

***Issued on behalf of the Industry Response Group's
Steering Group on Competences for Building a Safer Future***

**Independent Steering Group to take forward
Dame Judith Hackitt's recommendations on competence**

Many organisations spanning the construction and fire sectors have come together to form a steering group to take forward key recommendations in Dame Judith Hackitt's *Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety*, to improve competences for those working on the design, construction and operation of higher risk residential buildings.

The **Steering Group on Competences for Building a Safer Future** is a sub-group of the Government-led Industry Response Group [see Note 1], which was set up, last July, in the wake of the Grenfell fire to coordinate action and advice to building owners.

The Steering Group [see Note 2] will continue the work on capacity and competence, begun in late August 2017, as a workstream of the IRG, and also the Working Group on Competence, set up as part of Dame Judith's Review. Both groups were chaired by Graham Watts OBE, Chief Executive of the Construction Industry Council, who will also chair the new Steering Group on behalf of the IRG. Peter Caplehorn (Construction Products Association) and Peter Yates (Local Government Association) will be Deputy Chairs. The Steering Group Secretary is Denise Chevin.

Building a Safer Future identified a lack of appropriate skills, knowledge and experience of those engaged at every stage of the life cycle of higher risk residential buildings as a major flaw in the current regulatory system. It also calls for a formal process for assuring these competences.

Specifically addressing the recommendations and proposals in Chapter 5, and Appendix E, of *Building a Safer Future*, the steering group will develop a plan for an overarching body to provide oversight of competence requirements and support the delivery of competent people. The scope will be for work on higher risk residential buildings as set out in *Building a Safer Future*, but work will be carried out on the basis that it is likely to have wider application to other building types.

The Hackitt report recommended a year to complete this work and that progress should be reported quarterly. As details become clearer about the role of the Joint Competent Authority (JCA) and the implementation of Dame Judith Hackitt's recommendations, the Steering Group, and IRG, will consider how this work can best contribute to this evolving process.

The work of identifying and developing specific competency frameworks and accreditation pathways, will be undertaken by 11 working groups [see Note 3], broadly reflecting the work set out in the Hackitt Review; with one additional work stream (Procurement) being added by the Steering Group.

Each working group will be tasked with defining:

- a process for agreeing and monitoring competence frameworks;
- a process for agreeing and monitoring accreditation and reaccreditation;
- the period within which competence should be reassessed;
- the method for demonstrating or proving competence;
- whether the competence requirements for those working on HRRBs should also be extended to cover other multi-occupancy residential buildings and to institutional residential buildings;
- a programme of fire and system safety CPD; and
- identifying exemplars from other sectors and internationally.

The Chair, Secretariat and membership of each working group are being recruited from across the fire safety sector, built environment professions, the construction industry and from those who own and manage higher-risk residential buildings.

The Steering Group will meet fortnightly throughout the year and, in addition to overseeing and peer-reviewing the outputs from the eleven working groups, the Group will also:

- determine arrangements for the effective oversight of competence requirements to support the delivery of competent people working on higher risk residential buildings;
- propose the role and remit of an overarching competence council;
- identify and fill any further gaps in the competence requirements across the commissioning, design, construction, refurbishment, maintenance and management of higher risk residential buildings;
- organise a workshop on the principles of competence frameworks; and
- make quarterly reports to MHCLG/JCA, via the Industry Response Group

The Group met for the first time on the day prior to the publication of *Building a Safer Future* and has met twice more. Speaking after the third meeting, on 31 May, Graham Watts said: *“Dame Judith asked the construction and fire safety sectors to continue the work started in response to her interim report and it has been heartening to see the collective commitment from across both sectors, and amongst those who represent building owners, to come together quickly to ensure that these issues are addressed. Our aim is to ensure a joined-up approach to achieving a comprehensive, coherent and robust framework for the competence of all those creating, maintaining and managing higher risk residential buildings. It is an excellent beginning and we hope to improve upon the year timescale envisaged by Dame Judith by completing this work in March 2019”.*

ENDS

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Notes:

Note 1:

The Industry Response Group is chaired by the MHCLG Building Safety Programme. In addition to the MHCLG, membership consists of Build UK, Construction Industry Council, Construction Products Association, National Fire Chiefs' Council, Local Government Association, National Housing Federation, plus IPA and BEIS. It has met regularly since July 2017.

Note 2:

Membership of the Steering Group is drawn from: ACAI/CICAIR, ARB, Build UK, CIC, CIOB, CPA, Engineering Council, FSF, IFE, LABC, LGA, NFCC, NHF, RICS plus the independent chairs of WG8 and WG11 and additional independent members.

Note 3:

WG1 Engineers - led by the Engineering Council, working on a contextualised standard for chartered and incorporated engineers [Proposal on p.135, *Building a Safer Future*];

WG2 Installers - led jointly by Build UK and the Fire Sector Federation, working on a comprehensive framework of competences for those installing fire safety and other safety-critical systems [Proposal on p.135, *Building a Safer Future*];

WG3 Fire Engineers - led by the Institution of Fire Engineers, working on the enhanced competences of fire engineers [Proposal on p.77, *Building a Safer Future*];

WG4 Fire Risk Assessors - led by the Fire Sector Federation, working on the enhanced competences of fire risk assessors [Proposal on p.136, *Building a Safer Future*];

WG5 Fire Safety Enforcing Officers - led by the National Fire Chiefs Council, working on the competency framework for fire safety enforcement [Proposal on p.137, *Building a Safer Future*];

WG6 Building Control/Building Standards - led jointly by LABC/Association of Consultant Approved Inspectors, working on the competences of those regulating building standards (currently known as building control) [Proposal on pp. 79/80, *Building a Safer Future*];

WG7 Architects/ Building Designers - led by the Architects Registration Board working on the enhanced competences of architects and other building designers [Proposal on p.137, *Building a Safer Future*];

WG8 Building Safety Manager - to be chaired independently, working on the required competences for the new role of building safety manager [Recommendation 5.4 on p.80, *Building a Safer Future*];

WG9 Site Supervisors - led by the Chartered Institute of Building, working on enhanced competences for site supervisors [Proposal on p.77, *Building a Safer Future*];

WG10 Project Managers - led by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, working on enhanced competences for project managers [Proposal on p.77, *Building a Safer Future*];

WG11 Procurement - to be chaired independently, working on defining competences for those commissioning/procuring higher risk residential buildings [additional to recommendations in *Building a Safer Future*]