

PRESS RELEASE

Issued on behalf of the Competence Steering Group and the Industry Response Group

16 August 2019

Construction and fire industries set out sweeping proposals to raise competence and make buildings safer

A radical and wide-ranging set of measures to improve the competence of those who design, construct, inspect, maintain and operate higher risk residential buildings (HRRBs) and make them safer for the public has been set out today by a cross-industries group backed by Government, the Industry Safety Steering Group and Dame Judith Hackitt.

The measures are being proposed by the Competence Steering Group (CSG), set up by the Industry Response Group (IRG) to tackle competency failings identified in the Hackitt Review, *Building a Safer Future*, following the Grenfell Tower fire. The CSG has brought together more than 150 institutions and associations across the full spectrum of construction, built environment, fire safety and building owner/manager sectors; all working towards the common purpose of raising competences to improve life safety.

In its interim report *Raising the Bar*, published today, the CSG is urging all life-safety-critical disciplines working on HRRBs, including designers, engineers, building standards officers, site supervisors, fire safety enforcement officers and fire risk officials, to adopt the measures.

It is also calling on Government to play its part by requiring that any company or individual working on a central Government construction project, including those to retrofit existing HRRBs must meet the competence frameworks set out within this report. Local authorities and the wider public and private sectors are also being urged to follow suit.

Dame Judith Hackitt's review identified a lack of consistency and rigour in the processes and standards for assuring the skills, knowledge and behaviours of those working on HRRBs and concluded this was a major flaw in the current regulatory system. The competence frameworks developed by the CSG and its working groups tackle these shortcomings by setting out the appropriate knowledge, qualifications and skill sets required for individuals working on HRRBs, how they should be assessed and by whom.

In addition, *Raising the Bar* calls for:

- A new oversight body - the Building Safety Competence Committee - which will monitor assessment processes, draw up a central register of dutyholders eligible to work on HRRBs and continually drive improvements across the sector. This recommendation dovetails with proposals set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in its recent consultation.

- Government to mandate individuals working on HRRBs to be registered/certified by a recognised professional/or certified body.
- All organisations, including professional bodies, carrying out the assessments and reassessments of an individual's competence should themselves be subject to a rigorous system of oversight by a body such as UKAS or the Engineering Council.
- The building safety regulator to hold and maintain a register of those qualified to perform the key roles with the advice of the Building Safety Competence Committee. And, additionally, to provide sign-posting to registers which should be held by the professional and trade bodies of those qualified and competent to work on HRRBs.
- The period of reassessment to be no less than every five years.
- Common principles of continuing professional development (CPD) to be established for each sector, which the Building Safety Competence Committee should use to hold sectors to account.
- Fire safety CPD materials to explain basic fire science to be available to anyone working on HRRBs or managing occupied HRRBs.

In launching the interim report, Graham Watts, chief executive of the Construction Industry Council and chairman of the CSG, said:

“It is clear that industry organisations have accepted the need to change. The working groups are proposing to raise the bar through a more rigorous approach, including training, assessment, reassessment and third-party accreditation. Combined with a new oversight layer, we think adopting our measures will result in a paradigm change to improve competence and industry culture.”

The interim report is published for wide consultation, ending on 18 October 2019, following which a final report will be issued.



The Interim Report, Executive Summary and accompanying Annexes can be downloaded here:

Raising the Bar Interim Report

<http://cic.org.uk/admin/resources/raising-the-barinterimfinal-1.pdf>

Raising the Bar Executive Summary

<http://cic.org.uk/admin/resources/executive-summaryraising-the-barinterimfinal.pdf>

Raising the Bar Appendix A (Working Group 1-3):

<http://cic.org.uk/admin/resources/raising-the-barappendix-a-working-group-1-3.pdf>

Raising the Bar Appendix A (Working Group 4-12):

<http://cic.org.uk/admin/resources/raising-the-barappendix-a-working-group-4-12.pdf>

Raising the Bar Appendix B – Building Safety Coordinator

<http://cic.org.uk/admin/resources/raising-the-barappendix-b.pdf>

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

- (1) **This press release is issued on behalf of the Competence Steering Group and the Industry Response Group**
- (2) The Industry Response Group was formed jointly by the MHCLG and Build UK, the Construction Industry Council and the Construction Products Association, in July 2017, and meets regularly. Membership now also includes the National Fire Chiefs' Council, the Local Government Association and the National Housing Federation. The Competence Steering Group was set up in May 2018.
- (3) Two invite-only conferences are to be held on 30 September and 18 October, bringing together a wide range of influencers across the construction, fire, built environment and building owner/manager sectors.
- (4) The working groups established 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 professionals (WG11)
 - Products (WG12)

Ends

