

SPECFINISH

The magazine of FIS representing finishes and interiors



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FIS

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The University of Birmingham's new Collaborative Teaching Laboratory facility where British Gypsum's technical team ensured the most suitable building materials for the high-performance and technical environments.

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SpecFinish 2019



FIS supports members with Brexit checklist

FIS, the trade body for the finishes and interiors sector, has created a Preparing for Brexit Checklist for its members.

This checklist is designed to support FIS members with the questions that they need to start asking across the Product, Process and People elements of their business (the three pillars of the FIS Quality in Construction Strategy).

While not exhaustive, it aims to help members understand the impact of Brexit and look at potential risks, challenges and opportunities.

Iain McIlwee, FIS chief executive, said: "We are constantly hearing that businesses need to start preparing for Brexit. In fairness, government has started to draw information together, but the complexity and volume of information is overwhelming to most small- and medium-sized

businesses.

"The simple fact is preparing for Brexit is extremely difficult while Brexit is being kicked around like a political football in Westminster and regardless of the outcome or our own views, there remains so much uncertainty and cause for concern out here in the real world.

"Rather than trying to predict outcomes, FIS has focused the checklist on the elements that will most likely impact on our members and help them to adopt a more risk-management based process. It is all about starting to have the right conversations with staff, subcontractors, suppliers and customers, and identifying where the impact may be."

FIND OUT MORE

www.thefis.org/knowledge-hub/brexit-checklist

Government should enforce fair payment for SMEs, say MPs

The government should introduce a tougher regime to tackle larger companies who treat small businesses "disgracefully" by enforcing long payment terms or paying their suppliers late, says the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee.

In a report, entitled 'Small businesses and productivity', it is highlighted that for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to succeed, it is crucial they are paid fairly and on time. However, the report finds that bad payment practices have led to the failure of many SMEs and prevented others from growing and improving their productivity. Initiatives to address poor payment practices, including the government's Prompt Payment Code, have been ineffective, say MPs.

Within the report are recommendations that government introduce a statutory requirement for companies to pay within 30 days, move as soon as possible to require all medium and large companies to sign the Prompt Payment Code, and equip the Small Business Commissioner with powers to fine those companies that pay late.

Rachel Reeves MP, chair of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee, said: "SME businesses are vital to the health of our economy, providing jobs and prosperity to communities up and down the country. But many are placed in a stranglehold by larger companies deliberately paying late and ruthlessly taking advantage of their suppliers, causing these firms financial instability."

The Committee's report identifies the construction industry as a sector where poor payment practices are rife, as highlighted by Carillion's woeful treatment of its suppliers.

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www.specfinish.co.uk

Immigration White Paper to restrict access to skilled workers

Specialist contractors could have their pipeline of overseas workers cut off should the government Immigration White Paper become law.

The government said it is sticking to advice given to it by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) which said unskilled workers should not be allowed into the UK just because a particular industry needed workers. A £30,000 annual salary was confirmed as the salary threshold for skilled immigrants, although ministers are expected to consult for another year on where to set the post-Brexit salary threshold.

Commenting on the White Paper, Iain McIlwee, FIS's chief executive, said: "The White Paper suggests the government does not understand the skills required in our industry and its proposed approach will create a real challenge for our members.

"We need to look at what skills are required and then ensure they are provided in the most effective way. Adopting arbitrary caps is not the solution we need."

FIND OUT MORE

www.thefis.org



Lifetime Achievement Honour for David Hall

British Gypsum's National Technical Academy Manager, David Hall, has won The Lifetime Contribution to Training Award at the Plasterers' Training Awards. Since joining British Gypsum nearly 30 years ago, Mr Hall (pictured centre) has worked tirelessly to progress training in plastering and drywall systems sectors, spearheading working groups for the development of National Qualifications for Interior Systems, establishing the delivery of drylining qualifications within British Gypsum's Technical Academies and, more recently, collaborating with the FMB to help shape the new three-year Plasterer Trailblazer Apprenticeships.

FIND OUT MORE www.specfinish.co.uk

900mm board offers improved safety and productivity

A new report from specialist contractor Astins, in collaboration with FIS, Skanska, Knauf, and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), illustrates the positive impact and potential of using smaller and lighter 900mm wide plasterboard in place of the standard 1,200mm wide board.

The HSE had found that dryliners are particularly prone to Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs), largely due to manually handling 1,200mm wide plasterboards, often on their own.

Astins was lead contractor on a pilot project, using a 900mm wide plasterboard, looking at addressing issues with heavy plasterboard. The final report found a 33 per cent reduction in plasterboard waste; significant productivity improvements (62 per cent), especially during second fix; and shoulder muscle stress reduction of 30 per cent. The project also reported relatively equal overall CO2 emissions and an overall cost benefit.

FIS members can access the full report on the FIS website.

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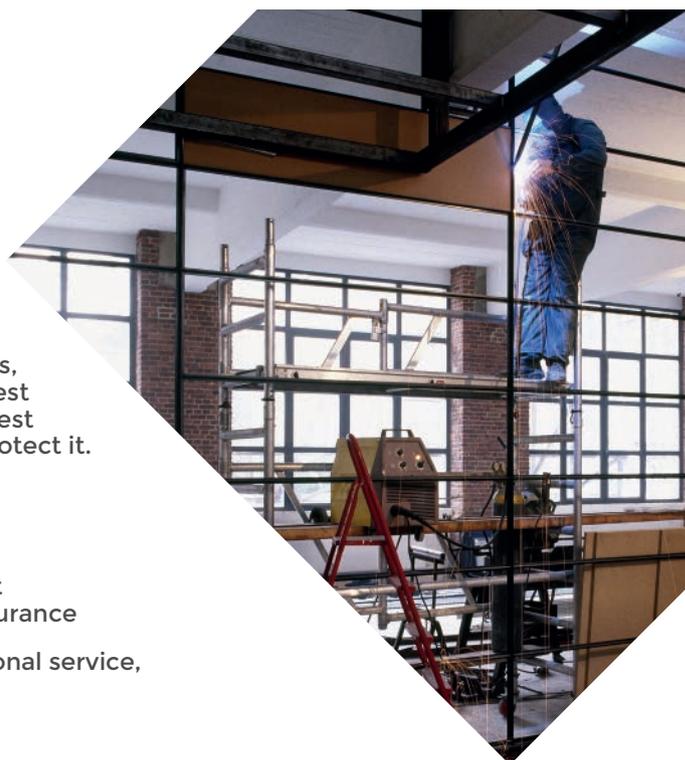
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Editor's column

New Year, new hope, new vision

The start of any new year begins with hope and expectations. Throughout this issue we review ways to work better in winter and gain an insight into delivering a true customer experience.

What possibly won't change is the all-consuming debate about Brexit. Not knowing what to prepare for is extremely difficult, but the new FIS checklist (see page 2) will help business owners and managers to make sure that that labour and material supplies are secure.

Skills are a known shortage but where contracts are underway there are growing concerns about sustaining material deliveries. Any delays could impact on the supply chain's ability to meet programme targets. Inadvertently, specialists could then become exposed to penalties through no fault of their own.

The Brexit checklist is the latest aid from FIS. The trade body's annual review (see page 18) shows that it has made considerable progress in tackling the skills shortage and addressing technical issues faced by the sector. But at its heart is the objective to help members improve performance.

FIS needs to work hard to champion improvements through its Product, Process and People strategy. But it also needs those active in the sector to get more involved and participate in the change process. The collapse of Carillion and the continuing crisis over payment shows that stronger leadership and greater engagement are necessary.

The Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee proposes to introduce a tougher regime to tackle larger companies who treat small businesses "disgracefully" (see page 2). Plans to bar those who abuse payment from public contracts may encourage a more sensible approach and create less conflict.

Conflict is something that does not exist in the BW Workplace Expert's playbook (see page 14). The new management team's commitment to delivering defect free contracts demonstrates that there is a place in our industry for adopting a true customer experience that is valued. Perhaps others can learn that getting the job right first time, on time, will reap rewards for all.

My wish for 2019 is a world where Brexit has ceased to be an issue; the industry is training more new entrants; snagging is a task confined to history; and our sector enjoys shorter payment periods and no retentions.

Adrian JG Marsh
Editor



Digital Construction: the Final Frontier

Construction, the final digital frontier. These are the musings of the FIS CEO: my mission to explore the horizons, seek out new technology and question whether the construction industry will boldly go where everybody else has gone before.

It's worth pointing out here that I am not advocating seeking out new galaxies to avoid the endless Brexit debates. But at the start of the New Year, it is important to look ahead and consider what is most likely to disrupt the construction sector. If we look beyond Brexit and at the things we can control, I am convinced that the construction sector is on the verge of digital disruption. "BIM is coming" has become akin to "The End of the World is Nigh" (it is, by the way), but BIM is only a part of this digital revolution.

There are three key reasons why I confidently make this prediction. Firstly, we had a warning shot across our bowels from Carillion. We need to be more productive and in this pursuit of productivity, virtually every other sector has been disrupted by digital solutions. Getting a cab has, for many, become "uberizing it"; popping into the bank is a rare occurrence for most of us; Amazon is changing the shape of the high street; the driverless car is just around the corner (merrily running an algorithm whether it is better to run over three badgers or you!) – even factories can be monitored on mobile phone apps. I tell you, it is coming – just Google it!

The second driver is Quality and Risk Management. Grenfell was a stark reminder that to deliver on quality we need to improve our ability to manage information and control process. Central to this is the Golden Thread and a need to communicate more effectively, ensuring that there is

an understanding of and information on compliance and competence (as per the FIS Product, Process, People framework) at every level of the supply chain. Risk management is that: it is not removing, but limiting, the potential to do harm, and it is also recognising that mistakes happen. But if everybody has the information they need and we know everything about the product and people involved, we can isolate failure down to exceptional circumstance, and review, learn and, importantly, identify and limit wider problems.

Finally, the technology sector is interested. All of a sudden, I am meeting more and more IT people at construction events and they are talking to me about stuff that I barely understand but that seems to hold the key to unlocking some of our problems, like artificial intelligence and blockchain (see the recent FIS Focus article on www.thefis.org if you need this demystified). It will be these innovators that open our eyes to the art of the possible and ensure that secure and seamless transition of critical information between all parts of the supply chain becomes a reality. Other prizes could even be automatic, transparent and fair flow of payment – now imagine that!

So, when I talk about the digital revolution, I am not referring to an army of robots or teleporting between sites. I am talking about the start of joining the dots, linking specification to ordering and product information to site competence. Welcome to the Digital Revolution. As Spock would say, anything else is "Highly illogical!"

IAIN MCILWEE
Chief executive
Finishes and Interiors Sector

Health and Safety perfection: a journey, not a destination

Michael Barker, managing director of Safety Platforms, discusses how the endeavour for perfect health and safety practices should never end, and why innovation in this area should be on everyone’s agenda.

Having supplied access equipment to the construction industry for more than 30 years, I have been witness to radical changes in the equipment being used on-site. Heavy steel scaffold towers, wooden hop-ups and, dare I say it, beer crates were all common sights in the early days.

Thankfully, things have moved on and we now see equipment on-site which was previously not thought of. These new developments make site work

much safer and more efficient. All areas of work have seen vast improvements, too, with much more thought now given to, for example, work at height, noise levels and the consequences of manual handling.

A prime example of change would be that, up until 15 years ago, a ladder and scaffold board were considered an acceptable working platform in a stairwell – “That’s how it’s always been done”, the common excuse heard.

Through proactive contractors and suppliers working together to develop solutions to improve safety, usability and productivity, the industry solved a problem and moved another step towards realising sensible health and safety protocols.

We have possibly all heard or said the phrase “Health and safety gone mad”, and when talking about children not being allowed to play conkers in the school playground, this may be

relevant. However, when talking about protecting people and improving working conditions on-site, developments have been vital, and consideration of further refinements should be ongoing.

Improvements in site safety have come about not just because of legislation but also by people looking at what we do and thinking “Is there a better, safer way of doing this?”. By continually reviewing current practices and by keeping health and safety on everyone’s agenda, our industry can be made even safer, even more productive and better positioned to face the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Who knows what we will see on construction sites in 20 to 30 years?

MICHAEL BARKER

Managing director
Safety Platforms

www.safetyplatforms.co.uk



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British Gypsum plasters selected for landmark healthcare project

More than 50,000m² of British Gypsum Thistle plaster has been used as part of St Andrews Healthcare project Fitzroy House, a two-storey facility to provide specialised care for up to 110 young people with complex mental health needs.

The internal environment was important for facilitating patient recovery, and P+HS Architects consulted with medical professionals and patients on the design, with flexibility, durability and a healthy building with a robust quality finish identified as key requirements.

A two-coat plaster system was chosen for its increased durability. This consisted of British Gypsum's Thistle HardWall undercoat and a skim finish coat of ThistlePro PureFinish, which incorporates Activ'Air technology to absorb and convert formaldehyde for a healthier internal environment, considered to help speed up patient recovery.

Subcontractor Taylor Hart – an FIS member – achieved superb results throughout. Managing director Phil Lewis commented: "We are very pleased with the project, especially due to the time and programme constraints.

"That success has been recognised by the industry and we won Gold in the FIS Contractors Awards 2017."

www.british-gypsum.com

Selectaglaze assists with Tudor building refurbishment

Secondary glazing from Selectaglaze has been introduced to Whitehall Museum, a 500-year-old Grade II* Listed Tudor building, as part of a £1.6 million refurbishment and restoration to tackle damp issues, improve thermal performance, and remove 20th century fixtures while restoring some of the original features.

The introduction of secondary glazing traps an insulating layer of air, which can reduce heat loss by more than 50 per cent, with low-emissivity glass enabling the achievement of U-values of around 1.8. Main contractor R. Durnell & Sons, specialists in the sensitive restoration and refurbishment of heritage buildings, approached Selectaglaze to carry out the secondary glazing works.

Fifteen units were installed from the lightweight range along with two fire-retardant units. The old Tudor building's sloping irregular floors, bowed walls, uneven ceilings and irregular window openings necessitated high levels of craftsmanship. Tapered and splayed timber grounds were used to take up the building's irregularities. Once in place, the secondary glazing was installed, which was seamlessly designed to suit the original windows.

www.selectaglaze.co.uk

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Longline Vision transforms head office space

Photo credit: Simon Halstead

Nevill Long's Longline Vision partitioning system has been installed at The Gorilla Glue Company's new UK head office in Chorley to transform and separate office space, reception area, corridors and a meeting room as part of a Cat B refurbishment.

Kieron McLaughlin of K McLaughlin Ceilings & Partitions invited Nevill Long to site before the work began to give an idea of budget and schedule of works. The existing space was initially divided up by solid partitioning, making the space dark and closed off, and the brief focused on allowing for more light to enter the space.

Nevill Long's North West branch supplied the drylining, insulation and frameless glazing for the renovation. The Longline Vision partitioning system was selected for its combination of design versatility and rapid installation to effortlessly create bright, open spaces. The system's design features slim aluminium profiles without vertical mullions between the panes making it easy to create the desired modern look.

The Gorilla Glue Company wanted to incorporate the company and brand logo onto the single-glazed, frameless glazing without it being too overpowering, so the designers opted for a branded manifestation printed onto frosted film and continued throughout the space, enabling bright colours to be used as bold feature walls throughout the office.

www.nevilllong.co.uk



Sto helps create the right impression for Scottish school

One of the largest ever UK projects using StoTherm Classic M insulation and the Sto-Rotofix Plus fixing system has been completed in Scotland – the new Portobello High School, in Edinburgh.

StoTherm Classic M was chosen to provide high-level thermal performance for the new building. The EWI system features expanded polystyrene insulation boards and non-cementitious rendering components for impact resistance of 60 joules – up to 10 times greater than that provided by similar cementitious systems. This is a particular benefit for school projects of this type where the facade cladding may be subject to harsh treatment. The system was finished externally with a through-coloured StoSilco K silicone render for extra protection and to enhance the appearance.

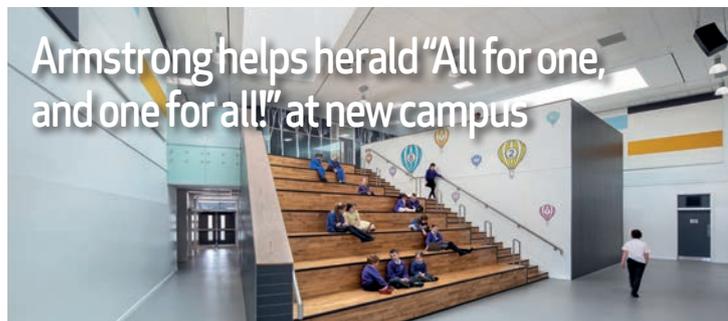
Sto-Rotofix Plus was used to fix the insulation. It has a unique helical spiral fixing which allows the insulation boards to be mechanically fixed, quickly and reliably, and then easily adjusted so that a seamless facade can be created ready for rendering.

www.sto.co.uk

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For a Longline Vision brochure or to find your nearest Nevill Long branch visit nevilllong.co.uk



Armstrong helps herald "All for one, and one for all!" at new campus

A trio of Armstrong Ceiling Solutions have been installed at the new Balloch Campus in Dumbarton, where three schools now co-locate.

The new state-of-the-art campus features three highly acoustic Armstrong Ceiling Solutions throughout: Perla OP 0.95 Tegular mineral tiles on Prelude 24 TLX grid, Parafon Hygien Board mineral tiles on a 24mm corrosion-resistant grid, and Armstrong's revolutionary TechZone integrated ceiling system – the industry's first easy-to-specify-and-install ceiling solution with integrated technical services – incorporating Perla OP MicroLook planks.

Delivered by main contractor Morgan Sindall, Armstrong ceiling systems were specified by architects Holmes Miller for the £16m campus for "cost and quality" reasons and installed by Armstrong's Green Omega specialist subcontractor and FIS member Brian Hendry Interiors, which had a team of up to 16 operatives, including apprentices, on-site for five months.

www.armstrongceilings.co.uk



Promat breathes new life into Swansea's Oldway Centre

Etex Building Performance company Promat has developed a bespoke passive fire protection solution for the Oldway Centre, a Swansea office block being converted into 556-bedroom student accommodation.

This switch from commercial to residential use required the building floors' fire resistance to quadruple to 120 minutes. Passive fire protection boards and sprays can be combined to achieve higher performance, but the centre's 1960s-designed coffered slab floors meant rigid protection materials were not suitable.

Promat also needed to meet the building's tight build schedule and accommodate the installation of offsite-manufactured bathroom pods in time for the 2019 term. These could not be elevated into place until the floors were upgraded, so speed of install for the passive fire protection was vital.

To overcome this, Promat specified CAFCO CP2 – a cementitious spray designed for increasing the fire resistance of concrete slabs and quick to apply with the right expertise. Main contractor WRW Construction appointed installation subcontractor Sharpfibre, whose teams are trained to apply Promat products.

Russell Cooper from Sharpfibre said: "CAFCO CP2 ticked all the boxes for this project, including compliance, performance and speed. We covered two floors per week, applying 18,000m² in total."

www.promat.co.uk



New Rockfon Metal ceiling tiles announced

Rockfon has announced the launch of Rockfon Metal ceiling tiles, which combine unique stone wool performance characteristics, such as A1 safest reaction to fire and highest Class A sound absorption, with a modern metal surface.

The tiles have a bright white surface, providing an option for specifiers looking to create contemporary ceiling designs that offer the additional benefits of high light reflection to maximise a room's natural daylight.

With Class A sound absorption, Rockfon Metal achieves the highest alpha rating of 1.00. The ceiling's high absorption controls the ambient sound level, preventing echo and increasing speech intelligibility – ideal for offices, public buildings and retail outlets.

The tiles are available in two perforation patterns and in different sizes and edge details, such as clip-in concealed, semi-concealed and visible grid options. They match Rockfon's Chicago Metallic T15, T24 and Clip-in white grids, ensuring the colour is consistent throughout every project.

www.rockfon.co.uk



Style achieves extensive room flexibility at Royal Holloway

Partitioning expert Style has worked closely with contractor Osborne and Associated Architects to assist with and advise on the design of numerous moveable wall systems at new Emily Wilding Davison building, at Royal Holloway University.

Demonstrating the full breadth of Style's portfolio, the final arrangement involved a 50dB Rw DORMA glass wall in the events seminar room, a DORMA Variflex system in the events space, a 56dB Rw acoustic DORMA moveable wall in the PC training rooms, a 46dB Rw folding wall in a clinic room, and a 56dB Rw DORMA moveable wall in the meeting rooms.

The demand for flexible space on this state-of-the-art project was extensive, while the specification was also far from the norm. In one room, the university wished to include hanging rails on the partitioning panels, allowing artwork to be displayed. There was also a need for additional acoustic protection and visual privacy in the reception area, as and when required.

www.style-partitions.co.uk

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Working in a winter fit-out land

In the middle ages when winters were severe, construction work stopped between November and March because it was impossible to work. Today, we assume we can carry on through, but what are the risks to the finished work, the programme and the people? FIS technical director **Joe Cilia** talks to members across the FIS community.

revisits to already completed areas with big impacts on programme and costs. This can lead to disputes.” On this topic, Mr Double added: “Remember, there are no fire tests for water-damaged partitions.”

So, who pays when water damages the fit-out?

Mr Double commented: “That depends. In our experience, this will be the loss adjusters if it is due to building defects, poor design or damage caused by leaking services. And it can depend on the contract – for example, if a main contractor brings the fit-out programme forward before the building is weathertight.”

What about lighting in the darker winter months?

“The main contractors will generally provide safety lighting as required under CDM,” said Mr Sexton, adding, “But remember, there may be a need for task lighting specific to your work as well!”

Mr Double added: “Suitable and adequate lighting is vitally important when attempting to achieve the required level of finish. Requirements for artificial lighting are noted in the BS 8212, 8000 and the plastering standards BS EN 13914-2:2016.”

Can dehumidification speed up the curing time?

“There are times when we would recommend their use, such as in preparation for the installation of drylining where there is insufficient time to allow the building to naturally dry,” explained Mr Sexton. “However, where dehumidification is used during the installation, the level needs to be such as to not adversely affect the set and drying phases of the jointing, plaster or skim.”

What specific safety considerations are required in winter?

David Cant of health and safety consultants Veritas said: “In cold weather, specialist PPE may be required, which should be appropriate for the task. Remember, there may be times when operatives are standing in the cold for long periods, so ensure they have adequate equipment to hand.

“Be aware that surfaces could be icy and slippery, so taking extra care entering site and moving equipment and materials is imperative. You should also monitor and record weather changes and look at what controls are in place to manage and respond to the changes.”

How about storing and moving materials on-site?

Gavin Palmer of specialist fit-out contractor Astins said: “Moving materials and even getting to site can all be weather dependant, and high winds can put a stop to carting where cranes and hoists are used.”

He advised: “Contractors should always ensure that materials are stored in a flat, dry space – boards are prone to taking on undulations, which may manifest themselves in the finished work. Water-resistant boards are designed to resist water in their installed state, but they can absorb water if left lying flat in the rain for prolonged periods.”

Mr Double added a final point on preserving the quality of plasterboard. He said: “It is common for main contractors to instruct that plasterboards are raised off the slab so if there is any standing water, it does not soak into the boards.”

It seems that winter more than any other season comes with its own challenges, but remember that winter doesn’t have a monopoly on wet weather – many of the points raised here are just as valid when working in summer.

If you have any views on this article or would like to contribute to the next article on fire doors, please email joecilia@thefis.org.

FIND OUT MORE

JOE CILIA

FIS technical director
joecilia@thefis.org



Photo credit: Aztec Interiors

Should you start the fit-out before the building is watertight?

“Commencing works ahead of a building being watertight is a lottery,” commented Alex Double, a drylining and fire consultant.

What do British Standards say?

British Standard 8212: 1995 Code of Practice for Drylining and Partitions using Gypsum Plasterboard states, “It is essential that areas to be drylined or partitioned are watertight, weatherproof and dry. This is of particular importance as drylining materials are vulnerable to wet or high-humidity conditions.”

Does water ingress have an impact on fit-out?

“When it rains, fungal spores in the air are deposited on surfaces where there is contact, which may lead to mould growth on finished plasterboard months after completion,” said Mathew Sexton, head of advocacy and standardisation at British Gypsum. “The trick is to keep the walls dry to avoid this happening.”

Andrew Richardson of Fermacell commented: “Water ingress can make it necessary to replace damaged boards or system components, meaning



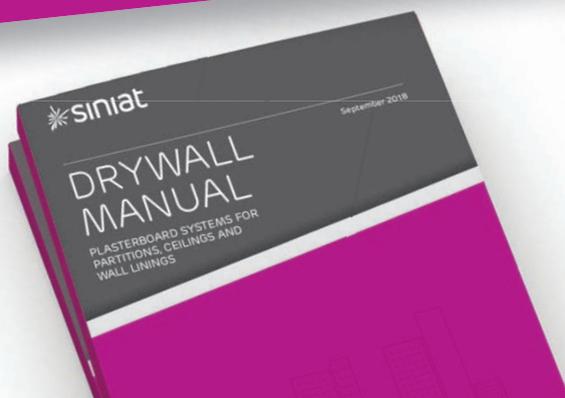
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The Siniat Drywall Manual 2018 is a comprehensive, technical guide to finding solutions using Siniat's products and systems. It has been updated to reflect:

- New products and systems that we have created
- Changes in testing methods in response to changes in Building Regulations
- Innovations made by ourselves, which might change the ingredient mix of our products



Innovation drives change

When open plan evolved for commercial and residential buildings, some thought the days of the simple partition were numbered. However, the partition remains a critical component in creating fully functioning interiors that are efficient and safe for both installers and occupiers. **Adrian JG Marsh** reports.

be slotted easily into the standard metal frame.”

The result was DRYBACKER, a ready-made pattress panel that is pre-cut and grooved for easy installation and finishes flush with the studs. It requires no power tools and cutting and, as there is no noise and dust, it is safer for installers.

“We conducted rigorous tests to BS 5234: Part 2 and worked with Salford University to assess the structural qualities with pull-out values,” continued Mr Murray. “Combined, these known pull-out strengths based on British Standards, with an OSB ‘C’ mark for structural use, enables designers and contractors to determine the strength of an OSB partition wall.

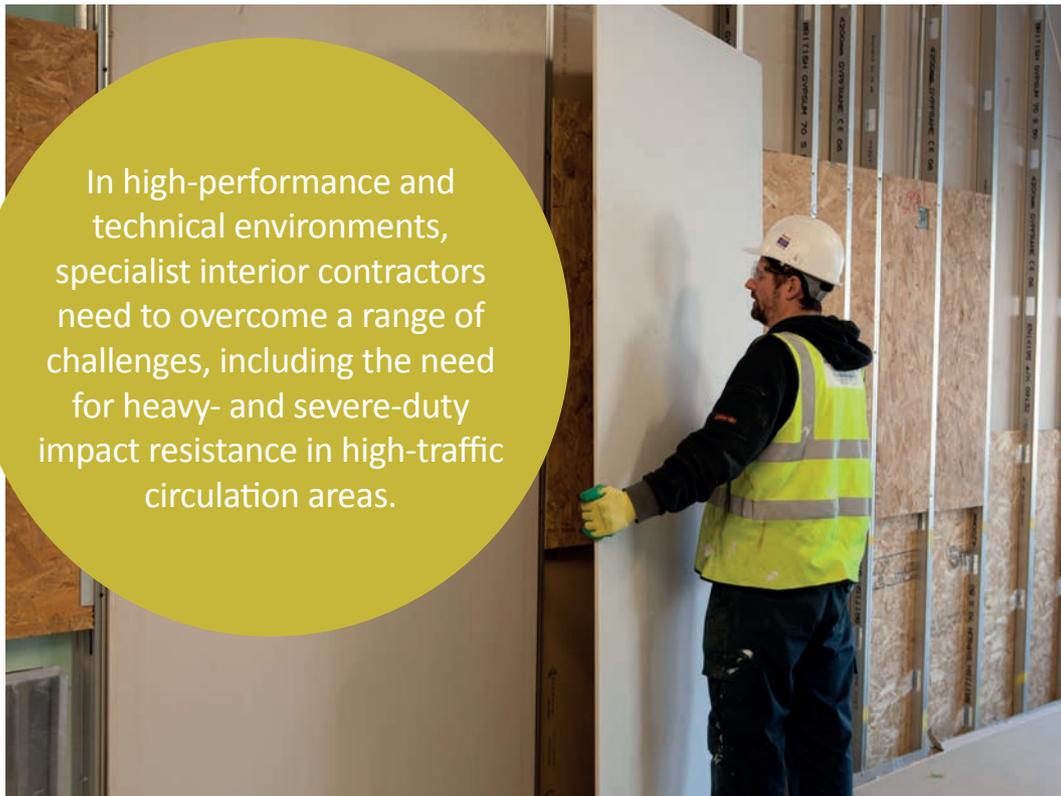
“The key issue for designers is that DRYBACKER has known pull-out values, unlike plywood, which has unknown values. Trials with drywall contractors were successful and showed that there was less waste, because no on-site cutting was required, and we estimate that it is 60 per cent faster to install than plywood. So, with the increasing move towards greater compliance test data being required, we’re able to provide accurate performance information.”

In high-performance and technical environments, specialist interior contractors will be looking to overcome a range of challenges. These include the need for heavy- and severe-duty impact resistance in high-traffic circulation areas and plant rooms. These facilities will also need to respect acoustic performance, fire resistance and insulation that impacts on the overall thermal performance of the building.

And if installation is more efficient, it is a real bonus. Simon Dixon at SDP confirms what contractors think. He said: “If a product can save us five minutes on each board installed then we can save ourselves a matter of days over an entire project, which makes us and our clients very happy.”

With more emphasis on compliance and performance data, system and product developments that improve safety and productivity must be welcomed and will surely make a difference.

In high-performance and technical environments, specialist interior contractors need to overcome a range of challenges, including the need for heavy- and severe-duty impact resistance in high-traffic circulation areas.



“The need to tackle the ongoing housing shortage will continue to drive systems development for partitions and linings next year and beyond,” said Matt McKay, strategy and marketing director at Etex Building Performance.

“We expect to see growth in the build-to-rent market, which calls for heightened focus on tenant comfort and durability of the building fabric to maximise long-term income for asset owners. For

partitions and linings, therefore, the focus must be on developing higher performing, more robust systems which require minimal maintenance, while assuring a better quality of life for tenants.”

David Murray at MEDITE SMARTPLY agrees about the need to improve performance but also sees on-site productivity as a critical component for specialist contractors. MEDITE’s Oriented Strand Board (OSB) is a versatile,

cost-effective and environmentally friendly alternative to plywood.

Mr Murray said: “Innovation is about creating value from something new and keeping it as simple as possible. Our DRYBACKER board evolved because of a query from a major drywall contractor who had used the wrong screw size on OSB board for a project in London. This led us to look at devising an OSB backing board specifically for dryliners that could



The Central Bank of Ireland, Dublin

Ireland's most iconic new building, the Central Bank of Ireland on the banks of the River Liffey, is Ireland's first ever BREEAM 'Outstanding' rated building, setting an example of progressive construction that thinks about the future.

Architects Henry J Lyons achieved this by designing the large sweeping interiors to be as user friendly as possible for the Bank's staff, by specifying acoustic wood panels from Woodfit Acoustics, made from MEDITE PREMIER FR. This MDF panel from MEDITE SMARTPLY is flame retardant for safe use in public buildings and is produced using FSC certified timber, from sustainably managed forests in Ireland; all the

essentials to make this board suitable for the Bank's new interior.

Custom-made acoustic systems and non-acoustic panelling, including veneered MEDITE PREMIER FR, were used in different areas. The finished panels range from ebonised slat ceilings and slat walls, custom white-washed perforated panelling which extends seven storeys high, and perforated oak ceiling tiles throughout the work areas.

Fergal Costello at Woodfit Acoustics said: "Acoustics are extremely important in a big open building such as this one, to reduce reverberation while not restricting air circulation."



The Collaborative Teaching Laboratory (CTL) facility, University of Birmingham

The new Collaborative Teaching Laboratory (CTL) facility at the University of Birmingham posed a number of technical and programme challenges. However, close collaboration between FIS contractor member Grimes Finishings, the University's Clerk of Works and British Gypsum's technical representatives ensured the project was completed in record time, snag free and to the highest delivery standards.

Morgan Sindall awarded the partition, linings and plastering package to

Grimes Finishings in 2017. The new 72,120 sq. ft CTL facility was designed to bring together practical teaching activities across a broad range of science and engineering disciplines. Set over three storeys, the high-specification facilities feature state-of-the-art wet lab, dry lab and E-labs.

Grimes Finishings worked with British Gypsum's technical team to deliver the most suitable building materials for the project's high-performance and technical environments.

To be the best, you need to be defect free

Having helped to grow Overbury to a £500m fit-out giant, Steve Elliott and his team at BW Workplace Experts are now committed and passionate about transforming fit-out and refurbishment and delivering defect free on every contract in partnership with the entire supply chain. **Adrian JG Marsh** reports.



Steve Elliott, chief executive



Anthony Brown, sales and marketing director

"I was quite happy helping my daughter with her homework when I met Mark Richards and Craig Foster in 2014," said Steve Elliott, chief executive at BW Workplace Experts. "They wanted to take BW to the next level."

Mark and Craig had founded BW in 2001 and they had built a £50m specialist with a niche position in the high-end London fit-out market. The three talked and agreed a deal which saw Steve lead a management buy-in.

Steve set about recreating his successful team from his Overbury days. He was joined by former colleagues, including Anthony Brown, sales and marketing director.

Steve explained: "We're about customer experience and customer care. The problem with PLCs and hedge-funded buyouts is they are often restrictive. The deal with BW was an equity swap where the management team now own a majority of shares and the founders have

retained a minority investment.

"We restructured the business and built our strategy around one thing: being defect free at practical completion. There are four elements to defect free. Firstly, snag free at practical completion; secondly, completing on time; then, having O&M manuals available; and finally, achieving an average nine out of 10 with the project promoters in a client satisfaction survey. And to get nine is a big ask."

Setting sights on defect free

The whole business is focused on delivering defect free projects on every contract. A key role is that of BW's customer experience director, Rob Frank, who sits on the main board. Most of this role is about working with the BW clients and the supply chain.

Anthony explained: "Rob's role involves going around sites looking for examples of best

practice and sharing these with all our staff and simplifying the way we work so we're more efficient.

"We encourage staff to use Yammer, a software package, so they can share knowledge with anybody in any other part of the business. We have regular internal presentations and site tours to make sure everyone here can see what's happening and can learn so we improve what we do for our clients.

"More than 50 per cent of Rob's time is working with the supply chain and making sure we're working with the right people, in the right way, to ensure that they have the right values and they support what we're aspiring to achieve."

Aligning the supply chain

Since the new team moved in, BW has realigned its supply chain. Every supplier and subcontractor are marked against a range of criteria, including health and safety, attitude on-site, quality, surveying and communications. They are then graded into three levels: logged; approved; and preferred.

If a supply chain member achieves preferred status then BW does not take any retentions; in fact, it gives back any retentions that are being held. And the BW contracts teams want to work more with them because they know they'll get a defect free result.

"This (approach) works incredibly well and builds tremendous engagement with the supply chain," Anthony explained. "We work with them around innovation, spread ideas about what works and what does not work, and help them plan future workload."

Internally there is a commitment to share ideas and examples of best practice among all the staff. Steve continued: "We engage strongly (with our staff) and we regularly have one-to-one reviews and mentor individuals. Everyone is asked what they like about BW and what they would change about BW.

"There is a commitment to maintaining face-to-face engagement at all levels. We also do this with the supply chain and then we analyse the data to see if we can identify any patterns and then take steps to improve what we do.

"We have a team of design managers who are not doing first principle design but are liaising with architects, consultants and the trade contractors to ensure we have the right information so that we can design out snags before they become snags and achieve defect free projects."

Critical factors for delivery

BW identifies the critical factors to achieve defect free on each contract at an early stage. There is a focus on the project-critical trades of mechanical and electrical, joinery and partitions, and ceilings on bigger jobs.

Photo credit Gareth Gardener.



BW: Workplace Experts is thrilled to have delivered the fit-out for Your Space, an evolution of the design of the Stephen Lawrence Centre in Deptford, London.

So, is BW successful with its defect free strategy?

Steve said: “This year, 60 per cent of contracts have been defect free – that’s up from 40 per cent last year. More importantly those that are not defect free are generally only days away from being defect free.

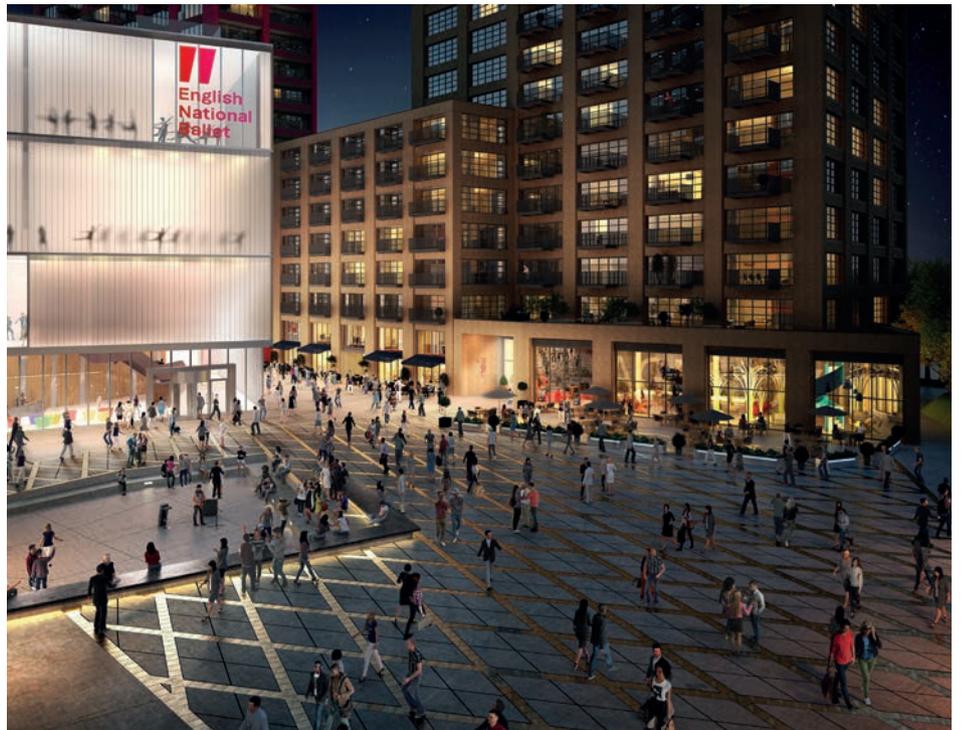
“Every contract is a step towards being totally defect free. Our aim is to provide a world-class level of service and we’re very puritanical about defect free. It is either defect free or it is not.”

BW is part of the Cranfield Customer Experience Forum that share examples of best practice across different economic sectors. They can measure themselves against global brands such as Apple and Carlton Hotels.

Learning from other businesses is integral to driving BW forward. Partnering arrangements with fit-out contractors – HITT in the USA and SHAPE, the largest fit-out contractor in Australia – have added an edge. They share business relationships, culture and staff exchanges.

Steve does admit that some who go on exchanges do come back...! He added: “The partnership allows us to learn what’s the latest in fit-out and refurbishments in North America and Australia. There are long-term and short-term assignments where people go and live a project. Those who go have to blog, email ideas and Yammer. So the whole business benefits.”

Anthony explained further: “We work at these partnerships and they’ve helped with innovation, especially where technology is involved. That’s how we came to adopt Procore as a construction management software, which has saved us huge amounts of time and money.”



BW has been appointed to manage the fit-out of English National Ballet and English National Ballet School’s new joint home, a 93,000 sq. ft development located in Canning Town, East London.

Team focus

The BW team is packed full of new ideas, challenging its people, and bringing new technology and workplace designs to the UK. It is now competing at the top table of fit-out and refurbishment.

Revenue has grown to £180m turnover and post-tax margins hover around a mouth-

watering five percent. Contract sizes vary from £26k to £48m and they’re targeting a £300m turnover. But what’s the ultimate aim for Steve and his BW team?

“We want to be the world’s leading interior fit-out company; not the biggest, but the best,” he answered.

And there is no reason why they won’t get there.

Pushing and nudging: psychological techniques to raise standards



‘Nudging’ is a subtle psychological technique used to encourage positive behaviour – and it could help improve site safety too.

Your business is duty-bound to continually raise standards of health and safety on-site. The HSE expects you to proactively identify opportunities for improvement; being alert allows you to mitigate risks earlier – hopefully before anyone is injured.

Many activities you undertake on-site have legal requirements attached. Working in a particularly dusty environment? You must wear a mask to prevent inhalation of particulates. Working at height? You must have suitable guardrails or safety harness in place to prevent falls. Although these rules are set in stone, employees can – and will – ignore them. Many sites deny entry to workers who arrive without a minimum standard of gear (hard hat, steel toe-capped boots, hi-vis vest) and this means workers are prepared when they arrive. But that may all change once they do gain access.

Rule enforcement is essential

Faced with the threat of losing a day’s pay, most workers will ensure they are properly equipped when they arrive. As the day wears on, though, workers will frequently remove their hard hats as they work. Unless you employ a foreman to constantly circle the site to spot equipment infringements, people are exposing themselves to risk.

When it comes to legal requirements like PPE, the ‘big stick’ approach may be entirely appropriate. Under no circumstances can you allow an employee to pose a risk to themselves or others.

Not every activity on-site has specific legislation attached. Sometimes safety standards can be raised by encouraging employees to change habits and behaviour to act more responsibly. But how do you encourage these behavioural changes? One technique that’s gaining a lot of attention is called ‘nudging’.

People need choices if you want their behaviour to change

Normally, nudging on a building site would be a bad idea – but we’re not talking about physical contact. Nudging is a behavioural science concept that subtly encourages people to make better choices. Rather than

creating a whole load of rules and punishing people for failing to follow them, nudging uses positive psychological reinforcement to help them make the right decisions to protect themselves and others.

The biggest problem is that people don’t make rational choices. We like to think that given instructions and facts, people will always make the ‘right’ choice, or act in the way we expect. But the reality is that humans almost always make choices based on emotion or instinct.

People respond better to choices. Simply telling people what to do is ineffective when trying to encourage behavioural change. They feel that decisions and outcomes are forced on them, they have no say in the situation and they mentally disengage. Any behavioural changes will be temporary – and employees will not go above or beyond.

Nudging towards the right choice

Nudging uses the illusion of choice to push people towards making the right choices. There are many ways to achieve this, but to succeed you will need to carefully consider the decisions your employees face, the choice you want them to make and how you can subtly nudge them in that direction.

This is not as difficult as it sounds. Say you have a problem managing foot traffic along gangways, as workers are unable to pass each other easily. Under normal site protocol, you would simply issue an instruction telling everyone to keep left when using the gangway – for a day or two they might comply, but the situation will quickly return to normal.

The nudge approach is slightly different. Instead of issuing instructions, you simply paint footprints on the left-hand side of the gangway. This visual cue is a form of instruction, but workers can still choose to ignore it. But the reality is that they will follow the footsteps and stick to the left-hand side. They think they have chosen their own path, but really you have nudged them into making the right choice.

There are two keys to making nudges work:

1. Plan out the decisions people face

To design an effective nudge, you need to know what decisions your employees face and what the ‘correct’ outcome is. Wherever possible, engineer situations in such a way that the decision is reduced to two clear options. In the case of the gangway, employees can walk on the left or right – there are no other options.

2. Maintain the illusion of choice

Remember, people want freedom of choice, so although your nudge will push them towards a specific option, they need to feel as though they can choose to do the opposite. They will almost always make the right choice regardless – but they must have a choice.

Get creative

There are many ways to use nudging on a construction site to raise standards – you just need to be a little creative. For further help and advice on how to apply behavioural nudges successfully on your construction projects, get in touch with Veritas Consulting.

FIND OUT MORE

DAVID CANT

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www.veritas-consulting.co.uk

Liquidated damages in building contracts

Delays can be damaging to construction projects, so building contracts often make contractors liable to pay damages at a pre-determined rate if their actions delay practical completion. These are called liquidated damages. **Kara Price**, a solicitor with Womble Bond Dickinson, highlights the issues to consider.

Although liquidated damages (LDs) can be used in other circumstances, they are mostly associated with compensating delay. LDs provide certainty: their rate is fixed, they effectively limit a contractor's liability and they allow the parties to price the risk of delay. Furthermore, LDs avoid lengthy and expensive disputes to determine the level of damages.

To claim LDs, an employer does not need to show actual loss or any attempt at mitigation. Instead, the mere occurrence of the relevant breach is sufficient. It is, therefore, important that LD provisions contain:

1. **A clear rate** that represents the amount payable, usually on a daily or weekly basis. LDs must not act as a penalty but should instead reflect a genuine pre-estimate of the employer's losses. They should, therefore, be set at a realistic level.
2. **A clear date** for practical completion or a number of set dates for a sectional completion.
3. **A clear scope** so that all parties are certain about the circumstances when LDs will be payable.
4. **Any conditions precedent** for claiming LDs, such as issuing a Non-Completion Certificate.

Issues to consider in relation to LDs

Early Use and Partial Possession: A contractor's liability for LDs will normally reduce proportionately once an employer has partial possession of a site. However, where an employer is merely in occupation with the consent of the contractor then full liability for LDs remains with the contractor.

Sectional Completion: LDs normally reduce proportionately at each stage. Where delay at one stage delays the following stages, a contractor will have to pay LDs for an equivalent period at each of the following stages.

Excluding LDs: If parties want to exclude LDs, they should do so explicitly. Simply inserting 'nil' or 'N/A' next to the level of LDs may limit or completely prohibit a party's ability to claim damages generally.

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FIS Annual Review 2018

FIS, the voice of the finishes and interiors sector, highlights the challenges, initiatives and achievements of 2018.

During the last 12 months, FIS has made considerable progress in tackling the skills shortage, addressing technical issues faced by the sector, and championing improvements in commercial contracts, particularly related to payment.

We remain committed to raising standards and working hard for our members during challenging times that have seen the collapse of Carillion – and the stark impact on our members – along with the uncertainty of Brexit.

The tragic 2017 fire at Grenfell Tower resulted in the regulations and practices that are prevalent in our sector coming under scrutiny and question. Naturally, the work to advise, inform and develop initiatives to address Dame Judith Hackitt's report was a priority in 2018, with FIS active on four of the 12 working groups focused on raising standards and ensuring the quality and traceability of systems and installations.

Our annual Conference – Growing Your Business in a Changing Market – gave over 120 members and guests the opportunity to debate how these factors are driving change within the sector, how the changes may impact on their businesses and how to minimise their effect. Through six breakout groups, delegates received support and advice for developing their business in a fluctuating market.

The Conference helped to clarify where FIS will focus in 2019 to address members' needs and champion the sector. Questions raised also gave rise to our Brexit Checklist published in December.

Technical

Our technical projects and initiatives continued to raise the profile of FIS and its members during the year. We joined the Technical Response Group formed by the CPA, looking at competency and a code of conduct for marketing fire performance products. FIS is also represented on the new BSI group FSB1, which is providing an overview on standards relating to fire.

FIS also engaged with members and industry to develop a response to Dame Judith Hackitt's comments about a lack of evidence, compliancy and competency. Our Product, Process and People (PPP) approach captures evidence at all stages of a contract using readily available packages, including Dropbox. PPP has been included in a recent paper to government on data and will allow our members to be at the forefront of meeting new requirements and regulations.

We are chairing the working group reviewing BS 8000:8, BS 5234:1 and BS 8212. This work will culminate in a new standard for the design and installation of drylining in 2019.

We worked closely with the Steel Construction Institute (SCI) and members to review and update a guide on the design and installation of light steel external wall systems to provide guidance for the sector and help establish FIS members in this growing sector.

980

Downloads of FIS Best Practice Guides

Skills

FIS is driving the interiors sector skills agenda, in partnership with CITB, with an integrated campaign that is addressing the lack of qualified tradespeople and new entrants.

Fit-Out Futures, which brings together the BuildBack, BuildME and Sector Engagement initiatives, is delivering well and gathering the pace needed to provide the legacy of easy defined new entrant pathways into the sector. See page 20 for a review of Fit-Out Futures.

The third Training Needs Analysis is underway, providing an understanding of the trends within the industry, and informing focus and changes to the skills strategy.

Project Futures is a collaboration between FIS and Stortford Interiors, which will result in recruitment and training of 30 apprentices over three years. Project Futures is part of FIS's wider campaign to simplify apprenticeships for both employers and recruits.

We are also supporting members to get the best value from Apprenticeship Vouchers. The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in 2017, set at 0.5 per cent of an employer's wage bill (applicable to companies whose annual pay roll is in excess of £3m). With CITB already collecting levy from construction employers with a wage bill of £80,000 or more, this overlap between the two levies prompted the FIS training board to set up a new employer-led Levy Working Party to consider the options for how the two levies can work alongside each other to leverage greater value for members.

6,321

CSCS Skilled
Worker card increase

1,340

Training days delivered



Community

Sector engagement continued to be a key initiative for FIS, and our 11 Special Interest Forums continue to grow and bring the community together to tackle issues important to members and the sector.

In addition to our main events – President’s Lunch, Awards Lunch, Scottish Awards Lunch and Conference – FIS exhibited at WorldSkills UK LIVE and UK Construction Week, where architect George Clarke announced the #iBuiltThis2018 winners, attracting attention from a wide range of sector stakeholders and encouraging people to engage.

FIS’s social media presence now boasts more than 10,372 followers across our platforms, reaching out to over 1.5 million people and engaging with 32,000 individuals. This drives visitors to the FIS website and to the membership directory, where clients can search for FIS members. Add this to the number of people reading our magazines, and this demonstrates the continued growth of the FIS community and the sector influence this brings to the benefit of all members.

Our next major event is the President’s Lunch on 5 February at Plaisterers’ Hall. We look forward to seeing you there.

1,150
FIS event attendees

463
Free credit checks

10,372
Followers on FIS social media
(Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn)

14,106
Visits to FIS membership directory

55,731
Visits to FIS website

36,000
SpecFinish readers per issue

57,000
FIS Focus readers per issue

£8,500
Raised for mental health charities



Looking forward to 2019

I am expecting 2019 to be a landmark year for construction: the shadow of Grenfell finally giving way to major regulation reform; the failure of Carillion undermining traditional business models; and Brexit rocking the foundations of our economy and housing at the top of the political agenda. FIS will look directly into the oncoming hurricane to ensure members are ready for change and prepared for the opportunities.

We will raise our voice, too, and be heard above the storm to stamp out archaic practices like cash retentions that undermine efforts to foster a more collaborative and supportive supply chain. The watchwords for 2019 are Risk, Quality, Productivity, Safety and Sustainability. We will drive these themes through our working groups, our skills programme and our ongoing vetting process for members.

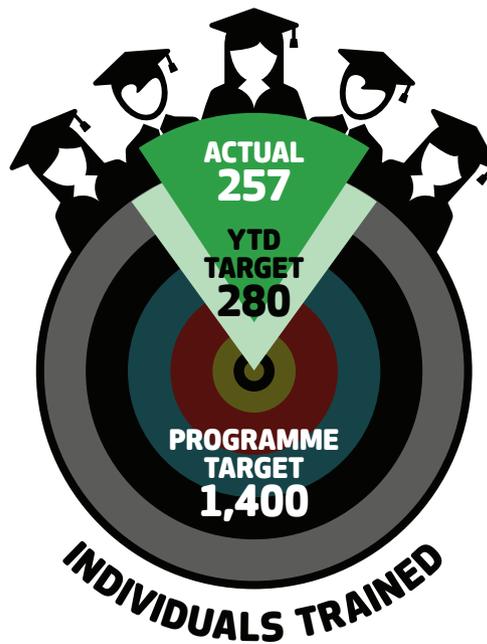
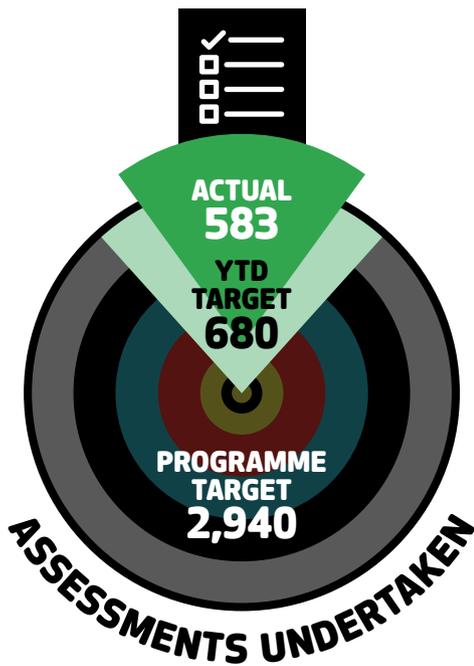
The FIS team is prepared for a huge year in 2019 and we urge all companies in the sector to get more involved – the power and potential of FIS grows with every member.

Andrew Smith, FIS President

FIND OUT MORE
www.thefis.org

Fit-Out Futures – how it is delivering for the sector

Just over a year ago, FIS was awarded £1.5m from CITB to deliver against a £2.1m programme defined to provide clear new entrant pathways into the sector. Following 12 months of delivery, FIS skills delivery director **Helen Yeulet** outlines key successes, where the team are against targets and how the approach is being adapted to meet challenges.



Fit-Out Futures is the overarching FIS project that brings together BuildBack, Sector Engagement and BuildME – all designed to help tackle the sector’s skills shortage.

Delivering work experience opportunities

BuildBack provides a simple pathway into construction for anyone with little or no experience of the construction industry. Having piloted this through an earlier funded CITB project in the North East and understood that demand must drive the rollout, the cohorts delivered over the past year have all been established to meet employer demand. Birmingham, South Wales, Sheffield and Manchester have been key for the first new locations. This has led to development of new training

provider relationships, extending the FIS Approved Training Provider network yet further through both college and commercial provision.

Through BuildBack, an employer provides some work experience to enable new entrants to the sector to get a true flavour of the industry and reduce the number of drop-outs once employment is offered. It also provides the employer with a longer ‘interview’ opportunity of any candidates. Despite the high skills shortage and the cohorts being set up only where enough employers had expressed an interest and a need, there has still been issues where providing this has come bottom of the list behind resolving any problems on-site.

The skills shortage that needs this type of solution impacts the ability to deliver daily on-site, meaning even employers with

the demand often must put the delivery of today’s project above the needs of tomorrow’s.

Geography has a part to play in the skills agenda across the UK and one that the BuildBack rollout is highlighting to an even greater extent. With demand in Greater London being evidenced by the 70 per cent+ usage of European labour by employers in the sector, FIS ran the first Lewisham-based project early in 2018 with several FIS member employers lined up to provide work across the city.

The volume of applicants was exceptionally low, with high levels of drop-out during the first assessment phase with issues around either levels of learning in English and maths or the candidate’s own decision not to progress. Unemployment in the UK is at an all-time low but, as

always, London reflects an even greater level of job opportunity across all industries. Construction does not offer the same appeal that perhaps hospitality or retail might do, regardless of the longer-term opportunities.

Being trained in a trade is a highly valued occupation in other areas of the country and as London has highlighted that construction is not necessarily the career of choice in one location, in South Wales, conversely, the success has been impressive. Working with the NPTC network and a new independent training provider, Dragon Training, the first cohort was run in June. The success was so great that this has continued with a back-to-back rollout of five cohorts. Dragon Training has plans to utilise the BuildBack project across wider geographies as a pop-up solution. Commercial providers are proving to be a step ahead of the colleges in their ability to drive against a target and be more agile in their approach to ensure the right outcomes.

Fit-Out Futures is also proving to offer training providers a really simple step into delivering for the interiors sector, with smaller outlay than a longer-term training course may require and the ability to really develop a market within their area. South and City College Birmingham is a key example of a college that had the tutors and facilities but had struggled to get employer engagement to deliver the apprenticeships in interiors they had the appetite for. Following two cohorts of BuildBack, they are now working towards becoming an FIS Approved Training Provider with apprentices at the heart in 2019.

FIS now has a dedicated advocate in Anne Pavey, a DWP senior national account manager who focuses on construction. This level of relationship is ensuring that not only is the rollout getting all the on-the-ground support required when looking at a new location but that the understanding of the interiors sector and the opportunities it can bring as a career are being publicised to potential new entrants.

CSCS cards benefit the sector

Sector engagement success was defined as an increase in the volume of new skilled workers with CSCS cards as the measure. At first glance, these numbers show FIS to be well on track to achieve with over 100 per cent to date against the target set. However, this hides a worrying trend that is currently being discussed at high level with CITB with the projected numbers looking to considerably reduce. As the skills gap tightens its impact on sites around the country, the easiest and fastest route to get workers through the gate is a green card. CSCS is seeing that with 33 per cent of its cards being green, the request for blue skilled cards is becoming a real challenge. FIS is currently working on many fronts to address this with both CITB and CSCS.

BuildME to help retain construction college students in the sector

As the final piece, BuildME is in its infancy having just launched at WorldSkills UK LIVE in November. As an initiative that provides work placements for current

construction course college students, it has been well received by colleges as a precursor to the new T Levels – two-year technical programmes – being implemented across vocational qualifications by the Department for Education.

Gathering pace

After its first year, Fit-Out Futures

is delivering well and gathering the pace needed to provide the legacy of easy defined new entrant pathways into the sector.

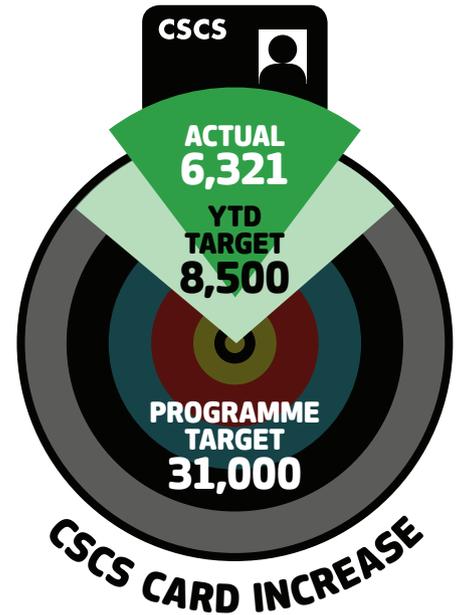
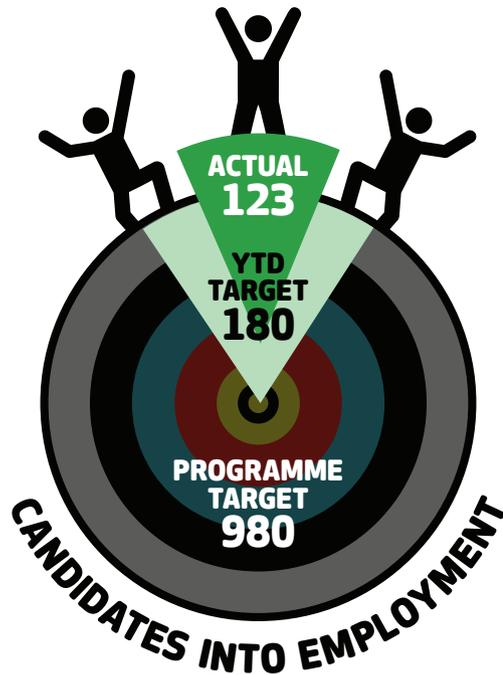
Steve Coley, chair of the FIS Skills Board, said: “The only way to address the skills shortage is to do something about it. As with all large programmes of change, we’re learning and adapting as we deliver,

but it will only work if employers take a small part and work with us.

“Never mind what we do for our sector – BuildBack is estimated to save the economy £16m – isn’t that something to be proud of?”

FIND OUT MORE

skills@thefis.org or www.thefis.org/skills-hub



CSCS improves employer applications with new online process

The Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) has launched an improved employer application process that is online and will be quicker and easier to use.

CSCS provides an employer application service that is used by many employers in the industry to apply for cards on behalf of their workforce. In recent months, the CSCS team has been working with the industry to improve this largely paper-based and inefficient service with the introduction of a new online version in November.

Employers are encouraged to embrace the

new online process because applications made by post or email are no longer accepted. CSCS now only accepts employer applications via the new online portal.

CSCS is keen to point out that the method of payment for employer applications remains the same. Employers who hold an account with CITB will continue to pay in the usual way. For employers without a CITB account, they must provide contact details for payment to be arranged over the phone via a debit or credit card.

Angeleen Hill, CSCS scheme manager, said:

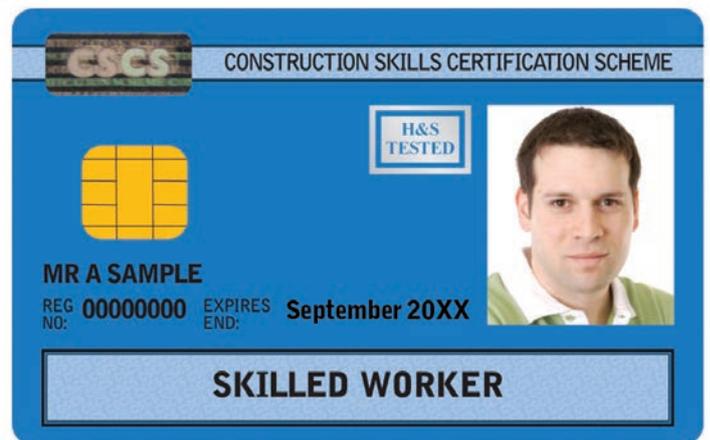
“Online employer applications are an exciting development for CSCS.

“Moving employer applications online removes much of the complexity surrounding the old paper-based system. Overall, it will simplify and speed up the whole card application process for employers.”

The CSCS online employer application portal can be accessed at www.cscsemployerapplication.co.uk/application

FIND OUT MORE

www.cscs.uk.com



Calendar of events



FIS President's Lunch
Plaisterers' Hall, London
5 February 2019

FIS Awards Lunch
Dorchester Hotel, London
4 June 2019

FIS Scottish Awards
The Principal Edinburgh, George Street
27 September 2019

Welcome to new FIS members

Friends of Wilson
www.friendsofwilson.com
Designers and makers of architectural acoustic wall panels, hanging screens and room dividers.

Mac-Exteriors
www.mac-group.com
Specialist construction and fit-out partner for the commercial sector.

PPG Architectural Coatings UK
www.johnstonstrade.com
Manufacturers of high-performance trade paints, woodcare products and performance coatings.

Butler & Willow
www.butler-willow.co.uk
Specialists in creating smarter, more efficient, agile workplace environments.

Major milestone for Linear Projects

The year 2018 has proved a definitive one for Glasgow- and Manchester-based integrated interior fit-out specialist Linear Projects, with turnover topping £19m, office staff increasing to 45 plus on-site operatives to 200 – and a 25th anniversary.

Starting life in 1993 as a labour-only family business offering drylining and suspended ceiling solutions, the business, then known as John Holmes Contractors, evolved to Linear Projects in 2003.

The steady growth and expansion of Linear Projects has ensured stability and strength, with it now working with a number of the UK's largest contractors. In the last two years, Linear Projects has worked on the multi-award-winning new Macallan Distillery and Visitor Experience, for which it won Partial Fit Out Gold at the 2018 FIS Scottish Awards, and it was appointed by Robertson to deliver interior packages on its largest project to date, the new Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre, with a value of £15m.

FIND OUT MORE
www.linearuk.com



CCF raises record amount for Alzheimer's Society

CCF has upped its fundraising activity for Alzheimer's Society to beat its previous years of support and give the charity a record-breaking donation.

The 41-strong CCF branch network is working hard to meet the ambitious target, with teams across the country completing a variety of challenges to raise as much money as possible for Alzheimer's Society to support its fight against dementia.

Members of CCF recently braved the heights of the Yorkshire Three Peaks to raise £32,615.03 for the charity. The team climbed Pen-y-Ghent, Wharfedale and Ingleborough peaks, in just 12 hours, to complete the challenge.

Dean Pinner, managing director at CCF, said: "We are determined to make this a record-breaking year and raise as much money as possible for Alzheimer's Society."

FIND OUT MORE www.ccfstd.co.uk

Dragon Training delivers community projects through BuildBack



FIS Approved Training Provider Dragon Training & Recruitment is delivering BuildBack across Wales, an FIS programme which puts candidates through college training and on-site work placement.

Describing the benefits for candidates, Ashleigh Edwards-Davies, director at Dragon Training & Recruitment, said: "We have found BuildBack to be beneficial to the candidates in terms of confidence, motivation, and learning new or advancing skills.

"Many candidates have been unemployed for a considerable amount of time and the difference within themselves from day one to finishing the two-week course and being offered work experience has an obvious uplifting effect. It's fantastic to see how many have secured regular work as a result."

Dragon Training runs BuildBack courses at charity venues, most of which have been at YMCA buildings, but other community projects have taken place at WCVA (Wales Council for Voluntary Action), Llanishen Scouts Hall in Cardiff and East Street Mews in Bristol, which is being renovated for the use of homeless people in that area.

Mr Edwards-Davies added: "Giving the BuildBack candidates the opportunity to learn and develop skills on charity buildings gives them, and us, a sense of pride in providing a service that is desperately needed within the community. This approach is also environmentally friendly as materials used are there to stay, therefore reducing waste material when training the candidates."

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BUILDBACK
www.thefis.org/skills-hub/sector-training/buildback-programme

Photo credit Irina Boersma, Wartski and Waldo Works



Measom scoops £1.2 million luxury retirement scheme

Measom has been awarded a £1.2 million drylining and ceilings package at The Chimes luxury retirement residential development on Horseferry Road, in the City of Westminster.

The 38-week programme contract started on-site in October and is the first time Measom has worked with ISG. The package includes installing drylining and ceilings in the basement, ground floor and upper floors one to six.

The Chimes, which is the latest PegasusLife Developments scheme, is a collection of 39 one- and two-bedroom apartments.

FIND OUT MORE www.measom.co.uk



FIS Scottish Awards – will you be a 2019 winner?

FIS is delighted to continue with the successful Scottish Awards scheme and Lunch in 2019 – and the awards are now open for entries.

The Scottish Awards aim to demonstrate the quality of work and range of projects that are carried out in Scotland. All FIS contractor members are eligible to enter and the deadline for entry is 28 February 2019. All projects must be in Scotland and completed between 1 January 2018 and 31 December 2018.

Entries will be visited by two FIS award judges, who will determine the winners in the seven contract categories. In addition, the awards include a category for Apprentice of the Year (who must be training in Scotland). The award categories are: Interior Fit Out; Partial Fit Out; Drywall Construction; Plasterwork (general and heritage); Suspended Ceilings; Partitioning; Judges' Award; and Apprentice of the Year.

The award winners will be announced and presented at the Scottish Awards Lunch on 27 September 2019 at the Principal Edinburgh Hotel.

FIND OUT MORE www.thefis.org/membership-hub/fis-awards/fis-scottish-awards

FIS members benefit from new CITB training funds

CITB has confirmed that more than £100,000 of funding has been awarded to FIS members through its new and easy to apply for funding solution, with FIS members having a 90 per cent success rate when applying, based on prior applications.

The CITB Skills and Training Fund was set up to support small employers to deliver construction training. CITB-registered employers with up to 99 PAYE staff can apply for up to £10,000 every 12 months, as per these bands:

- Employers with 1 to 49 PAYE staff can receive up to £5,000
- Employers with 50 to 74 PAYE staff can receive up to £7,500
- Employers with 75 to 99 PAYE staff can receive up to £10,000

Following a successful funding application, CITB will release the funds straight away, providing small employers with an immediate training boost. In addition, employers are still eligible to claim the traditional CITB Grant after training has been completed.

FIS skills delivery director Helen Yeulet said: "Right now there is no bigger issue in construction than the skills gap. It is not just holding us up, it is undermining quality and reducing productivity. To redress this, it is so encouraging to see FIS members taking proactive steps, working with our training team and CITB to ensure that they can draw down the funding to support their efforts to close the gap.

"We have seen huge changes in funding and the drive for simplicity seems to be paying off. What is even more encouraging is that these intrepid members have paved the way for the floodgates to open. We encourage all members to make a New Year's resolution to contact our skills team to talk about the training they want to do. There is funding out there and the CITB Skills and Training Fund is a great starting point."

FIND OUT MORE www.citb.co.uk/funding

Chalkstring recognised with construction innovation award

Chalkstring, providers of project cost control software for construction contractors, won Innovation of the Year 2018 at the Construction Computing Awards in November and was a finalist in three categories: One to Watch Company for 2018, Editor's Choice of 2018 and Cloud Technology of 2018.

The Construction Computing Awards showcase and reward the technology, tools and solutions that enable the construction industry to be more efficient and deliver successful projects.

Barry Chapman, Chalkstring's managing director, said: "It's a fantastic accolade to be recognised by the industry. This further exemplifies the value that Chalkstring offers to customers by increasing margins, streamlining processes and improving the visibility of project performance."

FIND OUT MORE www.chalkstring.com



90 FETTER LANE

LONDON

SAS330 Tartan Grid

