

PRESS RELEASE

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Built environment and fire industries set out blueprint for improving competence and driving culture change

A blueprint to improve competence for those working on higher-risk buildings and drive culture change has been set out by a cross-industry group representing more than 150 organisations in the fire and built environment industries.

Setting the Bar is the second and final report of the Competence Steering Group [CSG] and is an update of its Interim Report, *Raising the Bar*, published in August 2019. The work was initiated by the recommendations in Dame Judith Hackitt's review *Building a Safer Future*.

The proposed overarching system of competence set out in the report is made up of four key elements:

- a new competence committee sitting within the Building Safety Regulator
- a national suite of competence standards – including new sector-specific frameworks developed by 12 working groups
- arrangements for independent assessment and reassessment against the competence standards
- a mechanism to ensure that those assessing and certifying people against the standards have appropriate levels of oversight.

Since the publication of *Setting the Bar*, the CSG and its working groups have consulted widely and taken on board feedback as they have continued to develop sector frameworks and overarching competence frameworks. These frameworks will provide the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours needed to carry out specific roles, and deliver a more rigorous approach to the essential training and assessment that is required.

Additionally, the competence requirements for the new role of Building Safety Manager have also been completed – which has been a major element of the CSG's work. *Setting the Bar* includes a summary of the key points under the Working Group 8 section, but there is a full and separate report published by WG8 alongside this report, *Safer people, safer homes: Building Safety Management*, reflecting the fact that WG8 is establishing a completely new role and the competence needed.

The CSG is recommending that all individuals whose work on higher-risk buildings is likely to materially affect safety outcomes, or who work unsupervised on these buildings, should meet the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours set out in the competence frameworks developed by the industry.

CSG Chairman, Graham Watts, Chief Executive of the Construction Industry Council, said: "We would see higher-risk buildings as an essential starting point for the new competence frameworks for the whole of the built environment, which would result in a step change across the sector and change of industry culture."

The CSG has worked closely with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government and some of the Report's key recommendations have already been adopted, including the proposal for a Committee on Industry Competence as set out in the draft Building Safety Bill.

The CSG is urging government to make mandatory the assessments against the frameworks for those working on higher-risk buildings, and is calling on government to take the lead by requiring that the competence framework set out within this report [subject to their review against the Overarching Competence Framework Standard currently being developed through BSI] must be met by any company or individual working on any higher-risk building.

Watts said: "There is no time to lose in casting aside the substandard practices that have shamed the industry. In this document we have set a new bar and we would urge all those working in life-critical disciplines to attain these higher levels of competence. Only then can we rebuild the trust of those who occupy and live in the buildings we design, construct and manage."

Anthony Taylor, Chairman of WG8, Director, H&S for Avison Young, said: "Developing the completely new role of Building Safety Manager has been an enormous undertaking, which we have worked closely with MHCLG to achieve. We believe the competences and job functions we have set out will deliver the reassurance and trust to residents that their buildings are being managed safely by landlords."

The Full Report *Setting the Bar* and accompanying Annexes can be downloaded [here](#).

The Executive Summary is available [here](#).

WG8 Report *Safer people, safer homes: Building Safety Management* is available [here](#).

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Working Groups established by and reporting into the Competence Steering Group were as follows:
 - Overarching Competence Body (WG0)
 - Engineers (WG1)
 - Installers (WG2)
 - Fire engineers (WG3)
 - Fire risk assessors (WG4)
 - Fire safety enforcing officers (WG5)
 - Building standards professionals (WG6)
 - Building designers, including architects (WG7)
 - Building safety managers (WG8)
 - Site supervisors (WG9)
 - Project managers (WG10)
 - Procurement (WG11)
 - Products (WG12)
2. The Competence Steering Group (CSG) was set up under the auspices of the Industry Response Group, established in the immediate aftermath of the Grenfell tragedy in June 2017 jointly by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Build UK, Construction Industry Council and Construction Products Association and the National Fire Chiefs' Council.



3. CIC is the representative forum for the professional bodies, research organisations and specialist business associations for professional services providers in the construction industry. It provides a single voice for professionals in all sectors of the built environment through its collective membership of 500,000 individual professionals and 25,000 firms of construction consultants.

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