills gap.

## Suggestions for companies

Companies should focus on strategies that enhance retention. The most common motivators we see when deploying The Happiness Survey are a good relationship with colleagues, work-life balance/flexibility, attractive salary and career progression.

Focusing initiatives on a team's motivators can support both industry-wide retention efforts and individual companies' goals to maintain a committed and engaged workforce.

## Mental Health (Fig. 2)

Older age groups (45-64: 54% agreement) perceive greater support from their companies compared to younger employees (17-25: 17.5% agreement). Levels of comfortability discussing mental health and

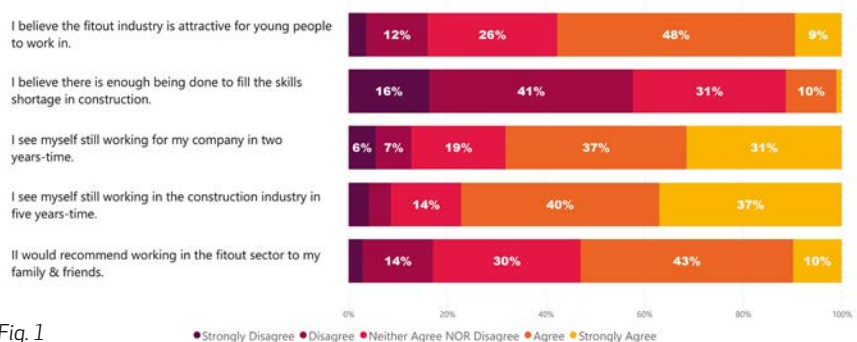


Fig. 1



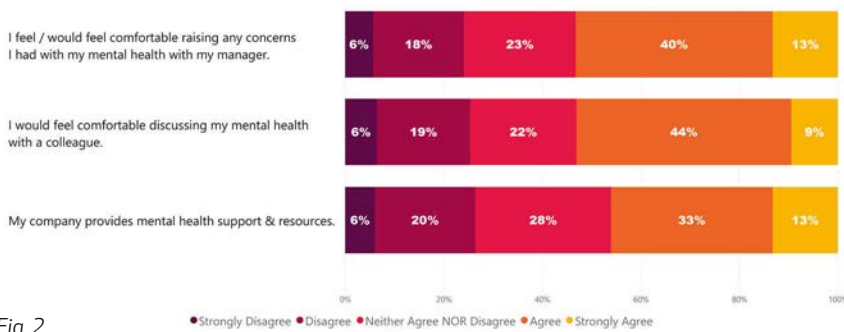


Fig. 2

perception of mental health support score significantly lower among those who prefer not to disclose their gender.

**Key insights**

- 53% would feel comfortable raising any concerns they had about their mental health with their manager or a colleague.
  - 46% agree that their company provides mental health support and resources.
- These insights highlight variations in perceptions of mental health support across different age demographics, suggesting potential generational differences in expectations or experiences.

**Suggestions for companies**

Communicate mental health resources: Lower agreement with younger employees could highlight a need for companies to build trust and improve communication channels regarding mental health support.

Create an inclusive culture to promote psychological safety: Fostering a supportive, open, and inclusive environment could enhance comfort levels across all demographics.

**Culture and engagement in the fit-out sector (Fig. 3)**

51% like the culture in the sector, with 67% agreeing there are good career opportunities available to them. Lower scoring topics include communication (39%) and appreciation (38%).

**Key insights**

- 51% are in agreement that participants like the culture.
- 61% believe the sector is collaborative.
- 39% are in agreement that communication is courteous and considerate.
- 38% feel there is a culture of appreciation and recognition.
- 53% of respondents would recommend the sector to family and friends.
- 57% are in agreement on the sector being attractive for young people.

**Age**

18 to 24 years old have a higher belief in the sector's attractiveness for young people (73%) and appreciation/recognition culture (69%).

**Gender**

Females (F) tend to have higher agreement rates on positive culture than males (M), particularly in recommending the sector to family and friends (F:61% vs M:51%) and finding it attractive for young people (F:73% vs M:54%).

**Tenure**

16-20 years of experience: Highest agreement liking the culture (64%) vs 6-10 years of experience scoring 41% agreement.  
 3-5 years of experience: Highest belief in the sector being collaborative (76%).

**Suggestions for individuals working in fit-out**

There is a positive correlation between appreciation and recognition and happiness at work. Feeling valued could therefore be a key factor in an individual's decision to stay within the industry. Showing appreciation to the people you work with can be as simple as a 'thank you' for a job well done, or recognising when someone has surpassed expectations on a task.

When asked to select the reasons they choose to work in the sector respondents top three reasons cited were salary/wages (54%), interesting projects (47%) and relationships

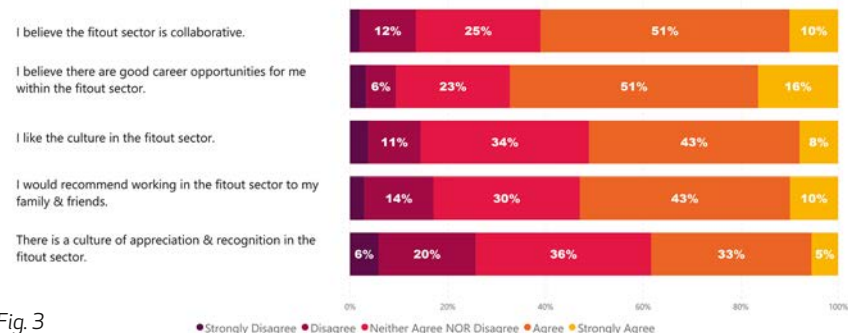


Fig. 3

with colleagues (42%). Interestingly, these are the same top factors cited for having a positive impact on individuals happiness in slightly different order and weighting.

When reviewing the reasons people choose to stay in fit-out across different demographic there are significant differences in weighting: Salary and wages: Male: 61% and Female: 30%, Relationships with colleagues: 55-64: 47% and 65-74: 30% and Interesting projects: Female: 59% and Male: 45%.

**Suggestions for companies**

Salary and benefits are a topic that is often raised in The Happiness Survey. Across all our surveys conducted it averages third on the list of highest motivators for employees in companies.

Fair and transparent pay is critical to engage and attract talent. Transparency around pay comes from having the right framework in place and being able to point to this to justify and make consistent decisions.

Employees and contractors can benefit from knowing that this framework is benchmarked to the industry levels of pay, taking this off the table as an issue when it comes to what drives an individual's happiness at work.

**Conclusion**

Holly concluded by saying: "Some of the insights highlighted key areas of work to be done, like helping to close the gap on the skills shortage and improving communication across the sector. Elsewhere, the insights are better than expected, highlighting a positive outlook many workers in fit-out have on the sector.

"We would encourage anyone interested in improving employee engagement in construction to follow The Condor Collective on LinkedIn @thecondorcollective. Also to explore the findings in more detail, you can attend the Engaging the Workforce - What we've learnt from Project Happiness webinar on 1 May at 11.00". To register visit:

[www.thefis.org/project/wellbeing](http://www.thefis.org/project/wellbeing)

[www.thecondorcollective.com](http://www.thecondorcollective.com)

# SOFTWARE TECHNOLOGY VS HUMAN JUDGEMENT: AN ONGOING DEBATE

Exploring divided opinions when it comes to the adoption of content-based web software for construction site safety.

SpecFinish Editor David Crowson spoke to two FIS Health and Safety partners, **Gavin Jones**, Senior Business Development and Relationships Manager at beAccredited, and **David Cant**, safety + risk management professional, mentor, coach and Managing Director of Veritas Consulting. They both offered compelling perspectives on the topic of using content-based web software to ensure safety on our construction sites, acknowledging and respecting each other's viewpoints.

## Elevating workplace safety: Unleashing the potential of Risk Assessment Method Statement (RAMS) content-based web software

Gavin explained that navigating the complexities of modern workplaces demands more than just conventional safety measures. In a departure from traditional methods, content-based web software emerges as a game-changer, revolutionising how organisations ensure the safety and well-being of their workforce by fortifying and streamlining health and safety protocols.

### The advantages

**Improved compliance with statutory requirements:** A good Health and Safety software can ensure that the user remains up to date with evolving health and safety law. If legislation is set to change, the information within the software should update so that the user is not using out of date documentation

**Efficiency in the digital age:** Bid farewell to intricate paperwork and time-consuming data entry. This software takes centre stage, eliminating complexities and



Gavin Jones, Senior Business Development and Relationships Manager at beAccredited



David Cant, safety + risk management professional, mentor, coach and Managing Director of Veritas Consulting

VS

empowering companies to allocate their resources strategically. From using your own content library to create site-specific risk assessments that the whole team can access, to inviting staff to sign off on the latest toolbox talk topic, this innovative tool transforms the way teams operate, enhancing efficiency and response times.

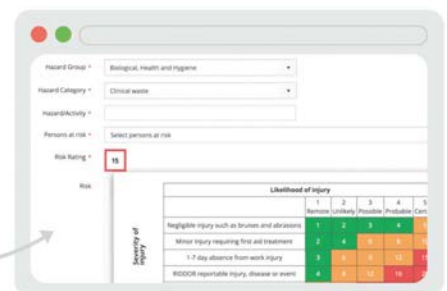
**Central knowledge hub:** Among its standout features, the software establishes a centralised place for health and safety information. No longer scattered across separate systems, critical data is accessible in one unified platform, facilitating informed decision-making and enhancing overall operational efficiency.

**Consistency is key:** In the design of all documents, content used within risk

assessments, and relevant legislation references, consistency is key. The software ensures uniformity, providing a structured and standardised approach to document creation. This ensures that risk assessments are not only efficient but also adhere to regulatory standards consistently, enhancing overall compliance and safety measures.

**Site specific:** Software is dynamic and using clever drag and drop technology allows you to adapt the content making it specific to the work site.

**5,000 users can't be wrong:** Over 20,000 documents are made by returning customers monthly. It's likely there isn't a site that hasn't seen a set of digitally produced RAMS.



## Software Vs independent advisors:

### The risks of relying on independent advisors:

When it comes to relying on independent advisors through manual processes, there are notable risks that shouldn't be overlooked. Imagine this scenario: it's a critical moment, a safety issue arises, and your independent advisor is nowhere to be found, possibly on holiday. This situation creates a bottleneck that could easily be avoided.

### Prioritisation challenges and workload allocation:

Adding to the complexity, there's uncertainty about how independent advisors prioritise their workload when multiple requests come in. Are you the first or last person to receive assistance? This lack of clarity in workload allocation can potentially impede timely responses to crucial safety matters.

### Risks and the assurance of content-based web software:

Moreover, consider the risks associated with the dynamics of a company's relationship with an individual advisor. What if that advisor decides to move on or the relationship sours? In a manual system, the institutional knowledge often leaves with the advisor, leaving the company scrambling to piece together vital safety information.

To further illustrate his perspective Gavin provided a real-life example of streamlining the safety protocols in a scaffolding company. He said: "Imagine you own the company and it is Monday at 8am. You've received an urgent email requesting your presence on-site after the project timeline dodged the forecasted adverse weather conditions. However, before you can commence work, your RAMS need to be checked. In this scenario, a RAMS software solution (from office or mobile) becomes invaluable. Swiftly and confidently, you can submit a risk assessment to satisfy both the site manager and principal contractor. This not only avoids downtime but also ensures that wages are utilised efficiently. Content-based web software facilitates this streamlined process, enabling rapid responses and proactive safety measures. Ultimately, this contributes to a more efficient and cost-effective operation for the scaffolding company".

Gavin concluded by saying: "Content-based web software acts as a safeguard against such uncertainties. The software ensures continuity, facilitating seamless transitions and uninterrupted safety management, regardless of individual circumstances. This digital solution not only mitigates the risks associated with advisor availability but also enhances overall safety resilience in the workplace".

[www.beaccredited.com](http://www.beaccredited.com)



## Is using software for risk assessments - risky business?

David acknowledged Gavin's insightful observations, and said: "We can agree that risk assessment software offers a valuable tool for construction safety personnel. It enhances efficiency, consistency, and data analysis, making it an excellent companion in pursuing safety excellence. Nevertheless, before fully embracing this technological solution, I urge you to consider the associated disadvantages".

### The disadvantages

**Lack of site-specific context:** While software can guide you through standard risk factors, it may not always capture the unique nuances of a specific construction site. The physical environment, materials, and workforce behaviours vary, making site-specific knowledge crucial. Example: In a historic renovation project, software may not account for the challenges of working with fragile, aged materials, which require specialised safety measures.

**Human judgement:** Software lacks the human judgement and creativity required for assessing complex and evolving risks. It may not adapt to the construction site's unexpected or rapidly changing conditions. Example: During bad weather or a sudden storm, software may not immediately consider the increased risk of slip hazards from wet surfaces, whereas human safety personnel could adapt quickly.

### Initial investment and training:

Implementing risk assessment software can be costly, both in terms of purchasing

the software and training personnel to use it effectively. For smaller construction businesses, this can be a significant hurdle. Example: A small, family-run construction company may find it challenging to allocate resources for software and training when they have limited budgets.

**Data accuracy:** The accuracy of risk assessments generated by software heavily depends on the quality of the data input. If the data is outdated or incomplete or the user has a lack of knowledge and experience, the risk assessments may not reflect the current situation accurately. Example: If a construction site's safety records are not regularly updated in the software, it may not reflect recent safety improvements or changes, potentially leading to incorrect risk assessments. Knowing this will almost certainly be the case, you have a problem.

David concluded by saying: "It's essential to recognise content-based web software limitations, particularly in addressing site-specific challenges and the need for human judgement. Striking a balance between software-driven risk assessments and human expertise is the difference between creating a safe construction site and an unsafe one.

Let's use these technological advancements to strengthen our commitment to safety, always remembering that the people and their dedication to safety will be the ones who make the difference".

[www.veritas-consulting.co.uk](http://www.veritas-consulting.co.uk)



# SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS REPORT - PUSHING THE CONVERSATION FORWARD

A recently released report by Morgan Lovell on Scope 3 emissions reveals the colossal challenge they and our industry face. The report breaks down methodology, findings, and imperative steps.

After the completion of their company's Scope 3 emissions report, it is very clear that Morgan Lovell learned just how huge and complex these carbon sources are, and how much more work they and the industry need to do.

**Dr Joe Croft**, Head of Environment and Sustainability at Overbury and Morgan Lovell, provides an insight into the report.

We acknowledge that the report is by no means perfect. We don't cover every molecule of carbon dioxide. However, we believe that by sharing the best understanding we have of our company's true carbon impacts, our report will help improve our working practices, along with those of our supply chain partners. We're confident that with each publication of our Scope 3 report, we will learn more, resulting in more accurate results.

The published report is completed with as much honesty and transparency as this challenging exercise demands.

## What is the report based on?

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, which categorises three areas of carbon output.

**Scope 1:** These are emissions that a company makes directly, for example by

burning fuel for the vehicles and boilers that it owns and runs itself.

**Scope 2:** These are emissions that a company makes indirectly, such as when the electricity and energy it buys for heating and cooling buildings.

**Scope 3:** These are all the emissions for which a company is indirectly responsible up and down its value chain. They include emissions related to a company's purchase, transportation and distribution of goods and services, as well as their customers' use of sold products. They also account for business-generated waste, end-of-life product disposal and employee commuting and business travel and Scope 3 emissions involve so many other parties that it's difficult to measure, manage and map a solution for their impact.

It's no surprise, to see in glaring numbers that Scope 3 carbon is the big one for the company. The same is true for many companies, especially those whose carbon footprint, like Morgan Lovells, extends to the extraction, manufacture and processing of raw materials. This report has provided the data to support the company's belief that, in the design and build sector, Scope 3 is pretty much the whole ball game.

## How the company's data was measured (and kept perspective on the minutiae)

Morgan Lovell used guidance from the GHG Protocol, and sometimes used Google. We encountered difficulties, limitations and errors along the way, and have tried to acknowledge these in writing up our findings.

For example, we had trouble obtaining embodied carbon data for mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) components and found a general lack of environmental product declarations (EPDs).

There's an element of overlap in Scope 1, 2 and 3 reporting. We focused our Scope 3 efforts on areas that are less likely to be caught by other parts of our value chain. Morgan Lovell will continue to work with the chain and challenge ourselves on our approach to M&E design, to further drive these down. We are confident about making gains here but want to give more attention to issues that are currently under-reported which are namely, the embodied carbon of the materials we specify and install. We believe this is where we see ourselves being able to have the greatest impact.

We also focused on data that's meaningful and robust. We have made sure our numbers are accurate enough to inform our strategy, without getting too tangled in precise decimal points. The scale of this exercise and the carbon impact we are talking about is so great that we would rather invest our energies in reducing our emissions than sweating over the fractions.

## Results

Morgan Lovell's total emissions for 2022:

- Scope 1 measured at 0.86 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
- Scope 2 measured at 159 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
- Scope 3 measured at 63,823 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
  - Purchased goods and services 26,948 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
  - Fuel and energy related activities not included in Scope 1 and 2 41 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
  - Upstream transportation and distribution 250 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
  - Waste generated in operations 22 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
  - Business Travel 109 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
  - Employee commuting 218 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
  - Use of sold products 34,067 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
  - End of life treatment of sold products 2,168 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

tCO<sub>2</sub>e stands for tonnes (t) of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent (e).

## Conclusions

Numerous conclusions were drawn concerning Scope 3 emissions. Some of the more unsurprising, shocking and scary were that we knew these emissions would be dominant, but we didn't know the overwhelming scale; The emissions account for 99.75% of our carbon emissions. So, this is clearly where we need to channel our efforts; Fit-out has a problem.

While there are achievable wins in terms of designing out materials and reducing wastage, the way to significantly lower carbon impact is largely down to manufacturers producing much lower carbon products and the industry driving much greater reuse. Manufactures must ensure that they are alert to the lower embodied carbon products that are available, and that their designers understand the carbon impact

of their design decisions; Some manufacturers are doing good things, but their company's need the leaders to keep driving down embodied carbon and the followers to catch up fast. They should put time where the carbon is. Turns out it's less about the transportation of products, which has historically had a bad reputation. For higher carbon products, the carbon impact of their shipping is a mere speck compared to the embodied carbon of their extraction and production; 'Use of sold products' is a big one for them; Finally reuse, reuse, reuse.

## The way forward: Together we must all tackle Scope 3

Everyone needs to understand that Scope 3 is where the carbon is.

The more companies in the fit-out industry who put pressure on reducing Scope 3 emissions, the better the market for lower carbon products, lower carbon design and greater reuse.

We believe that at some point, the industry will reach a critical mass where clients, designers, services engineers, and site delivery teams, without even trying particularly hard to reduce their carbon impact, will deliver low carbon spaces due to the low carbon nature of the now-standard methods and products. However, we can't just wait for the sector to get there organically. We need everyone to understand that Scope 3 is where the carbon is – and how every decision that is made will impact the carbon output. By sharing the best understanding we have of our company's true carbon impacts, we are bringing the conversation to the table for everyone in the sector to join in.

Sustainability professionals need to produce better resources and communications that make it easier

for people to recognise the carbon impact of their choices and decisions. Some good examples available today include Perkins and Will: Net zero now<sup>1</sup>, Hoare Lea's: Calculating whole life carbon<sup>2</sup>, tp bennett's: Building a sustainable future report<sup>3</sup> and Morgan Lovell's: Low carbon office checklist<sup>4</sup>.

We strongly encourage all companies to get their Scope 3 figures out there as soon as possible. Some sectors have developed a transparent culture where competing companies publish their numbers for the benefit of the wider industry. We need to foster this collaborative approach across the fit-out industry if we're going to drive carbon right down.



### FIND OUT MORE

To read more visit: [www.morganlovell.co.uk/insights/scope-3-emissions-report-2022](http://www.morganlovell.co.uk/insights/scope-3-emissions-report-2022)

### Source

1. [www.perkinswill.com/news/net-zero-now](http://www.perkinswill.com/news/net-zero-now)
2. [www.hoarelea.com/2022/05/27/calculating-whole-life-carbon-in-heating-and-cooling-systems](http://www.hoarelea.com/2022/05/27/calculating-whole-life-carbon-in-heating-and-cooling-systems)
3. [www.tpbennett.com/sustainability/](http://www.tpbennett.com/sustainability/)
4. [www.morganlovell.co.uk/checklists/low-carbon-fit-out-checklist](http://www.morganlovell.co.uk/checklists/low-carbon-fit-out-checklist)





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# A HEALTHY BUILDING, A HEALTHY LIFE

A new practical guide by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), is a fascinating read that discusses the direct connection between our health and the health of our buildings. It emphasises that our environment can have more influence on some aspects of our health than genetics.

**H**ealth and well-being are becoming key considerations in built environment design and management for every property professional and discipline. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly challenging for surveyors and other built environment professionals to navigate healthy choices around building design decisions, certifications, products and operations, with new regulations and voluntary standards emerging that require detailed guidance and expertise.

With well-being also forming an important part of the Social 'S' of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), surveyors, funders and developers are keen to understand, enhance and measure the ways in which their property portfolios can support human health.

The recent guide from RICS titled *The design, delivery, and management of healthy buildings: a practical guide* is intended as an overview document and 'one stop shop' of guidance and key considerations, rather than detailed recommendations and actions for each discipline.

## Introduction

**Olga Turner Baker**, Managing Director and Co-founder at Ekkist, and RICS East Chair, says: "Design for well-being has emerged as a distinct new discipline, alongside a range of global certification standards. Separate from the field of sustainability, which seeks to understand how buildings impact the environment, the field of design and management for well-being is centred on the human experience – the profound impact that buildings have on our mental and physical health. It concerns every aspect of master planning and building design and every built environment professional.

Delivering healthy buildings and healthy places is also fundamental to achieving progress in wider global issues, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It is therefore the collective role and responsibility of all built environment professionals to ensure that we are delivering buildings for current and future generations

that will ultimately help to create healthy, thriving and resilient communities globally.

It is hoped that the guide will inspire conversations, increase knowledge and awareness, and help professionals to build compelling cases to put forward to key decision-makers that support genuine actions and industry-wide progress".

## Who is this guidance for?

Every RICS professional, including developers, agents, investors and advisers, will be involved in health and well-being decisions at some point in the built environment life cycle. However, five RICS disciplines play a leading role in achieving success in these requirements. These are the project managers, planning and development surveyors, quantity surveyors, facilities and workplace managers and valuation surveyors.

## How do buildings impact our health?

How we design our cities and buildings has a profound impact on our health, with the potential to either harm or improve it.

Healthy buildings and master plans aim to increase our opportunities to thrive, to feel well and perform better, supporting our overall mental and physical health.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Report to Congress on indoor air quality, modern populations can spend as much as 90% of their time indoors, which has an intrinsic impact on health. Decades of academic and empirical research have shown a number of common health outcomes (both positive and negative) directly linked to the way we exist within buildings.

## Biophilic design

Biophilic design is the practice of creating a greater connection between people in the built environment and nature. Such elements can be direct (such as the inclusion of plants), indirect (views of nature) or representational (through natural colours and forms, for example).



*Olga Turner Baker, Managing Director and Co-founder at Ekkist, and RICS East Chair*

Benefits include aiding recovery from stressful events, supporting a positive mental state, increased attention capacity and reduced levels of anxiety.

In 2015, a systematic literature review found a total of 41 studies on nature's attention restoration potential, demonstrating its potential to support cognitive performance.

In classroom settings, students with views of nature performed significantly better than those with barren views, and in office environments, short-term memory improved when workers were exposed to biophilia.

Typical interventions to consider: Natural building materials and finishes, indoor planting, images or videos of nature, murals, maximising views of nature or planting, indoor courtyards or winter gardens, water features and living walls.

## Electric light

Electric lighting, specifically its quality, can affect our circadian rhythm. 'Glare' is defined as excessive brightness, excessive brightness contrasts and excessive quantity of light; it has been associated with health issues ranging from visual discomfort and eye fatigue to headaches and migraines.

'Flicker' has been associated with eye strain, headaches, migraines and epileptic seizures.

Avoiding both issues and specifying high quality lighting in buildings can help prevent a range of negative health outcomes for building occupants.

Equally, specifying circadian lighting, where appropriate, or dimmable lighting can also help to support human circadian rhythms, sleep health and productivity, and is particularly important in spaces without access to natural light.

Typical interventions to consider: Reducing the risk of flicker and glare, colour rendering index (CRI) criteria to accurately represent colour, circadian lighting systems, balancing contrast and brightness for neurodiversity.

### Building materials

The use of building materials has the potential to impact human health in a number of ways. Not only is it important to avoid and remediate well-known toxic materials such as mercury, lead and asbestos in new buildings and refurbishments, but also to be aware of Volatile Organic Chemicals (VOCs) present in many modern building materials.

VOCs encompass a wide group of volatile substances of both natural and artificial origins, which can have a wide range of health effects from nose, eye and throat irritation, headaches and nausea to liver, kidney and central nervous system damage.

While VOCs are present outside, buildings are a net source due to human activities, cleaning practices and emissions from materials. Avoiding this is paramount to supporting people's health in all building types globally, and a number of global certifications exist for low VOC products.

Typical interventions to consider: Low or zero VOC paints, glues, sealants and finishes, formaldehyde-free joinery and timber, and natural building materials.

### Building management

The importance of managing built assets in a way that supports human health cannot be overlooked.

In practice, this means planning for effective management in the early design stages, establishing good practices and protocols from building completion onwards, creating robust and transparent processes, and carrying out post-occupancy monitoring.

RICS' IBOS standard provides a road map for operating assets in a holistic and comprehensive way, which can also support health and well-being outcomes.


Typical interventions to consider: Ongoing air quality monitoring, replacement/maintenance of air and water filters, regular cleaning of taps and Mouthpieces, visual checks for mould and damp, and post-occupancy surveys.



RICS PRACTICE INFORMATION

## The design, delivery and management of healthy buildings: a practical guide

Global  
1st edition, October 2023



### Sound

Noise can be one of the most significant stressors on the body. How we design buildings and mitigate exterior and interior noise can therefore have profound consequences on our health and well-being.

After adjusting for other factors that contribute to cardiovascular risk (including air pollution), it was found that every 5dB increase in the average 24-hour noise level was associated with a 34% increased risk of heart attack, stroke, and other serious heart-related problems.

Designing buildings that mitigate noise transfer, reverberation and vibration between spaces can reduce overall stress levels, and some health risks, and support population health, particularly that of neurodiverse population groups who can be more impacted by noise issues.

### Typical interventions to consider:

Reverberation mitigation, acoustic boards and panels, noise-absorbing materials, exterior sound barriers, and sound masking.



### FIND OUT MORE

To read more including the role of health and wellbeing in ESG, when should health and well-being be considered during construction? next steps for organisations by visiting: <http://tinyurl.com/2yn9w6d5>

[www.rics.org](http://www.rics.org)



# EVERYBODY IS A SPECIFIER 'TIL THEY ARE PUNCHED IN THE FACE

**Damian James**, Director at Damian James Delay and Quantum Experts, explains why a robust Design Responsibility Matrix (DRM) can provide the clarity the supply chain requires.



*Damian James, Director at Damian James Delay and Quantum Experts*

Construction has been termed a process of, “design at leisure, procure in haste”. The reality is that the design process is complicated and disjointed and not served by a

procurement process that often leaves the details to the contractors in a Contractors Design Portion (CDP) clause, with little or no time to address the issue properly. The enthusiasm to get on with a project, all too often leads to confusion down the line.

## Is a stronger process necessary to advise the sector when uncertainties arise in design solutions?

A growing concern is that where a plan of works leans on “descriptive” rather than “prescriptive” design we are seeing CDP becoming less well-defined and more onerous. Often, there does not appear to be a standard process for creating and updating the DRM. There is a resulting lack of clarity about how early supply chain involvement should be managed.

The risk that this lack of clarity and certainty creates is higher when RIBA stages 4 and 5 are overlapped (which according to the plan of works is the only way to accelerate the programme). This is becoming less realistic as the Building Safety Act calls for more to be done to evidence the compliance of design before work can commence.

What is needed is a clearer process for creating a DRM (an agile process that engages the supply chain). Such a process

will encourage a protocol to mandate that the matrix is signed off by all parties to say that they understand and accept the risk. It should also confirm there is consistency with the drawings and supporting information.

The process to create and manage the DRM should include a design development process. As part of this, where suggested details are proposed (or vitally where detailed information is omitted), these should be properly reviewed to ensure that a product solution is available that is:

**Available:** that it can be procured/supplied in the timeframe.

**Buildable:** can be built.

**Compliant:** regulated performance can be evidenced (in the specific circumstance with all interface/fixing details checked and confirmed).

**Fits:** The project can fit into the space specified.

Where a product is available that meets these four steps, it would then enter the DRM as a “Confirmed Detail” (covered by the manufacturer’s warranty/scope of evidence in the location). It can then be signed off by the principal designer, priced effectively and built.

Where it can’t meet those four steps, it should be recorded as a: “Nominal Detail” (not covered by the manufacturer’s warranty/scope of evidence in the location). In this instance, it should be priced as a “Provisional Sum” (additional costs and delays may arise from evidencing). The uncertainty should be recorded through the design responsibility matrix and the right people consulted (under the control of the principal designer).

To shift a “Nominal Detail” into “Confirmed Detail” status we need a defined process for building the evidence. The options are (to be agreed with the Building Control function):

A) Speak to the manufacturer to see if any test evidence that is not currently in the

- public domain will support the design
- B) If no evidence is available, get a formal assessment done by a competent individual using the PFPF Methodology (the detail should be checked to ensure it is covered by PI insurance, either directly or via the Principal Designer)
- C) Test it (with a scope created in line with formal assessment protocols above)
- D) Design out the details to ensure that the building is designed within the scope of existing test evidence.

In the worst case, if something can’t be evidenced then it is downgraded from a “Nominal Detail” to an “Unresolved Detail”. This may in turn result in a return to Stage 3 and a practical re-design.

## It is crucial to think about who does what

If the principal designer identifies descriptive and prescriptive elements of the specification: If the former, then a process should be specified for creating the DRM that ensures the principal designer has sufficient oversight and confidence. If the latter, then the DRM creation process should guarantee that they are presenting “Confirmed” not “Nominal Details”.

## The “responsible no”

Where the above processes are in place, a robust approach to go/no go on a project must be employed. As an industry, we need to exercise caution in our enthusiasm to get on with the job. To manage risk properly and avoid possible disputes or losses, we need to ensure that work doesn’t go ahead until anything unclear is resolved.

Ultimately, proceed with caution, because a train that passes a signal at danger is likely to end up involved in a train crash further down the line, and nobody wants that.

[www.damian-james.com](http://www.damian-james.com)



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# PROMOTING REMARKABLE INNOVATION IN THE FINISHES AND INTERIORS SECTOR

The FIS Innovation Awards, presented at the FIS Conference on 27 February, showcased the innovative spirit within the finishes and interiors sector, challenging the misconception that innovation is lacking in the construction industry.

The FIS Innovation Awards, which are an integral part of the FIS Conference, took place at the Workspace Design Show. The Awards aim to seek out innovation that meets a need in the sector, and has evidence of adoption or planned use in a commercial environment. The winner's innovation will have supported improvements in efficiency, productivity, performance, quality or perception of the finishes and interiors sector.

The four categories, Digital, Sustainability, Product – Fit-out, and Product – FF&E, were independently assessed by a panel of expert judges.

Congratulations were extended to the winners and those shortlisted in each category for their remarkable achievements.

The winners of the categories were then invited to deliver a short pitch on their innovation to the audience, with the audience determining the overall 2024 Innovation of the Year.

## Digital Innovation – Sponsored by



Recognises outstanding innovation in the digital landscape that is contributing to demonstrable improvements in efficiency or quality outcomes related to interior systems.

### Winner: PlanRadar

Product: PlanRadar

PlanRadar is a SaaS field management platform specifically designed for the intricate needs of construction and real estate projects, including task management and communication for robust project oversight. Operating through a cloud platform, it allows users to easily document and record vital project data, creating an all-important golden thread of information.

Fundamentally, it's a tool for anyone looking to improve the safety, quality and efficiency of builds, whether new builds or renovation and retrofit projects.

The software goes far beyond data entry and recording, serving as an all-encompassing solution adapted to the fast-paced nature of the fit-out sector, adept at navigating the complexities of existing building surveys or condition surveys, snagging at the beginning and end of projects to reduce the likelihood of reworks, managing subcontractors and enabling the easy reporting of vital project information for a comprehensive audit trail.

Simple to use and intuitively designed, users can efficiently manage surveys and snag reports, ensuring full safety and compliance.

Importantly, users can capture critical visual data in the form of voice notes, photos and videos whilst live on-site, with the ability to geotag each image for pinpoint plan accuracy.

[www.planradar.com/gb](http://www.planradar.com/gb)

**Shortlisted:** Zentia  
**Innovation:** Sonify 3D Studio  
[www.sonifystudio.com](http://www.sonifystudio.com)



(L-R) Joe Cilia, Technical Director at FIS presents the award to Joey Wilkinson, Enterprise Account Executive at PlanRadar

**Shortlisted:** Etex  
**Innovation:** mySiniat  
[www.siniat.co.uk/en-gb/uk/mysiniat](http://www.siniat.co.uk/en-gb/uk/mysiniat)

## Product Innovation – FF&E – Sponsored by



Recognises outstanding innovation in products including but not limited to, furniture, desks seating, acoustic absorbers, pods and kiosks, specialist joinery and signage or mechanical and electrical components.

### Winner: Box Strap

Product: Box Strap

Box Strap is a bracket that perfectly mounts metal backboxes in closed stud walls. It guarantees the metal back box sits 6mm away from the finished wall on a single-layer plasterboard of 15mm thickness and 9mm on a double-layer plasterboard.

For example, the fire-rated walls between apartments or backing into communal hallways.

The bracket doesn't clash with the baffle box details of the plasterboard manufacturers as it is fixed behind the plasterboard instead of across the studs. An electrical metal back box can be installed with both sides of the walls closed allowing the dryliner to close the walls without having to cut around metal back boxes. In addition, this means that the drywall system is no longer bonded to the electrical earthing system which is something that can happen with the traditional method.

The bracket helps reduce the making good required around switches and sockets that are caused by the difficulty of cutting around metal back boxes while closing the walls. The cutting out is now done by the electrical contractor when the walls are closed. It can improve the fire barriers between the metal backboxes and plasterboard walls, as it allows for a perfect cut around metal backboxes every time.

[www.boxstrap.co.uk](http://www.boxstrap.co.uk)

**Shortlisted:** Mute  
**Product:** OmniRoom  
[www.omniroom.com](http://www.omniroom.com)



(L-R) David Crowson, Editor of SpecFinish presenting the award to Josh Estrada, Managing Director at Box Strap

**Shortlisted:** Eyevolution  
**Product:** Shadowline  
[www.eyevolutionltd.co.uk](http://www.eyevolutionltd.co.uk)

**Product Innovation – Fit-out - Sponsored by**



Recognises outstanding innovation in interior systems.

**Winner: Fire Stop Products**

**Product:** Speed Cutter



(L-R) Ben Papple, Sales Director at EPD Insulation Group presenting the award to Stuart Seagrave, Fire Stop Products

Yet to be launched, Speed Cutter is a new solution to reduce the time, cost and skills required to fit fire-resistant penetrations to drylined walling.

Currently, there is a three-step process to fit a penetration. The dryliner fits a 'letter box' in the existing structure, the services team then fits the required pipework or cable, etc and the penetration then requires fire stopping by a fire-stopping expert. These three steps require several site visits and coordination between several agents. Speed Cutter can easily be fitted by any of these trades and provides an initial and future penetration.

Using Speed Cutter, timed installs show that a full penetration, including mechanical fixing can be fitted in less than two minutes. It is anticipated that it will significantly reduce the time, cost and complexity of the installation fire fire-resistant penetrations. This is expected to be both a first and second-fix product.

[www.firestopproducts.co.uk](http://www.firestopproducts.co.uk)

**Shortlisted:** Global Ceilings Services

**Product:** Teg Clip

[www.globalceilings.com](http://www.globalceilings.com)

**Shortlisted:** Seamless Abutment Solutions

**Product:** Cross Stud

[www.innovateatsa.co.uk](http://www.innovateatsa.co.uk)

**Sustainability Innovation - Sponsored by**



Recognises outstanding innovation that is contributing to demonstrable improvements in sustainable outcomes related to interior systems.

**Winner: IOBAC UK**

**Product:** IOBAC Contamination-free Flooring Installation Tabs

Floor coverings installed using wet applied adhesives can be difficult to reuse or recycle on uplift due to contamination from adhesives. This results in flooring being sent for incineration or landfill, and significant rectification work to the sub-floor before the next installation.



(L-R) Daryl Lewis, Business Development Manager and SFS Manager at Protektor Group presenting the award to Vikki Randles, Marketing Consultant to IOBAC UK

IOBAC Flooring Installation Tabs address this issue by enabling floor coverings to be affixed securely throughout the life of the installation, yet cleanly and easily uplifted.

These reversible fixing mechanisms give flooring a second life, vastly improving flooring circularity and making flooring manufacturers' take-back schemes easier to implement.

Building assets such as raised access flooring and concrete subfloors are protected from damage, with the additional embodied carbon associated with new materials avoided.

IOBAC Tabs are used for the installation of carpet tile, +4mm Luxury Vinyl Tile and woven vinyl tiles onto all commonly prepared sub-floors. They are a universal fixing system meaning adhesive-free design is not limited to a particular flooring type or brand.

The range consists of two products, both combining high grab with clean removal: **IOBAC MagTabs®** and **IOBAC Tab-It®**.

[www.iobac.com](http://www.iobac.com)

**Shortlisted:** Optima

**Product:** Optima Glass Partitions manufactured with Hydro CIRCAL aluminium

[www.optimasystems.com](http://www.optimasystems.com)

**Shortlisted:** Selo

**Product:** TEMPUS temporary fire doors

[www.selo.global/products/tempus-temporary-fire-doors](http://www.selo.global/products/tempus-temporary-fire-doors)

To read more about the FIS Innovation Awards winners and shortlist visit: <https://tinyurl.com/2ref8tp7>



**Innovation of the Year**

**Winner: IOBAC UK**

**Product:** IOBAC Contamination-free Flooring Installation Tabs



# OPEN THE DOOR AND BECOME QUALIFIED TO HELP EVIDENCE YOUR COMPETENCY

Revelation: Did you know there is no actual requirement for anyone installing life safety devices such as fire doors, to be personally qualified?



Ian Cavanagh, Managing Director at Independent Fire Safety Services

Surprisingly, despite the relatively recent tragic fire-related events in the UK including the Grenfell Tower, an individual must be deemed 'competent' but not 'qualified' to

install life safety devices such as fire doors, explained **Ian Cavanagh**, Managing Director at Independent Fire Safety Services (IFSS) and FIS member, to David Crowson, Editor of SpecFinish.

Ian said: "This is a somewhat unusual situation; the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) suggests that we define competence as the combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply them to perform a task safely. Other factors, such as attitude and physical ability, can also affect someone's competence.

"The word 'Competence' though, is very vague, subjective, and difficult to gauge, in a similar way much the same as the term 'Gravitas'. I would suggest that at the very heart of true competence are clearly defined qualifications. Surely, a suitable and sufficiently robust qualification better defines competence as it will demonstrate and prove all of the above factors as stated by the HSE but also crucially ensure the person can carry out the task for which they need to be able to demonstrate competence".

Ian explained that as we all know electricians have to be qualified, and their knowledge kept up to date. Similarly, gas



fitters need to be registered to be able to offer their services.

Sadly, Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document B – Fire Safety falls some way short in its requirements for those installing fire doors and suggests that Third Party Certification (TPC) of installers can provide confidence that compliance can be achieved.

Ian said: "TPC of course does not come cheaply, nor does it provide guarantees. TPC schemes generally work on the premise that one manager oversees up to 20 individual installers and ensures that each of those installers is suitably competent and monitors their work regularly. The installers themselves though do not need to be qualified – simply 'competent'.

"I believe that personal qualifications may be a more suitable and practicable way forward, and as such IFSS has created The Fire Door Academy to offer the fire door installation qualifications (These are offered at a reduced rate to members of FIS)".

Ian explained that the academy offers two routes to qualify which are both available nationwide.

## Route one

For those that hold a Level 2 NVQ Diploma **603/5468/9** and **603/4613/9** an 'add-on' module can be offered for installing fire-resisting timber door assemblies and doorsets in the workplace **M/616/5829**.

## Route two

Running alongside route one and designed specifically for City & Guilds carpenters and joiners who are excluded from the NVQ route unless they undertake the full NVQ qualification, there is the Firequal approved qualification in fire door installation.

Both of the courses are specifically centered around the installation of timber based doorsets and assemblies, they do not currently cover non-timber variations.

Ian concluded by saying: "Neither of the routes to qualification guarantee a successful pass – these are not 'attendance' courses, or 'tick box' exercises. Effort, diligence, and determination are required. The end result is a qualification that 'certifies' the candidate to install life-critical components in a building where hundreds of lives may be protected by the very products being installed and as such it must be robust".



## FIND OUT MORE

To read the feature in full and find out more about the courses, visit:

[www.specfinish.co.uk/open-the-door-and-become-qualified-not-just-competent](http://www.specfinish.co.uk/open-the-door-and-become-qualified-not-just-competent)

[www.independentfire.co.uk](http://www.independentfire.co.uk)

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### FIS Regional Meeting

Scotland  
25 April

### FIS Contractors Awards Lunch

Royal Lancaster Hotel, London  
6 June

### FIS Scottish Awards Lunch

voco Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow  
15 September

### FIS Training Awards Lunch

Plasterers Hall, London  
5 December



Dave Bonner receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2023 FIS Contractors Awards Lunch from FIS Chief Executive Iain McIlwee

For further information of these events visit:  
[www.thefis.org/events](http://www.thefis.org/events)

## Warringtonfire to open UK's largest built environment product testing facility

The new facility in Warrington is expected to open in 2025 and will be the largest in the UK, providing fire testing, technical and certification services. The facility will create over 50 new jobs and the company is committed to training and upskilling new and existing employees.

Customer demands for product testing are set to continue to grow significantly, due to increasing regulatory requirements, the introduction of additional standards, the rising importance of third-party certification and product assurance as well as the need for shorter testing lead times. The new facility will represent an almost 80% increase in size over its existing facility



in the region and is expected to triple Warringtonfire's testing capacity in the medium term.

To read more visit: <http://tinyurl.com/Sadrsdtt>

## Industry first for Metsec

voestalpine Metsec has become the first specialist metal forming company to achieve verification with the Code for Construction Product Information (CCPI) for its drylining metal framed components for gypsum plasterboard systems and SFS light gauge galvanized steel structural framing systems.

Continuous investment in independent fire performance testing and quality assurance keeps voestalpine Metsec's construction solutions at the forefront of the construction industry. The company is committed to ensuring that the data and information derived from these tests is conveyed in a clear, unambiguous fashion to provide specifiers, installers and users with the ultimate assurance of the systems' capabilities and suitability for their projects. CCPI verification follows the introduction

of new dedicated systems throughout the company to ensure that messaging from all divisions is based on accurate, verifiable data and that this information is presented in a clear and accessible manner.

[www.metsec.com](http://www.metsec.com)



(L-R) Gary Dixon, voestalpine Metsec Dry Lining Sales Director, Alan Harris, voestalpine Metsec Quality and BIM Compliance Director and Dame Judith Hackitt

## Going the extra mile: GO Interiors Birmingham doubles its capacity to support its growing customer base

GO Interiors announced the relocation of its Birmingham depot to a new one-acre site in Network Park. This has enabled the depot to double its stock capacity, optimise operational logistics, and enhance its service offerings to contractors, house builders and developers, throughout the Midlands region.

**Brendan Dunne**, Regional Director at GO Interiors, said: "We're incredibly excited about this move, the construction industry in the West Midlands is buoyant, so enhancing

our footprint was necessary to service the growing demand for our specialist solutions."

- The key benefits:
- Double the capacity
  - Streamlined efficient logistics
  - Expanded product range

This expansion marks a significant milestone for GO Interiors. The company is confident that the new facility will further strengthen its position as an interior solutions provider in the region.

[www.gointeriors.co.uk](http://www.gointeriors.co.uk)



## Shining bright, FIS members scoop top awards

Celebrating success is important as it acknowledges hard work, dedication and achievement. SpecFinish was delighted to see members of the FIS community continuing to win prestigious business awards.

### National Business Women's Awards

At the National Business Women's Awards Liz McDermott of QuickFix Profiles won the Influential Business Women of the Year 2023. Liz said: "I was thrilled to win the award, I would like to say a big thank you to those who voted for me and supported me over the last year and earlier in my career. It is lovely to receive this recognition for the long hours and hard work and the award makes it all worthwhile".



### The British Council for Offices (BCO) NextGen Awards

Clare Ashmore of Parkeray won the Inspirational Leader of the Year.

A proud Parkeray commented: "Huge congratulations to Clare. A big thank you to everyone who raised a glass to Clare's success and enjoyed a wonderful evening celebrating young professionals in the industry".

### Best Practices Integrated Informatics Core (BPIC) Awards

Julian Eley of BWWorkplace Experts won the Diversity Champion of the Year and Overbury's Giancarlo Gaglione won the Industry Role Model.

Commenting on his achievement Julian said: "We had an amazing night at the awards



and I was thrilled to win. Thank you to BPIC for a wonderful evening, and we eagerly look forward to next year's event".

Giancarlo said: "I was humbled to have been nominated for the award and then very surprised to have won. I would like to thank all the individuals and companies who have supported me in my career and The Mental Health World Cup<sup>1</sup> which I founded. After a decade of campaigning to raise awareness of mental health and suicide prevention, I am delighted to say The Mental Health World Cup has now achieved formal charity status. I am looking forward to what the future holds".

Source

1. [www.mentalhealthworldcup.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealthworldcup.org.uk)

R-L Liz McDermott of QuickFix Profiles, Clare Ashmore of Parkeray, Julian Eley of BWWorkplace Experts and Giancarlo Gaglione of Overbury

## Partners unveil new offerings and updates to support FIS members

FIS partners with a number of its associate members, providing exclusive, tailored, and discounted services to meet its members' needs. Some of these partners provide us with the latest updates and introduce new services.

### Recruiting overseas skilled workers

To help members recruit overseas skilled workers to fill the skills gaps being experienced in the industry which is inhibiting growth, FIS has partnered with specialist immigration lawyers, Migrate UK.

This partnership enables members to explore whether hiring overseas skilled workers is a viable route for them. Members will be supported with immigration legal guidance and advice on how to apply for a Sponsor License, Certificate of Sponsorship applications and compliance and record keeping.

Migrate UK is offering FIS members a 10% discount on all legal fees and an initial consultation free of charge.

Visit FIS member benefits at: [www.thefis.org/membership-hub/memberbenefits/immigration](http://www.thefis.org/membership-hub/memberbenefits/immigration)

### Financial stability and remarkable success when faced with significant cash flow challenges

FIS has partnered with BABR to provide comprehensive cash flow support to its members.

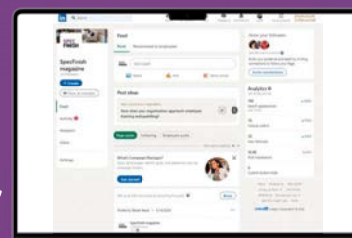
BABR's mission is to assist company owners in achieving financial stability and remarkable success when faced with significant cash flow challenges. BABR will guide company owners toward stability, empowering them to navigate challenges and seeking the most favourable outcomes. FIS members can take advantage of a dedicated helpline providing confidential, free, personalised assistance and expert guidance on all aspects of cash flow management.

To find out more visit: [www.thefis.org/membership-hub/memberbenefits/babr](http://www.thefis.org/membership-hub/memberbenefits/babr)

# HUNGRY FOR MORE INFORMATION?



Digest the latest insightful and engaging News, Projects, Products, Events and Features from our sector at [www.specfinish.co.uk](http://www.specfinish.co.uk) and our Social Media site on LinkedIn [www.linkedin.com/company/specfinish-magazine/](http://www.linkedin.com/company/specfinish-magazine/)



Andrew Hodgekiss | RapidFix Project Manager

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# GRIDLINE

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