

Building Safety: Industry Safety Steering Group Report for the Secretary of State

Report from the Industry Safety Steering Group, on their findings on progress of culture change in construction sector



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Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
Telephone: 030 3444 0000

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Foreword

It is now more than one year since the publication of the final report following my independent review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety related to high rise buildings, which was carried out in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire. We are now in the period of consultation on Government's proposals to implement the recommendations I made in my report.

In the last year I have continued to be involved in a number of ways in supporting the culture change which we must see if we are to deliver safer buildings for everyone: I have attended numerous meetings of the Department's Building Safety Programme Board and I have given more than 50 public speeches/presentations on the content of my report and the rationale for the systemic approach to change.

I have also had the privilege of chairing the Industry Safety Steering Group which was set up to hold the many industry stakeholders to account for delivering on the culture change which is needed. I am pleased to be able to present you with a summary of the work of the ISSG over the last year and to share our perspectives on the progress being made by industry.

The ISSG unanimously welcomes the publication of the Government's consultation document and believes that it is essential that the new regulatory regime is put in place as soon as is possible. It has been clear to us throughout the year that whilst some parts of industry are willing to make changes, there has been a strong sense of "wait and see" regarding Government's commitment to lead the way with robust regulatory change. The publication of the consultation document sends out a clear signal of Government's intent and commitment. This now enables us as ISSG to take a much firmer stance in holding industry to account in delivering on its commitment.

I would very much welcome the opportunity to meet with you after you have had the opportunity to read this report to update you further and to discuss plans for ISSG activity in the year ahead.

Dame Judith Hackitt, DBE, FREng
Chair of the Industry Safety Steering Group

Industry Safety Steering Group Report

1. This report provides the Secretary of State and Ministers with an update on the work of the Industry Safety Steering Group to date, their view on industry's progress with culture change and their priorities for the next six months.

Summary

2. The industry safety steering group (ISSG) was established to encourage culture change within the construction industry and to monitor broader industry's progress on implementing the recommendations in the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety. Members of the ISSG have been consciously drawn from senior levels in a wide range of sectors including the oil and gas, civil aviation, financial and chemical engineering industries to challenge the construction sector's current thinking and to offer advice on how other sectors have addressed similar issues. The ISSG has committed to work together initially for two years. At that point, if the progress industry continues to make with culture change is slow and requires further work, the group will make recommendations on how to accelerate progress. The group will also discuss whether the ISSG should have an ongoing role in supporting the industry to drive forward change where it is needed.
3. This report focusses on a number of themes the ISSG has reviewed to date; competence, industry culture change and leadership, procurement and construction products. It provides details of the ISSG's findings from our engagement with industry players including the Construction Leadership Council, the Industry Early Adopters, members of the Competence Steering Group and the Crown Commercial Services. The reports also provides details on the ISSG's observations on industry's progress embedding the recommendations in the Independent Review and moving forward with culture change.
4. In summary the ISSG:
 - has been pleased with the **considerable progress made by the majority of representatives** who have attended meetings, and with the overall response to the ISSG's challenges from industry representatives;

- appreciates the progress made by the Competence Steering Group (CSG). In response to early challenges from ISSG on the progress of reform, CSG have, in partnership with members of the ISSG made **significant progress on their proposals for an overarching system for competence**;
- recognises that **for some areas progress on raising competence levels may take longer to resolve**, but that progress is being made under the leadership of organisations such as Build UK and the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply. The ISSG will continue to monitor progress, offer support to move forward with culture change and challenge those who are making slower progress to learn from the leaders in the sector;
- welcomes the work of groups such as the **Early Adopters to take early action on prioritising building and fire safety** and encourages industry to learn from their early leadership;
- has noted, however, **that progress has been slow across parts of industry due in part to its fragmented nature**. In too many cases, organisations remain unwilling to share best practice; and
- believes that there is still **much more work to do to ensure that the message of culture change reaches the whole of industry** and that industry needs to have a plan of work going forward to address this in more detail. The publication of the Government's consultation document represents a significant opportunity to reinforce the message that culture change must happen and that the new regulatory framework will ensure that the industry is held to account.

Competence

5. Competence has been a recurring theme in all of the meetings of the ISSG to date and as it is an important topic, it will continue to feature heavily. The ISSG first discussed competence in December and heard from representatives from the Competence Steering Group (CSG). The Chair of the group, Graham Watts gave an update on the group and associated subgroups' progress and was joined by representatives from United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), Fire Sector Federation (FSF) and Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). In subsequent meetings, the ISSG heard from Build UK and Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) who are also involved in the CSG through its working groups on installers and on procurement.

6. CSG presented their second quarterly report at ISSG in December and we were clear that the CSG should be commended for bringing together such a large collection of different organisations across the construction and fire safety sectors and its role in facilitating a collaborative environment in which different sectors are starting to take a more coherent approach to raising competence standards. The ISSG welcomed the pace with which the group had come together, and the commitment shown by the group to delivering the recommendations in the Hackitt Review.
7. However, the ISSG also raised concerns regarding the slow progress that the group had made. The ISSG were also unsure of the ability of the CSG to deliver proposals that answered the recommendations set out in the Independent Review, particularly the CSG's proposed means of meeting the recommendation for an Overarching Competence Body (OCB) for oversight of competence requirements for buildings in scope of the new regime. In a letter from the ISSG to the CSG, it was noted that a number of challenges remained, particularly that:
 - the CSG were overly focused on skills and knowledge, which could lead to individuals focusing on just "passing a test". Many ISSG members felt that not enough work was being done to drive behaviour and culture change;
 - proposals to create a new OCB did not properly consider the functions of such a system, bodies which might already exist and that much of the work remained focussed on the new OCB's form. It was suggested by ISSG that the CSG should look outside the construction industry for guidance and examples of best practice; and
 - by focusing on active and passive fire systems alone and not those installing other fire and life safety critical systems such as cladding and windows, the approach to improving the competence of installers was not comprehensive enough and would leave gaps in areas that would significantly impact on safety.
8. Many of these challenges have now been addressed by the CSG with significant support from members of the ISSG.
9. Whilst there is still work to be done to improve the competence of installers, CSG Working Group 2 (installers), jointly led by Build UK, has carefully considered and begun to address the ISSG's challenges noted above. At later meetings the ISSG were impressed by the approaches taken by Build UK, who jointly with the Fire Industry Association and Stanhope PLC have carried out a review of installer

competencies and CSG Working Group 2 (Installers). The ISSG recognises that progress on improving installers competence may take longer to resolve and we will continue to support members of Working Group 2 as they seek to address the ISSG's concerns. We encourage examples of good practice to be shared widely and followed by industry and recognise that urgent work is needed to address the plethora of competence definitions and standards which exist to create a more coherent landscape and the reluctance to align which exists in some organisations.

10. ISSG member Scott Steedman has been working with Graham Watts to address some of these concerns. With the support of the ISSG, Scott agreed to lead a new Working Group (WG0), focusing on developing proposals for an overarching system for competence. Under Scott's direction, the group has successfully delivered proposals for a competence oversight system that will give assurance to residents, dutyholders and regulators that those involved in the design, construction, inspection, maintenance and management of Higher Risk Residential Buildings (HRRB) are competent to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. The full report, outlining the framework for the overarching system for overseeing competence, is included in Government's consultation on proposals for reform of the building safety regulatory system at Annex E.
11. Members of ISSG were particularly impressed to see the thorough approach taken by RIBA to contribute to the development of a comprehensive and coherent competency framework for the profession, through the competency working group. The plan of work is based upon the roles and responsibilities described in the Independent Review, and it has been further encouraging to see some other related professions starting to build their own frameworks that align with the Independent Review and proposed RIBA model.
12. Overall, the measure of success will be evidenced by industry working together in an open and transparent manner to raise competency standards. The ISSG are reassured by some of the progress made across industry, but acutely aware that there are still many areas of industry not working to meet the standards that will be required for the new system. The ISSG is looking forward to the CSG's full interim report, which is now expected to be published for consultation in Summer and will be particularly interested to see the CSG's proposals for how this work should be taken forward. Industry must lead the change and take ownership of delivering higher competence standards in order to drive building and fire safety and provide assurances to stakeholders including the regulator and residents.

Industry leadership and culture change

13. The ISSG has heard from a range of industry figures including the Early Adopters, the National Housing Federation, representatives from the Construction Leadership Council and the Competence Steering Group. It has been noted that progress across industry is varied and good practice is developing more quickly in more technical areas of the industry such as major infrastructure products, but this is not filtering down to the built environment as it needs to. Culture change remains a challenge the ISSG will continue to monitor in detail.
14. The ISSG first heard from the Industry Early Adopters in February. L&Q and Willmott Dixon attended the meeting to give an update on the progress made by the Early Adopters group. The ISSG welcomed the work of the Early Adopters to trial and test policy options based on the recommendations in the Independent Review. Members also commended L&Q and Willmott Dixon for the work they have undertaken individually across their organisations to prioritise building and fire safety and commended the Early Adopters more widely for taking roles as industry leaders. It was clear from the meeting that the Early Adopters have embraced their important role, particularly in sharing best practice and setting an example for industry to follow. The ISSG welcomed the Early Adopters' involvement in a series of Building Safety Learning Forums across the UK, run by the NHF, where they were able to share good and promising practice.
15. Members of the ISSG also commended the Early Adopters for the work they have done to accelerate and encourage industry leadership. We noted their work to develop a new Building Safety Charter but cautioned that the Charter needs to have real meaning and must be instrumental in driving cultural and behavioural change not simply a statement of good intent. At the time of the meeting, noting the positive commitment by the Early Adopters to sign up to the Charter, members of the ISSG expressed concerns about the level of scrutiny around the Charter and challenged the Early Adopters to develop a process to ensure the Charter is backed by appropriate levels of scrutiny. The Early Adopters have taken this feedback on board and made significant progress by working with officials from MHCLG to launch the Charter and develop a new website to promote the meaning and importance of the Charter. The ISSG also welcome the progress made to develop plans for an administrative body to support the Charter. These plans include measures to ensure those who sign up to the Charter achieve and evidence a high standard in safety before they can be identified as signatories of the Charter. Members of the ISSG will continue to monitor the progress with the Charter as these plans develop.

16. Members of the ISSG also heard from the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) in February and the ISSG were clear that the CLC needed to go significantly further to develop their role as industry leaders. Members of the ISSG were struck by the difference between the comprehensive safety culture of construction firms working on big infrastructure projects and those in the residential market. Whilst the CLC acknowledged the need for change, the ISSG felt that the CLC remained too focussed on large scale infrastructure development and productivity and that opportunities for alignment between safety and productivity goals were at risk of being missed, particularly in the residential market. The ISSG were clear that there is scope for greater cooperation between the CLC and the ISSG to promote the importance of building safety across the construction sector. The CLC were asked to:

- address the crucial need to rebuild confidence in the residential built environment in addition to their work on infrastructure projects;
- provide industry with a clear statement of intent and a robust, comprehensive and coherent message to industry on the need to change; and
- explore further the potential to work together with the ISSG.

17. To support the CLC in addressing these points, the Chair of ISSG has met with the CLC Chair and the Lead on Transforming Construction at IUK to discuss their concerns. The ISSG continues to engage with and support the CLC to ensure that, where possible, the outputs of the ISSG are taken forward within the relevant CLC workstreams, and that the wider work of the CLC and ISSG is complementary. One of the original members of the ISSG (Professor Jennifer Whyte) was subsequently invited to join the CLC because of her knowledge of systems thinking in construction. Whilst it was sad to lose Jennifer from the ISSG, the group welcomed the level of influence and aligned thinking that this would bring to CLC.

18. The CLC has now made significant progress since their first appearance at ISSG and has taken a number of steps to demonstrate their commitment to safety. This includes committing to issuing a public statement outlining their support for culture change and the adoption of a new approach to building safety and working patterns, progressed through their own work with professionals across the construction and built environment sector. Additionally, the CLC has committed publicly to maintain a focus on delivering safer buildings at the centre of the Construction Sector Deal and to work closely with the ISSG. The CLC attended the ISSG on 10th June to report back on how they have responded to the ISSG challenges. The ISSG was very pleased with the progress CLC made in bringing together industry initiatives on building safety and

were particularly pleased that they modified the board of the CLC to include 25 leads in the industry. They were also encouraged that the CLC are planning to hold a series of workshops over the summer, which will include discussion with industry groups about implementing building and fire safety improvements.

19. The National Housing Federation (NHF) presented at the ISSG in April. The ISSG welcomed the manner in which the housing association sector has taken in their approach to culture change, engaging with Boards and Executive teams through to residents. The ISSG were additionally impressed that the NHF actively promotes culture change through events, training and online resources. The ISSG has challenged the NHF to be more ambitious in their plans and have called for the NHF to provide a clear statement of intent for their members to follow.
20. It is evident that many in industry are already taking steps to change their culture to place building safety at the heart of their organisation and industry bodies are sharing good practice to encourage the sector to learn from their experiences. The ISSG, however, have some concerns about industry wide awareness of the need for culture change and a number of issues remain, particularly around industry's commitment to change. In many cases, industry bodies seem to be waiting for regulation to come into force before taking any action and the publication of the Government's consultation document provides an important trigger point to raise awareness of the new responsibilities which will be placed on managers of existing buildings as well as new build . With some organisations across the industry unwilling to share best practice, there is a need for greater transparency and more collaboration. ISSG have been clear that not cooperating is unacceptable, and that change must occur sooner.
21. The ISSG will continue to challenge and offer support to industry as it continues to move forward with culture change. Members have also been clear that areas where poor practice continues must be identified and stopped. Fragmentation within the industry cannot be offered as a reason or an excuse for lack to progress; if collaboration is difficult or impossible within the current fragmented structure then the structure of the industry itself needs to be addressed. We have noted that there is a tendency for the industry to continue to regard itself as "different" which presents a real barrier to learning lessons and good practice from other sectors.

Procurement

22. The ISSG has heard from key stakeholders including the Chartered institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) and the Crown Commercial Service (CCS). It has

been noted that industry has work to do to ensure safety standards are raised across the supply chain and that in too many cases industry remains preoccupied with profit, costs and margins without due regard for delivering safe outcomes.

23. Members of the ISSG have been clear that the public sector has an important role to play and should lead by example, establishing the highest standards in procurement practice by embedding the importance of safety into their contracts and procurement process. The ISSG welcomed the approach taken by the CIPS and the CCS to prioritise safety through measures such as the introduction of sanctions, boiler plate contracts and to raising the competence standards of those involved in procurement. The ISSG will continue to encourage industry to rebalance the weighting of their contracts in favour of a new approach that recognises safety and responsibility.
24. Members of the ISSG have noted that whilst some progress has been made, across wider industry this has been slow. It is clear that standards of competence among those who claim to be 'procurement professionals' needs to be raised and that lessons can be learned from other industries such as oil and gas and nuclear power. This is something the ISSG will continue to promote and review, encouraging the construction sector to learn from other industries. The ISSG are clear that the client, as a duty holder, will have an important role to play in the procurement process as their responsibilities will include managing safety through the whole procurement process. It will be vitally important that the specifications, which the design and contractor dutyholders are required to meet, are correct, but also that a robust system is in place to ensure the appointment of competent individuals. It is also crucial that restrictive pricing parameters or contract terms do not undermine this.
25. It is evident that many in industry are already taking on the challenge of raising standards in procurement practice. However, too many in industry continue to prioritise cost and profit over safety in procurement. Whilst this is changing, progress has been slow, and the ISSG would like to see more evidence of collaboration, sharing of best practice and learning from other sectors. To eradicate existing bad practice, industry must be radical in developing new contracts and approaches to procurement. Simply adjusting existing practice and contracts will, in many cases not suffice. Others have observed before that there is a significant opportunity here for Government at national and local level to take a lead in setting new standards for procurement and contracting practice. The ISSG believes that this is no longer merely an option but a necessity in order for Government to demonstrate leadership and set the tone for others to follow.

Products

26. The ISSG heard from the Construction Products Association (CPA) and British Board of Agrément (BBA) at the June meeting and were encouraged by the significant progress made by both organisations to drive product standards.
27. The CPA reported progress in driving product standards by raising the competence of those working with construction products. It is essential that industry achieves a level of competence which reflects the complexity of the tasks undertaken. The ISSG welcomes the collaborative approach the CPA has taken by working with the Competence Steering Group and in chairing Working Group 12 to develop a competence matrix, which sets out the level of skills, knowledge and experience needed to work with product that complements the stages of the RIBA plan of work. The ISSG was also impressed that the CPA has set up a Marketing Integrity Group which will require the marketing and technical information of products to be accurate. It was particularly pleasing to note that CPA re working to ensure that readily available technologies which are already in widespread use in other sectors are used to assist in product identification and traceability. The ISSG has encouraged CPA to share best practice with industry to ensure that products are of a high standard and safety standards are upheld.
28. The ISSG was pleased to hear that BBA has taken a proactive role in championing building safety by using their technical expertise to audit and test construction products, providing assurances to those working with products and the wider public that those products are safe and are being assessed regularly. In too many cases it not clear to building control officers carrying out inspections whether products have been used or substituted, and they do not have a reliable way of finding out. The BBA has taken an innovative approach in being able to identify and trace product information through 'QR codes', a positive step in providing assurances to sectors in the industry about the construction products they use.
29. It is encouraging that parts of industry are raising standards and working collaboratively, however there is much more to do to raise the competency of those working with construction products and to ensure that construction products are effectively tested, marketed and traced and that suitable products are used in the right applications.

Forward Look

30. **Competence:** The ISSG will continue to challenge industry about their work to drive up standards in competence. Following the publication of the final report from the CSG we will hear from the Chair of the CSG once more, and selected members from the CSG working groups to review their next steps. We will continue to support industry and work with them to drive up competence standards right across industry (it will be important to ensure the message of the final WG0 report and the CSG's report reach the entire industry and not just the members of the group).
31. **Qualifications:** The ISSG will explore how providers of qualifications plan to drive up standards in education, CPD and training. Raising the competence of those working on buildings is vitally important to ensure that safe and high-quality buildings are delivered. Having the correct qualifications will provide assurances to the regulator and more widely, the public that those working on buildings have the relevant skills and knowledge.
32. **Building owners:** Due to the importance of the forthcoming reforms in the occupation phase, the ISSG wants to understand more about how building owners will implement and manage the recommendations from the Independent Review and what they are currently doing to keep residents safe. The ISSG will also want to understand how building owners have changed their ways of working, for example by providing fire and structural safety training to staff and residents.
33. **Communication and culture change:** Culture change is a continuously evolving journey. Successful culture change must be driven by everyone in industry understanding their individual and collective roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, culture change will inform daily conduct and become an embedded way of making decisions. Ultimate success will be demonstrated by a significant improvement in the quality, safety and compliance of industry outputs. Members of the ISSG are eager to communicate this message about culture change more widely via various communications channels including through speaking at conferences, writing articles for industry publications, meeting with stakeholders and using social media.

Conclusion

34. Overall, the ISSG has been encouraged with the progress being made by the industry representatives who have attended meetings. It is clear from the work of Working Group 0, and the positive action taken by groups such as the CLC, that the ISSG's challenges to industry are having an impact. However, the industry is fragmented, and a lack of leadership and collaboration has led to incoherencies in approaches to building safety. There is, therefore, further work to be done to ensure that culture change occurs across the whole of industry and that the ISSG has an effective plan of work to support this.
35. Maintaining momentum across industry is vitally important and the formal consultation process on the new regulatory framework represent a significant milestone which must be used to agitate and mobilise the parts of industry that may be more complacent, to act now to embed changes to their ways of working. The ISSG will continue to put pressure on those who fail to demonstrate significant change until we are confident that sustained momentum and leadership are present within the industry itself to drive real lasting change.
36. It will be important to ensure that standards are raised across industry and not just amongst those whom the ISSG hears from or those who proactively engage with Government. ISSG members will continue to engage with wider industry, using their networks to promote the message of culture change. It is also clear that industry can learn from the work of other industries such as the oil and gas, civil aviation and nuclear and chemical industry alongside other sectors who have been through structural changes to improve safety. The ISSG will continue to offer such opportunities for learning but, equally, industry needs to be receptive to learning from other sectors.
37. Over the coming months the ISSG will hear from organisations across industry, and review topics including industry qualifications and how industry is preparing for the new dutyholder roles and responsibilities. The ISSG has a continuing role to play for the next year at least but it is vital that industry recognises that we are there to challenge them to fill the gaps in their own systems and processes. The work of the ISSG will be complete when the industry takes on that role for itself.