

Briefing Notes

PlaceShapers  
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## Are you regulation ready?

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## Introduction

As we prepare for buildings over 18 metres tall to be registered with the Building Safety Regulator from April 2023, what are the key pressure points for organisations when it comes to building safety? Sam Duggan and Olivia Post from Adecco share market insight into this area, discussing assessment, workforce planning and training and how this links to governance and managing risk effectively.

**NB:** You can download the UK Housing Data Standards individually or as a whole [here](#).

## Market insight – Sam Duggan

Sam Duggan shared his experience of the current market as a Building Safety, Recruitment and Training Business Lead.

- **Resource:** 4 in 5 firms are struggling to fill roles due to a candidate shortage. This is even more relevant with technical and specialist roles, such as fire safety and health and safety. On a positive note, recent Government policies appear to be attempting to get people back into work by aiding with childcare and targeted employment programmes. The hope is that these changes will provide access to a bigger pool of candidates.

- **Skills:** Despite the 'Building Safety Manager' role being created and then stepped down last year, organisations continue to recruit for this role. Organisations do not always have the budget to recruit externally due to the competitive salary demand (people are moving for on average £5,000 - £10,000 salary increase) and if this is the case, we would encourage re-training and upskilling current employees.
- **Assessments:** Ensure the assessment an individual is going through at recruitment stage is fit for purpose. Experience of CV's referencing managing fire safety/risks, but when put through the assessment their experience can be quite different. Question if there someone in the organisation who can help to assess suitability for that role and if not, is it possible to bring someone in such as a fire engineer who can assist.
- **Onboarding:** If you do find someone who you want to offer a job to, or if your organisation is looking to recruit to a role, the onboarding process is so important. Experience is that individuals often have two or three job offers they are considering at the same time. If possible, try to get them in to meet the teams and get a feel for the office to help get things over the line.

## Building Safety: Challenging perceptions, providing solutions – Olivia Post

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Olivia Post, Fire and Health & Safety Specialist delivered a talk on building safety, the legislation and what that means for board members.

On reflection the tragedy of Grenfell was the result of multiple failings in building safety, but it was not the cause of all the problems. It is fundamental that board members understand and get to grips with the new building safety legislation coming through.

## Legislation

- The new legislation follows on from Dame Judith Hackitt's 'Building a Safer Future' independent report (May 2018). The report concluded that there is a fundamental disconnect between the planning and design of buildings and what is happening when the buildings are being built. For example, it is too common for the safety aspects to not be known about, to be hidden away or to not be maintained post-completion.
- Unlike other legislation, the new legislation applies to old buildings as well as new buildings. Importantly, the legislation also applies to all buildings not just high-rise buildings.
- All the changes we are seeing are going to address the gaps in the old legislation and simplify what was and is still very complex legislation. Simplification is key because we all need to understand what we are talking about to ensure good and safe decisions are made about buildings in the future.
- Initial legislation came out: an enabling framework which gave the Government power to create the Fire Safety Act which subsequently enabled the Building Safety Act to follow.

## Key messages

- We can shape our own future to show how we are operating in the market. If we do not rise to the challenge, the Government will do it for us, and this will likely result in tighter guidelines creating more difficulties and increased costs.
- Stop waiting – start doing. We need everyone to operate more professionally and with more integrity. Everyone operating in the market needs the right training and the support to do that. Equip personnel with the right knowledge, skills, and tools to operate safely regardless of their role.

- How does your procurement process factor in the importance of building safety? Question: If your procurement weighs 70% on cost and 30% on quality, are you meeting the new building safety requirements or do you have a policy that supports the cheapest product.
- Everyone has a part to play, and everyone is culpable. It is not just down to the Building Safety Managers. The legislation can make everyone in an organisation culpable.

### What can we do as board members?

- Make sure building safety information is available and accessible. Keep it simple and do not overcomplicate.
- Culture change. We need a strong message coming from the people at the top that building safety matters. Take time to talk about it with personnel at all levels of seniority and role type. Develop policies with building safety at its core. Make sure people in the organisation understand building safety and how their role fits in with keeping buildings safe.
- Prioritise finance being available (where possible). Costs will initially be high as the demand is to work in a new way, but the hope is that costs will be saved later when buildings are built and maintained in the proper way.
- Make sure everyone has access to education on building safety. Share knowledge across the organisation, no one can be an expert in every area. If in-house resource is not available, signpost to training programmes.
- Make sure your building plans are accessible and up to date.
- Prioritise data management, question how you get your data and if the reporting systems are good enough. Celebrate data and make sure you are getting the correct data from colleagues and contractors – move away from blame culture!
- Don't stop reviewing. Building safety will not stop moving as the legislation was designed to enable continuous change and adaptation. Review what is going on around you as often as you can, update policies and reflect on the data you are getting back.

## Q&A and Discussion

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- **It is quite daunting for board members to get their heads around everything that is required, where you would suggest a board member starts with this.**

*Make it part of your mission. If you have a policy, make sure building safety is placed right at the heart of it. You need to start sharing that message, we want it to be that if you cut through any slice of your organisation, building safety is right there at the centre. That is the starting point.*

- **What key metrics do you think boards need to be looking at – we get the message that we need to be looking at data holistically.**

*You want to have a no blame culture about data. If you are getting information about outstanding repairs, you need to know that information as it can give you an idea about things that can potentially go wrong. People might not want to give you the information, but you want to see everything. This gives you an opportunity to see where you are with things breaking or failing, especially when it occurs repeatedly.*

- **Quite a bit of the works we carry out are service chargeable and where the service charge is already high, we have started to see a backlash. How do we deal with that challenge?**

*The starting point is your policy. One of the things you have to accept is that some of the buildings you have residents in will not be suitable for the duration of their life. You need to be empowered to move someone to a different home if it is no longer safe.*

*Another consideration is: are these buildings really what you want to keep in your portfolio. The question is are they realistic in terms of a new policy in housing or can you sell these buildings and develop new housing which can be a home for life.*

*I understand that doesn't deal with the challenge with residents but equally, every single person in one of your homes is loved. That is a really important message – in implementing these building safety measures, you are not doing it to harm or upset anyone, but to keep them safe.*

## Register for our next session

Repairs and maintenance. What do boards need to be thinking about?

Monday 24 April 16:00 - 17:00

Jenny Osbourne, Chair of Stockport Homes and CEO of Tpas will be joining us to discuss what boards need to be thinking about for repair and maintenance, and to share her reflections on what Stockport Homes have been doing.

Speakers: Jenny Osbourne , Chair of Stockport Homes and CEO of Tpas

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