

SPECFINISH

The magazine of FIS *representing finishes and interiors*



Understanding acoustics – the sector's role

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Technical: Are your fire doors compliant?
p10

Commercial: Construction industry retentions
p15

FIS President's Lunch and Fit-Out Futures Awards: All the winners from the event
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FIS

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FRONT COVER:

Academy House in London. SAS International Ltd supplied SAS330 to deliver high acoustic performance.

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FIS welcomes united action to address severe skills shortages

FIS, the trade body for the finishes and interiors sector, has joined a call from fellow construction bodies for united action between industry and government to address skills pinch-points.

A total of nine organisations, which included Build UK (representing the FIS and its membership), jointly called for collaboration to accelerate recruitment for 18 severe shortage roles in industry. These include acoustic engineers, ceiling fixers and dryliners. These roles were identified as being hardest to recruit for via research from across the members of each organisation and the wider industry, including members of FIS, and are vital to the delivery of projects nationwide.

The groups recommend that, wherever possible, steps should be taken to recruit for these roles within the UK, bringing in new workers or upskilling the existing workforce. Where this is not possible, it is proposed that government add the roles to its Shortage Occupation

list as part of its current review of migration as the UK leaves the EU. This would give these roles priority in future migration from the rest of the world.

Iain McIlwee, CEO of FIS, said: "Skills shortages are an ongoing concern for our members and if we sleep walk into the guidance laid down by the Migration Advisory Committee it could create real problems for construction delivery.

"We work tirelessly to support recruitment, training and upskilling within the finishes and interiors sector. However, in the short to medium term, we will clearly rely on overseas workers too. We need a joined-up approach when looking at these shortages – arbitrary thresholds based on employment, salary and higher levels of education, not the needs of the wider economy, are short-sighted."

FIND OUT MORE

www.thefis.org/news

HMRC outlines plans for no-deal Brexit

HMRC has written to construction businesses to confirm arrangements for making customs declarations should there be a no-deal Brexit. In communication sent out in February, HMRC confirmed that businesses will be able to use simplified declarations and postpone payment of duties under Transitional Simplified Procedures (TSP) in the event of no deal, although additional information will be required for controlled goods.

HMRC plans to review these measures after three to six months and give businesses 12 months' notice if they are to be withdrawn. Businesses can sign up now for TSP online (www.gov.uk/hmrc/eu-simple-importing) – an EORI number will be required – and find out which ports TSP applies to.

All VAT-registered businesses that currently import and/or export goods with the EU have also been written to, highlighting priority actions to take in preparation for a no-deal scenario.

Iain McIlwee, CEO of FIS, said: "It is good to see that members are receiving some form of communication and guidance in regard to potential outcomes of the ongoing Brexit negotiations. At the time of going to press, everything is very much up in the air and there is confusion across the country, not just in construction, about where we will stand on many aspects of business should a no-deal Brexit occur.

"We urge members to stay in touch and keep an eye on the information we'll be disseminating as and when we get updates ourselves so they are as informed and as prepared as possible at what is a confusing time."

Supply chain payments speed up by two days

The latest Payment Practices and Performance reports from Build UK members have seen the average number of days taken to pay invoices fall from 45 to 43 days.

Build UK has been campaigning to improve payment practices in the construction supply chain, and the UK's largest companies and LLPs are now required to report on their payment practices every six months. This means contractors and suppliers can make more informed decisions about whether to work with a client.

The majority of Build UK members have now published their payment results for a second time. The average number of days taken to pay invoices has reduced by two days and the average percentage of invoices paid beyond terms has reduced from 30 per cent to 26 per cent, demonstrating the value of increased transparency.

Iain McIlwee, CEO of FIS, said: "Figures published by FIS members have also been positive with the average number of days to pay invoices being 33 days and the average percentage of invoices paid late being 27 per cent.

"FIS supports complete transparency regarding payments and we will continue to push for continued and wider-spread openness."

Willmott Dixon Interiors put its strong payment performance, a 30-day average, down to its culture.

Graham Dundas from Willmott Dixon Interiors said: "We have been benchmarking every office and project team on the key metrics of fair payment long before the new legislation came into place and made it known that late payment is not tolerated."

FIND OUT MORE

www.BuildUK.org for the data

www.gov.uk for results of companies required to report



Industry trailblazers recognised at FIS President's Lunch and Fit-Out Futures Awards

Best-in-class practitioners from all areas of the finishes and interiors sector were recognised at the annual FIS President's Lunch and Fit-Out Futures Awards which took place at the Plaisterers' Hall in the City of London last month.

During the event, president Andrew Smith sang the praises of the industry's commitment in light of the current political climate and discussed the appetite within the industry for innovation. During lunch, the winners of the Fit-Out Futures Awards were also presented.

One of the awards, the Lifetime Achievement Award, was given to Ray Deeks (pictured centre) of G Cook and Sons. Of the three candidates shortlisted for the award, Mr Deeks was deemed to not only have delivered for his company, but also to have offered contributions to the wider sector that were likely to have lasting positive implications for years to come. Read more on pages 18 and 19.

FIS urges members to check delay clauses

FIS, the representative body for companies involved in all aspects of interior fit-out, refurbishment and building finishes, is urging its members to check payment delay clauses in case of a no-deal Brexit.

The subject of delays was raised at the No-Deal Brexit Contingency Planning event organised by the Construction Leadership Council and BEIS. Leading tier 1 contractors stated that delay costs would be borne and passed on by main contractors.

The impact of delay clauses was also flagged during the FIS Conference in October when Geraldine Fleming discussed Force Majeure, the unforeseeable circumstances that prevent a party from fulfilling a contract.

Iain McIlwee, CEO of FIS, said: "The concern is that since Brexit is not unforeseen, Force Majeure will provide little protection. The way that construction contracts are structured means specialist contractors tend to carry a disproportionate amount of risk."

"We would encourage early discussions between clients and firms, and for all those involved in the supply chain to both demonstrate flexibility and seek to ensure that risks are managed by those organisations best placed to do this."

In the FIS Brexit Risk Checklist, contractors are encouraged to carefully consider any contract clauses that may leave them exposed to penalties, should a no-deal cause delays to projects.

FIND OUT MORE: www.thefis.org/knowledge-hub/brexit-checklist

FIS

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Editor's column

Perception sets the standard

The skills campaign being led by FIS is trying to change how our sector is perceived. The initiative offers a dynamic and flexible way to support specialist contractors source a skilled workforce. Making the finishes and interiors sector an attractive career option will be a vital component to encourage new entrants in.

Equally, ensuring that those already in the labour pool have the right skills and qualifications to stay active in the sector is also critical. Inside this issue, we take a look at the journey one BuildBack graduate has followed (see page 20).

In the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower disaster, the initial government inquiry found that some products were not fit for purpose. In the case of fire doors, five different suppliers' products failed fire safety tests and were withdrawn from the market. FIS has been driving a new initiative that helps specialist contractors to provide the clear evidence of compliance and competence needed (see page 10).

Pinning down the performance of products is complicated when products don't do exactly what they say on the tin. In our technical feature (turn to page 12), we learn how increasing emphasis on the acoustic performance of buildings and how the industry should respond to this growing demand is essential to ensure product accountability and reliability.

As far back as the first Latham Report of the 1980s, clients challenged over-engineered designs and specifications as unnecessarily costly and complex. Cost pressures then encouraged a culture of lowest price and de-value engineering. Perception at the time was that performance and installation would not suffer.

In some cases, performance did not suffer, but in others, the unintended consequences led to serious failings. Then, when something goes wrong, we look for someone to blame. We now know that everyone in the supply chain has a responsibility, and it will be those organisations that can demonstrate that their people, their processes and the products they use are robust and totally trustworthy that will survive and flourish.

It has to become clear that responsibility for the design and specification sits with the client but performance remains at the heart of how our sector is perceived.

Adrian JG Marsh
Editor



That old devil called payment, again!

Reprehensible payment practices are a cancer at the core of construction, undermining efforts to be collaborative and destroying trust. Beyond wasted energy, legal fees and the opportunity cost of chasing invoices, I honestly believe this contributes to quality concerns and undermines progress.

You'll read in this edition of *SpecFinish* about efforts through Build UK to bring transparency on late payments. This is positive and we are hearing from tier 1s that it is bringing focus. It is a start, but it doesn't help us if the luo roll suppliers get their money immediately, and it doesn't address the bizarre concept of discounted invoices (to guarantee payment on time) or those dreaded retentions.

Build UK recognises this and is targeting unfair contractual clauses that parcel up and pass on, rather than manage risk effectively (findings to be published in the spring). If you need an example of this, look no further than Brexit. In the *FIS Brexit Risk Checklist*, we are urging members to check delay clauses to ensure that they are not unfairly left holding the baby.

Through Build UK, FIS has also been invited by BEIS to join a small focus group to see what more can be done. The short-term aim is to call a Payment Summit in June that brings together the great and good and lays out some uncomfortable ground truths while drawing on case studies from 'exemplar clients'. I honestly believe we are approaching that tipping point. Everybody knows we need to change, everybody wants to change, but change needs to be led and many simply don't know how to or don't

have the right resource or working capital to make the step change.

Our message is simple: if we are to drive innovation and improve productivity, we need to collaborate, overhaul quality management systems and eliminate waste – a good start is to pay what is owed, when it is owed!

On other matters, at FIS we have dedicated significant resource over the past 12 months to support the workstreams that have fallen out of the Grenfell Review process. Our main efforts have focused on product knowledge, marketing integrity and installation competence. It is encouraging to see the thinking behind our own Product Process People (PPP) approach to quality starting to resonate more widely in the sector, as well as our criteria to define competence (based on skills, knowledge, attitude and experience). Whilst there is more to be done, this activity is sufficiently progressed to enable us to start to look at how we need to adapt to deliver change through our own working groups (all set to meet in the spring).

These groups draw together our supply chain to look at safety, quality and innovation, as well as providing a platform to scrutinise our values, review and set standards, and share best practice. The format of these has also changed and following a meeting of the various chairs, we have agreed to make them open forums and to focus on some common key deliverables. I hope to see many of you there.

IAIN MCILWEE
Chief executive
Finishes and Interiors Sector

Working together to improve installer health

Paul Howard, head of technical marketing and innovation at British Gypsum, commends the efforts the supply chain is taking to address the challenges around installation safety for dryliners.

At British Gypsum, health and safety is a key priority and we support the delivery of any initiatives that will improve the safety of drylining operatives.

It is pleasing to see a number of different stakeholders from the supply chain working together to establish viable solutions that can really benefit operatives' wellbeing on the job. As part of the steering committee on this project, British Gypsum is examining manual and mechanical handling solutions as part of the process of identifying

the best approach for handling plasterboard on-site, along with reduced size plasterboard.

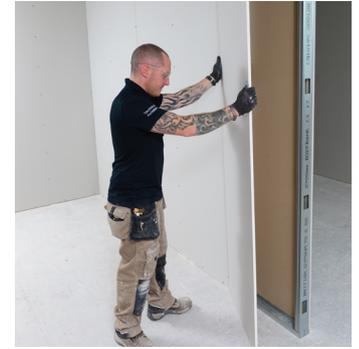
Work is being undertaken to add more depth to the current advice, with guidance in development on handling aids for different weights and sizes of plasterboard. This is with a view to helping the industry identify viable solutions that could alleviate the physical demand of the fixing process on drylining installers.

By really examining different handling solutions, our aim is to help deliver easier handling and

fixing processes, regardless of the size or weight of board, so we can contribute to operative wellbeing, ease of transfer around site and productivity improvements.

However, it is important to note that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and site conditions will play an important role when it comes to the type of plasterboard specified.

British Gypsum already supports the industry with a full range of literature, including our White Book, Technical Advice Centre



and advice on legislative and regulatory demands. By working with a reputable manufacturer, it is possible to benefit from expert advice and guidance to ensure the correct plasterboards are specified and correctly installed to meet a project's specific performance requirements.

PAUL HOWARD

Head of technical marketing and innovation
British Gypsum
www.british-gypsum.com

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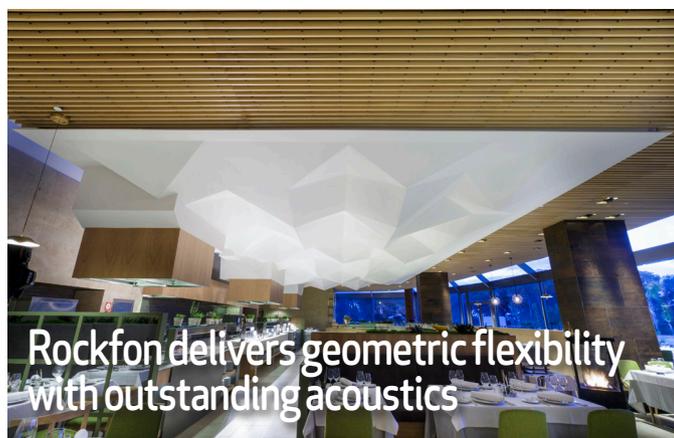
West Yorkshire bar gets a new lease of life thanks to Architextural

Bradford-based The White Space has given 99 & Main bar in Bingley a modern new look with the help of architectural and building-related films supplier Architextural, which is part of the William Smith Group 1832.

The White Space asked Architextural for a high-quality vinyl which would provide durability and a slick finish to give the bar top, walls, windows and doors a new lease of life. 3M DI-NOC VM-1692-Metallic was chosen as the material for the project as it offered design flexibility and more than 1,000 patterns to choose from to recreate the look of natural materials.

Using 3M DI-NOC architectural finishes allowed for application to happen in-situ, meaning the refurbishment had very minimal impact on the client's operations.

www.architextural.co.uk



Rockfon delivers geometric flexibility with outstanding acoustics

The flexibility of Rockfon Mono Acoustic helped architect Arantxa Guerrero achieve his challenging vision of an elegant and innovative ceiling design for the new five star The Llaut Palace Hotel.

One of the most demanding elements of the project faced by the design team was to create a ceiling with an inverted pyramid design, inspired by the simple geometric beauty of origami. The ceiling creates stunning angular ripples throughout the large hotel dining hall.

Mr Guerrero said: "We wanted to transmit this sensation of lightness; the element of origami communicates movement and flexibility, expanding the space of the room."

The origami-inspired artistry of Mr Guerrero demanded a material which didn't sacrifice aesthetics but allowed for the construction of vertices and triangulations while delivering high acoustic absorption to control noise and reverberation in this busy space.

www.rockfon.co.uk



SAS helps Central Bank of Ireland HQ achieve outstanding accolade

SAS International's ceiling systems have been used in the Central Bank of Ireland HQ, which has become the country's first office space to be awarded a BREEAM Outstanding rating, making it one of the most distinguished buildings in Ireland. The project forms an integral part of the wider Dublin Docklands redevelopment programme.

Contractors Platt & Reilly Drywall specified SAS International as it had worked with the company on a number of previous projects in Ireland.

For this project, tile-only system SAS320 was installed in corridors to control noise levels while still ensuring easy accessibility to the ceiling void. SAS330 was implemented in office spaces and in meeting rooms for its premium quality, longevity and flexibility, with the linear grid design selected to elongate the room, providing a seamless finish to the ceiling and exceptional lighting integration.

Installed in Central Bank's restaurant areas, SAS600 created a highly impressive interior incorporating functionality and stunning visuals.

SAS720 was installed underneath the stairs in Central Bank's atrium. Its 'plank' design creates a criss-cross, bridge effect which emphasises transparency and community in an open space, something which was key to this project.

www.sasint.co.uk

British Gypsum training course supports Willmott Dixon's mission for excellence

Willmott Dixon has reaffirmed its commitment to industry excellence by sending more than 120 of its employees on British Gypsum's Site Manager training course.

The course is accessible to construction professionals of all levels, helping them to gain a solid overview of what's required to ensure British Gypsum's range of products and systems are specified, installed and maintained properly.

Graham Thornton, quality delivery manager for the north at Willmott Dixon, attended the course and identified it as beneficial for the organisation's site managers. He said: "The British Gypsum Site Manager training course offers a thorough breakdown of what it takes to effectively fit drylining systems."

"Sending people on this training is a big part of our efforts to raise standards across our operations. The course mixes elements of operational, design and commercial knowledge, which makes it accessible for so many people."

British Gypsum offers the Site Manager training course through its national network of Technical Academies or via its external regional offices.

www.british-gypsum.com/technical-advice/training





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Shaw Contract launches Colour Foundation



Commercial flooring solutions provider Shaw Contract has launched its latest product range to the UK, Colour Foundation. The range brings designers an essential and specially selected palette of colours to enhance today's modern commercial interiors.

Colour Foundation consists of two shapes – colour square (50 x 50 cm) and colour rectangle (25 x 100 cm). Designed to work in unison, colour square and colour rectangle provide design flexibility to flooring layouts and looks. Together, they offer the designer options to breathe energy and personality into the work place.

Additionally, the 24 colours available mean designers can choose and easily combine bright shades with neutral tones, to create both subtle and eye-catching spaces.

Marcy Ewing, director of global design at Shaw Contract, said: "Both colour and light affect our perception of architecture. Colour Foundation is a collection that celebrates the interplay of light, colour and shape to achieve both harmony and interest."

www.shawcontract.com/colourfoundation



Armstrong Ceilings embarks on £5.4m project with Nevill Long

Armstrong Ceilings has marked its 55-year partnership with specialist distributor Nevill Long with a £5.4m community project at the heart of Wiltshire County Council's transformation agenda.

The Tisbury Community Campus project comprised a mix of refurbishment and new build, the latter of which included the sports hall and fitness suite, to bring a variety of services onto a single site.

Armstrong secured involvement with the project as a result of its value engineering and strong working relationship with the specialist subcontractor GHT.

To create a monolithic ceiling in the new sports hall on-site, Armstrong's Metal T Clip F system with security clips was installed across 700m², providing a downwards demountable solution for easy access to the ceiling void.

This was complemented by 120m² of anti-microbial BioGuard boards in the toilets and changing rooms and 1,540m² of Sierra Op Tegular and Sierra OP Board laminated mineral tiles in other areas, as their Class A acoustic performance helps with sound absorption (at 0.90aw).

The products specified offered cost-effective solutions which matched or exceeded the performance of rival brands with easier installation on-site.

www.armstrong-ceilings.co.uk / www.nevilllong.co.uk

MEDITE SMARTPLY launches time-saving pattress panel for dryliners



A new pattress panel that will improve productivity and safety for dryliners is the latest product from innovative timber panel manufacturer MEDITE SMARTPLY.

PATTRESS PLUS is the new OSB3 panel for use by dryliners and is ideal for contractors who construct plasterboard partitions. The panels feature a continuous recess along one side that is designed to accommodate 'C' studs without the need to cut in slots on-site.

This key design feature means that each panel sits flush against the stud flange, holding steady while you simply screw the other side into place. The finished result means a massive reduction in dust, as no cutting is required; drastically reduced noise, due to fewer power tools; and much less time spent cutting and installing panels, which can save hours, if not days, on big installations.

PATTRESS PLUS panels are available in thicknesses of 15mm or 18mm, widths of 397mm or 597mm (to fit 400mm and 600mm stud centres), and lengths of 1250mm or 2397mm, in line with leading plasterboard partition specifications.

www.mdfosb.com/en/smartply

Sektor range gives Goliath Home World bright new look



The Sektor brand of interior solutions from CCF has been used at Goliath Home World, a home improvement company based in Cannock, to help overhaul its showroom space and give it a bright new look.

To achieve a complete ceilings solution for the existing 185 sq. m showroom space, the Sektor range of Sahara perforated tiles, alongside the Sektor Lumos 6000k LED lighting panels and the Sektor ceilings grid, was specified as a complete package.

The finely granulated needled finish of the Sektor Sahara perforated tile meant that the showroom could benefit from mid-range sound absorption, while the addition of integrated ceiling tile lighting panels kept the area bright and attractive for customers looking at the displays. The ceiling grid, the Sektor TruGrid system, ensured a secure fit and smooth installation of the entire ceiling system.

Dave Nevell, installation and sales consultant at Goliath Home World, said: "The Sektor range of ceiling products have made a real difference to our display area. We're really pleased with the result and how the CCF team understood our needs, budget and timeframe requirements."

www.ccfstd.co.uk

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Are your fire doors compliant?

In the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower disaster the initial government inquiry found that fire doors made by five different suppliers failed fire safety tests and were withdrawn from the market. FIS has been driving a new initiative that helps specialist contractors to provide clear evidence of compliance and competence. **Natasha S Marsh** reports.

“A fire door is an integral part of a building’s fire strategy and it is crucial it performs in the way it is designed to,” said Kevin Dundas, supply chain manager at Willmott Dixon.

Willmott Dixon has been leading the initiative around Better Products to carefully selected partners it works with in the supply chain. Mr Dundas explained: “One area we focused on was timber doorsets. This product group has historically had a large area of defects for Willmott Dixon and one that has frustrated our customers when we got it wrong. This area is also of high importance when using a fire door.”

Fire doors are tested and rated for fire separation performance, and ratings are stated in terms of duration of time elapsed before the ultimate failure of the door. The most common ratings as referenced in UK Building Regulations are FD30 and FD60, although higher-rated doors such as FD90 and FD120 are available for use where additional protection is required. Fire doors are also tested for limited smoke passage, and a fire door with smoke protection requirements will be described with the suffix ‘s’ such as FD30s.

The important issue for installers and refurbishment contractors is to understand how specification, installation and any alterations, such as glazing, may impact on the door’s fire performance.

FIS, the Finishes and Interiors Sector, has been working with its members to address the issues of providing clear digital evidence of compliance and competence through an initiative called Product Process People (PPP). This is a process to evidence compliance by saving copies of test reports, product delivery notes and site images to show correct installation. Together with copies of the operatives’ CSCS cards, with relevant training recorded in the same file, the PPP initiative will provide current evidence of competency.

- Product: Keep records of the specification, test evidence, purchase orders and delivery notes.
- Process: Keep dated site images of the installation, especially elements that will be covered up in the final build.
- People: Record who installed the system using records from their CSCS cards and their relevant qualifications and training.

Commitment throughout the supply chain

For this to be successful, it requires commitment from every element of the supply chain. Using compliant products is critical to ensure they are fit for purpose and will not fail.

To ensure standards are being met by product specifiers, Mr Dundas added: “To achieve this high standard, we carried out a stringent procurement exercise that included 92 doorset companies.

“These companies were required to complete a detailed PQQ to demonstrate their professionalism and see if their values aligned to ours. Also, as part of this exercise, we completed various pricing comparisons and completed factory visits.”



Willmott Dixon has since developed a dedicated Better Doorset Brochure that incorporates its online design manual, The Yellow Book, which provides designers, purchasers and installers of doorsets with guidance to purchase products with a suitable specification.

Once the products have been selected to a satisfactory standard, it is the installers that need to ensure they are following the correct process. Mark McQuade, fire door installation and maintenance manager at Worksmart Contracts, said: “Training is vital to ensure the right processes are followed. Our team is dedicated to regular training, which can all easily be referred to in their training logs.

“When a team member goes out on-site, we need to be totally confident that the correct standards are being met. As well as meeting the FIS PPP initiative, we place great value in the BM Trada Q-Mark scheme and regularly conform to their audits with success. Without training and audits, it’s impossible to find a common benchmark for inspectors to start from.”

Summarising the importance of the industry implementing the PPP initiative, FIS CEO Iain McIlwee said: “Fire doorsets are vital for the compartmentalisation of fires – if we get it wrong, people can die. If we look at PPP in this context, it is about how we choose the right product, with the appropriate testing and third party certification in place. It is then vital that the people fitting them have the right skills and knowledge about the product that they are fitting (remember, a doorset is more than the door, there are a range of parts that must be compatible) and, finally, we need to ensure that a structured quality assurance process wraps round this – again, third party certification can help.

“At FIS, we’re looking at all of the products that we work with to ensure our members are advised, have access to the best training and can specify fire doorsets with confidence.”

FIND OUT MORE

www.specfinish.co.uk/features to read an article from the British Woodworking Federation (BWF) about the important factors to consider when specifying fire doors.

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etex building performance

The art of acoustics

Pinning down exactly the level of acoustic performance to expect from a building is more complicated when products don't do exactly what they say on the tin. Here, **Paul Thompson** investigates the increasing emphasis on the acoustic performance of buildings and how the industry should respond to this growing demand to ensure product accountability and reliability.



SAS International system SAS330 at 1 Carter Lane, London.

Recent years have seen various studies proclaim the positive – and negative – effect that a workplace environment can have on workforce productivity. Lighting and acoustics have come in for special attention, so by providing the optimum conditions for both, employees will be happy, feel more relaxed and be capable of their best work, meaning productivity will increase.

In the fiercely competitive business world where any gain – marginal or otherwise – can mean the difference between the success or failure of a company, these proven studies making the link between worker wellbeing

and productivity have seen the construction, architecture and fit-out of offices and workplaces change markedly.

And, where the acoustics of the workplace can have such a dramatic effect on a company's bottom line, then greater focus is placed on improving them.

Understanding acoustics

"We are certainly finding that the subject has increased in importance for owners and architects," said Paige Hodsman, concept development and workplace specialist at acoustic product manufacturer Ecophon. "They are

increasingly well briefed on acoustics and understand its complexity."

She points out that the acoustic performance of a room such as an open plan office is not a black-and-white issue – there are various greys of different hues involved too.

"As well as the space involved, you have to look at the workforce themselves," continued Ms Hodsman. "People react to sound differently: some work better in quieter spaces, others enjoy background noise. We find that acoustic performance and comfort can change across professions, so engineers might prefer quieter spaces than, perhaps, architects

might. There are basic physical steps to improve acoustics that can be made, but the key is to try and design offices that promote 'activity-based working' – where you might have different zones within the office designed specifically for different tasks," she added.

For Ms Hodsman, these basic steps to improve acoustic performance include fitting the best sound-absorbing ceiling as possible and providing soft floor finishes wherever seating is fixed.

In-situ performance

But there are plenty of other products that will afford some level of improvement in a building's acoustic performance. The difficulty is understanding exactly how these products perform and what level of improvement can be expected once they are fitted, according to FIS technical director Joe Cilia.

"Acoustic performance of products is expressed using data from laboratory tests. These tests measure airborne sound insulation and absorption. However, those results achieved in a laboratory cannot realistically be achieved on-site. There are too many other factors involved," he explained.

Laboratory tests provide a single figure value on the product's acoustic performance where flanking sound – the transfer of sound through ducts, holes in a partition or voids beneath a raised floor or suspended ceiling – has been eliminated as much as possible. Rather than a statement of the expected in-situ performance, these test results should be used as guidance for clients, architects and acousticians on the potential that some products have if used in a well-designed space.

Andrew Parkin, global head of acoustics at engineering consultancy Cundall, said: "There is no doubt that acoustic performance varies from laboratory to site. As specialists, we need to be able to offer clear advice to our clients. We are the translators of that information. The acoustician's job is not to baffle people but to understand exactly what the client needs and then interpret that into a design."

Ensuring clients understand exactly what that advice means in-situ can be difficult. The only way of really ensuring the design meets expectation is to provide an on-site mock-up. It is an approach that fit-out and refurbishment specialist BW has taken.

Bringing acoustic performance to life for clients

“We will construct mock-ups on-site for our clients. It helps them understand exactly how the building is likely to perform,” said BW’s operations director, Peter Nagle.

“We have had to tailor the provision for some clients on the back of these tests, but it can help us deliver on our clients’ expectations.”

That proactive approach highlights just how important some clients see the issue of acoustics but often they are hindered by other issues. Installations can be compromised from the word go if a property owner or landlord does not give permission for certain work. It can mean a complete rethink on how best to provide the optimum solution for a client.

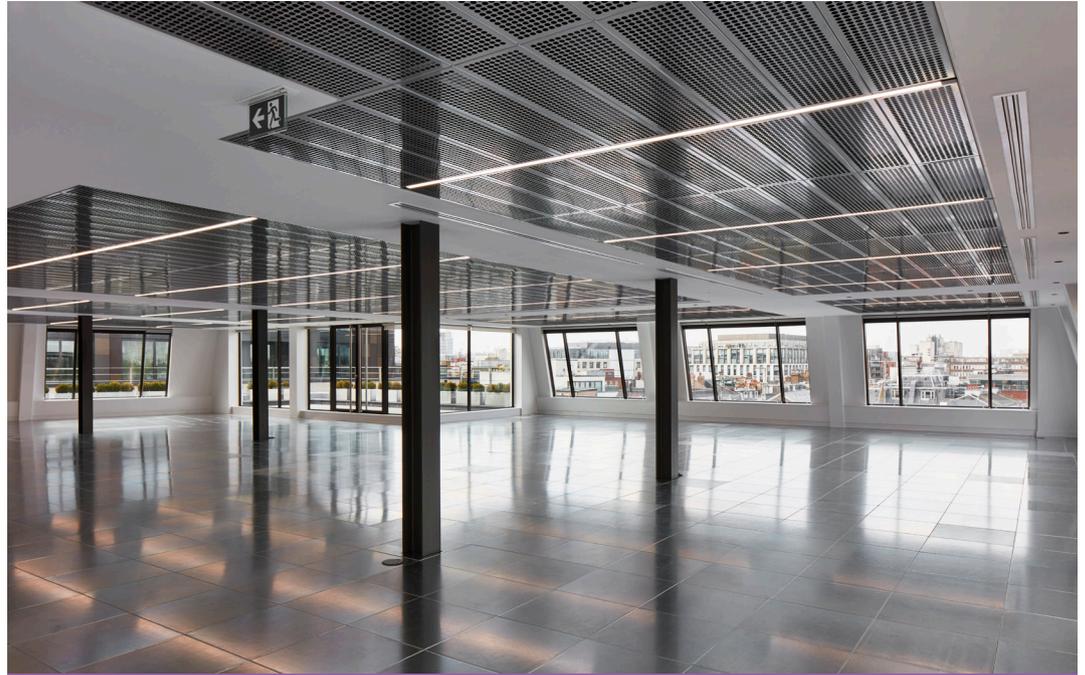
“There tends to be three variables that have to be considered on each design,” commented Stuart Colam, acoustic advisor at SAS International, adding “Finance, form and function. Depending on how you approach the project, each of these can have greater influence over the final scheme.

“Often, financial pressure will dictate the type of materials used, and this will have an influence on the other variables. The final installation will meet the specification, but it might not look quite as good.”

Early involvement

Ultimately, the best way to ensure a workplace, shop, pub, restaurant performs at its optimum acoustically is to ensure that the acoustician is involved in a project as early as possible in the design process. In Ms Hardman’s opinion, that is RIBA design stage zero.

“Ideally, I would like to see acousticians involved during that strategic appraisal period,” she said.



SAS International system SAS600 at 20 Rathbone Place, London.

Download the FIS Guide to Office Acoustics

FIS has developed a guide that outlines office acoustics design and installation best practice, which is available to download from www.specfinish.co.uk.

Good acoustics are essential for productivity and creativity in the workplace. Indeed, they can be key to the success of a building. Those that have worked in an environment with poor room acoustics, insufficient privacy, or excess or lack of background noise will testify to the crucial role acoustics plays.

For this guide, FIS commissioned a review of available research, which was carried out by Professor Bridget Shield, Professor of Acoustics in the Faculty of Engineering, Science and Built Environment at London South Bank University. Using this as a basis, FIS collaborated with leading acoustic and industry experts to develop this Guide to Office Acoustics.

The guide encompasses the needs of a range of audiences, including first-time office occupiers and clients, specialist contractors, suppliers of interior products, designers, architects and acousticians.



Perhaps that is a little too much to hope for, but there is no doubt that the sooner the acoustic requirements are addressed, the better for the final scheme.

Mr Parkin from Cundall added: “The sooner acousticians are involved then the lesser the

financial impact on a project the acoustic design has. The old saying that the later you are in the contract cycle the more cost you add, the earlier the more value, rings true.”

It is a view echoed by Mr Cilia. “Acoustic performance is not an

exact science. There are variables and a holistic approach needs to be taken by designers. Clients need to understand that by bringing acousticians onto a project as early as possible, they will be able to deliver a better solution for them,” he concluded.



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Construction industry retentions: how can you recover your money?

In this article, **Simon Lewis** and **Lucy Hadrill**, from the Construction and Engineering team at Womble Bond Dickinson, provide further insight into the issue of late payments and how they can be dealt with.



You will be familiar with the concept of retention: the main contractor deducts a portion (often 5 per cent) of monies due to the subcontractor on each interim payment and retains this during the construction phase. Often, half the retention is released on practical completion, with the remainder being released on certification of making good defects.

It is generally accepted that retentions benefit main contractors; funds are held as security against subcontractors' non-performance of their contractual obligations. However, there is widespread concern within the industry that the retentions practice is being abused by some main contractors and calls have been made to reform the law in this area.

In October 2017, Pye Tait Consulting published a retentions review on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). A few months later, former surveyor Peter Aldous MP introduced the Construction (Retention Deposit Schemes) Bill (Aldous Bill) to parliament, which seeks to ensure that retentions are protected by being held in third party trust schemes. However, following the collapse of Carillion and its failure to pay its subcontractors, several main contractors have backed calls to scrap retention payments altogether. Indeed, BEIS's construction

supply chain payment charter has proposed abolishing retentions by 2025.

Failure to release retentions on time can cause subcontractors huge cash-flow problems; subcontractors may lose retention monies entirely in the case of upstream insolvency or, worse still, risk becoming insolvent themselves. Further, the money tied up in retentions limits subcontractors' ability to grow their businesses.

Using the law to get your money back

Remember that retention monies belong to you. If a retention sum is due to be released under the terms of your subcontract, the contractor must serve a pay less notice, as required by the payment provisions of the Construction Act (source: The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as amended) if it wishes to continue withholding money. If no such notice has been served, how can you go about getting your money back?

As a first step, have a conversation with the contractor. Remind them that your payment is due and outstanding and (politely) insist that it is released immediately. You could also inform the contractor that you will be claiming interest (under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998) on the outstanding amount from the date payment is due.

Adjudication

If payment is still not made, perhaps the most obvious route for seeking redress is to rely on your right to adjudicate. This is a fairly cost-effective and speedy means of resolving disputes, with the adjudicator aiming to reach a decision within 28 days or so of receipt of a referral notice. A successful party can apply to the Technology and Construction Court to enforce the adjudicator's decision if payment is still not forthcoming. Adjudication is a reliable method of recovery, especially as a contractor rarely has a defence to non-payment if it has not served a pay less notice.

Statutory demand

You could issue a statutory demand. However, this can be an expensive method of debt recovery, especially if it leads to court proceedings. In *Ro-Bal Steel Fabrications Ltd v G Jones Site Services Ltd* (source: [2016] EWHC 292 (Ch)), G Jones was ordered to pay the applicant's costs (summarily assessed at £13,750) when seeking to recover a debt of £6,500. Losing in litigation is costly and you never recover all of your costs, even if you win. Adjudication tends to be quicker and cheaper, though parties do bear their own costs.

Litigation

It is possible that you could commence litigation then apply for a summary judgement (if you can show there is no real defence to your claim) but, again, this is costly and time-consuming, even if you win. Basically, adjudication is your best route if your contract is subject to the Construction Act or you have a contractual adjudication clause in your contract.

What's next?

Retentions will continue to be a focus point in 2019. Whilst we await the government's response to BEIS's 2017 consultation, the Aldous Bill is moving through parliament. With industry calls to abolish retentions altogether gathering momentum, hopefully we will see some positive action by the government in the not too distant future. In the meantime, for subcontractors seeking repayment of their unreleased retentions, adjudication remains the most reliable method of debt recovery.

Concerned about the potential misuse of your company's branding?

Visit www.specfinish.co.uk to read the latest advice from Rose Smalley, intellectual property associate at Womble Bond Dickinson, who discusses what you can do to protect your company's identity.



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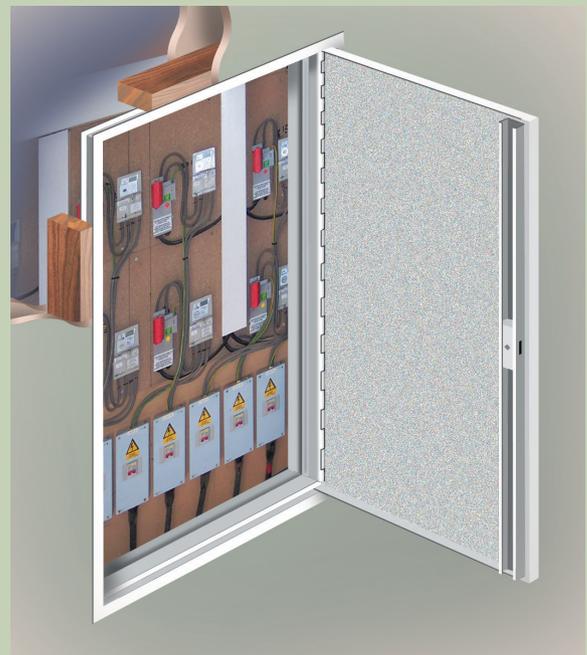
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FIS Client Guide to Office Fit-Out and Refurbishment

As part of its service to members, FIS produces a number of guides to help support the industry in a wide range of areas. The information hosted on the FIS website and the easy-to-use online library contains a wide variety of material, drawn from a broad range of sources. The Knowledge Hub is constantly expanding, with up-to-date and topical material added on a regular basis.



CLIENT GUIDE OFFICE FIT-OUT AND REFURBISHMENT

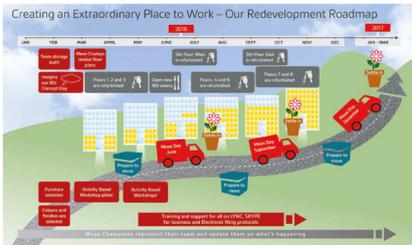


www.thefis.org

THE FIT-OUT AND REFURBISHMENT PROCESS



CONSTRUCTION 16



This is where you hand over to the skilled trades and professional experts in the construction industry. They have a lot more to think about than just fitting out your office. Here are just a few examples:

16.1 Health and safety
Under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015) commercial clients retain responsibility to ensure the fit-out is suitably managed. When there is more than one contractor on site there must be a principal designer and a principal contractor. The principal designer controls the pre-construction design and planning stage, obtains and collates pre-construction information provided to the principal contractor, prepares a health and safety file and ensures compliance. There are also specific responsibilities for subcontractors and individual workers. Ensure all are aware of their responsibilities and have necessary procedures in place. Major projects longer than 30 days and have 20 or more working simultaneously or take more than 500 person days, for example, must be reported to the HSE. There may be other specific health and safety legislation such as working at height or control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH).

16.2 Enabling works

- Ensure licence for alteration from the landlord is in place.
- Assess restrictions in terms of access, work times and specific types of working such as noise, heat etc.
- Obtain any necessary written permits.
- Ensure required planning permission is in place and an approved building regulations inspector has been appointed.
- Ensure adequate power and water are available.
- Make any special arrangements, for example, smoke alarms will need to be turned off while works involving heat are carried out.
- Arrange for proper waste separation for disposal or recycling.

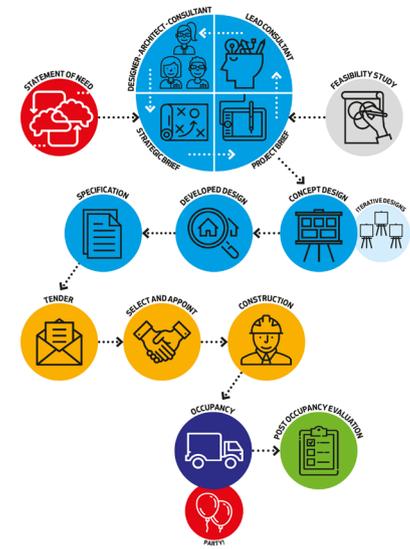
16.3 External

- Organise parking or have local parking bays suspended if necessary.
- Seek permission for slips and arrange access for delivery or specialist vehicles.
- Erect temporary hoardings and signage as required.

16.4 Internal

- Establish a site office and amenities (toilets, washrooms, break facilities) and arrange for these to be kept clean.
- Organise security to restrict site access to authorised personnel, issuing photo ID if necessary.
- Establish secure storage for equipment, chemicals, materials etc. to avoid theft or contamination.
- Erect partitions to prevent ingress into site and to stop dust, dirt etc. from contaminating other parts of the building, especially if they remain in use.
- Establish procedures for cleaning up quickly if any egress occurs.

APPENDIX II – PROCESS MAP



This Guide to Office Fit-Out and Refurbishment has been developed by FIS to assist clients with the task of fitting out or refurbishing their offices and to promote best practice in the fit-out process.

A good working environment is essential for productivity and creativity in the workplace. The evolution of the open plan office, flexible, smart and agile working practices, new technology and team working are just a few of the driving forces behind changes to office space design.

However, for clients, creating an office fit-out that suits their business, their customers and their staff – and having it happen on time, to specification and to budget – can seem overwhelming.

This publication will guide clients through the process from the initial decision as to whether to smarten-up their current office or

relocate and fit-out new premises, through to post occupancy evaluation.

It explains step-by-step the process, along with outlining the professional help available, to help ensure a successful outcome.

In order to cater for a range of fit-outs and refurbishments – everyone is different – the guide is quite detailed, so it is worth noting that not everything included will apply to every fit-out.

Nigel Higgins, technical engagement manager at FIS, said: “Managing change can be a daunting task, especially when that task can affect the productivity, wellbeing and even staff retention. With this in mind, a robust guide to supporting the client could be hugely beneficial.

“The FIS Office Fit-Out and Refurbishment guide offers practical guidance as to what is best practice and provides step-by-step explanations

on how best to operate to allow clients to plan, programme and manage their relocation.”

This guide will:

- help property developers, agents and interior property managers to aid their clients’ understanding of the fit-out process
- allow contractors to show their clients that they follow best practice
- assist architects and designers to increase their clients’ understanding of the fit-out process and highlight the importance of design
- assist members in winning work by providing an independent guide, aligned to an organisation that promotes best practice.

FIND OUT MORE

www.thefis.org/knowledge-hub

FIS celebrates industry's best at President's Lunch and Fit-Out Futures Awards

Some 300 industry leaders gathered at the prestigious Plaisterers' Hall in London last month for the 2019 President's Lunch and Fit-Out Futures Awards.

The sell-out event began with a speech by FIS president Andrew Smith, in which he highlighted the appetite of the industry for quality and innovation moving forward. Mr Smith praised FIS members for their ongoing commitment to business as usual during the uncertainty posed by the Brexit negotiations.

Speaking of the year ahead and FIS's aspirations for the future beyond this, Mr Smith said: "We have a vision to change the current norm. A vision built around the simple mantra of Product, Process and People and this is becoming increasingly ingrained in FIS.

"We look forward to a day when specification of properly tested and certified systems is commonplace; where builders are well organised through digitisation and BIM and employ professional, trained subcontractors; where our diverse people are proud to work in construction and feel trained, respected and valued; and where we in this room, together, deliver interiors projects of a high standard that delight our clients."

Following the president's address, the 2019 Fit-Out Futures Awards winners were announced, recognising the outstanding contributions and achievements of individuals within the sector. The four award categories were Apprentice of the Year, Outstanding Employee, Future Leader and Lifetime Achievement. You can read more about the deserving winners on these pages.



FIS president Andrew Smith.



(L-R) Dean Pinner, managing director of CCF, Simon Broggio from Meronden Ltd and Iain McIlwee, CEO of FIS.



Future Leader

WINNER Simon Broggio, contracts manager at Meronden

Having joined Meronden as a labourer, Simon quickly showed potential through his eagerness to learn and positive work ethic. Over time, he worked his way through the company, initially by taking on small projects and learning the skills associated with running a larger contract.

Following successful completion of a Site Management Safety Training Scheme (SMSTS) course, Simon took on responsibility for running larger contracts and more recently completed an £800k bedroom and reception area refurbishment for a central London hotel.

The judges said: "Simon is an exemplar of how someone can enter the construction sector as a labourer and with the right attitude and work ethic work their way up to take on a Level 6 Construction Site Managers course. He is already a natural leader and an asset to the finishes and interiors sector."

RUNNER-UP

Richard Austen, construction manager at Stortford Interiors

Richard was awarded runner-up due to his enthusiasm to adopt new ways of working and new technologies. He was also recognised for his ability to manage both his peers and his superiors.



(L-R) Nathan Garnett, event director at Media 10 Limited, Matt Taylor from Astins Ltd and Iain McIlwee, CEO of FIS.



Outstanding Employee

WINNER Matt Taylor, design manager at Astins

With more than 18 years' experience in the industry, Matt was recognised for his never-ending energy and professionalism for design and to the sector.

In his current role as design manager, Matt leads the design department and is instrumental in both the pre-construction and build phase of all Astins' projects. He was hailed for his exceptional abilities for practical problem-solving and understanding.

The judges were particularly impressed with Matt's ongoing commitment to making a difference across Astins, both commercially and technically.

Rebecca Hislam, HR and training manager at Astins, who nominated Matt, said: "Matt ensures that he finds the time needed to listen and fully support and motivate each member of his team and has a calm and thoughtful manner. His technical skills are second to none and he is always able to resolve a technical design issue on-site."

RUNNER-UP Ed Kelly, group operations manager at Etag Fixings

Ed was commended for his exceptional reliability, quality of work, initiative and professionalism, as well as his commitment to Etag's work values.





(L- R) Sarah Beale, chief executive of CITB, John Taylor from Stortford Interiors (UK) Ltd and Iain McIlwee, CEO of FIS.



Apprentice of the Year

WINNER John Taylor, apprentice carpenter at Stortford Interiors

Since the start of his apprenticeship, John has demonstrated his willingness to learn and progress his skills both on-site and at college. Paul Leach, operations director at Stortford Interiors, who nominated John, said: "He has demonstrated best practice, learning, attitude, professionalism, skills and behaviour from day one. This train of thought has been echoed from numerous sources including mentors, clients, directors and work colleagues."

The judges too noted that John was clearly a talented tradesman and that he was also changing attitudes internally about the positive benefits that an apprentice can bring to his company.

John was also praised for his understanding of the importance of his work and the need to follow guidelines. He continues to develop as a fantastic example of why the modern apprenticeship system will shape our industry for the future.

RUNNER-UP

Danny Beadle, apprentice site manager at Pexhurst Services

Danny was recognised for his commitment to all aspects of the day-to-day site role, as well as his dedication to learning and improving his skill-set.



(L- R) Dean Pinner, managing director of CCF, Ray Deeks from G Cook and Sons Ltd and Iain McIlwee, CEO of FIS.



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Lifetime Achievement Award

WINNER Ray Deeks of G Cook and Sons

Ray has always been a keen supporter of the plastering trade and for the past 20 years has been on the technical committee of the FPDC and the Heritage Forum of the FIS. He serves on two committees at the BSI and is the UK's representative on the European Standards Committee for Plastering and External Rendering. He was also deeply involved with the recent revision of BS EN 13914 parts 1 and 2 and is also involved with training, assisting the CITB with the formation and updating of standards and qualifications. Additionally, he recently assisted the FMB with the creation of the new Trailblazer Apprenticeship in Plastering.

Ray was chosen as the recipient of this award for demonstrating a lifetime's dedication to his trade. In particular, he was applauded for the amount of his own time he has committed to sharing his wealth of knowledge and experience with the wider industry.

The judges said: "We all owe Ray a vote of thanks for the legacy that he continues to leave."

Apprentice of the Year – Shortlisted entrants

Charlie Hazeltine

Job Title: Apprentice site manager
Company: Pexhurst Services

Charlie's dedication to all aspects of his day-to-day site role is excellent. He's also doing well in his first year at college on his BTEC and NVQ courses. He has completed all the training courses Pexhurst has placed him on successfully, including his SMSTS.

He has a willingness to learn. From inductions to overseeing subcontractors and implementing Pexhurst procedures, Charlie has picked all of this up well.

Charlie was also praised for his time management and for being reliable and trustworthy. It was also noted that he is a good communicator, is keen to learn and ask questions, shows enthusiasm and works in the best interests of the Pexhurst team.

Danny Beadle

Job Title: Apprentice site manager
Company: Pexhurst Services

Danny has shown great commitment to all aspects of the day-to-day site role, as well as completing a successful first year at college on his HNC and NVQ courses.

He has exceeded the level that the senior site manager would expect him to be at considering he is just 18, which can only be a plus. With further training, Danny is expected to only go one way – and that is up within the ranks of Pexhurst.

Danny has been a great success in his first year, showing high levels of commitment and desire for a career in the construction industry. He is a well-presented apprentice site manager who will go far within the construction industry with Pexhurst; he is willing, dedicated and very knowledgeable.



FIND OUT MORE www.thefis.org

A BuildBack success story – Nathen Nutt

In 2017, following a tricky 18 months, Nathen Nutt joined the FIS BuildBack programme, a decision which has proven hugely beneficial to his career. Here, **Yasmin Kauser**, marketing and communications manager at FIS, takes a look at Nathen’s journey to explore the impact BuildBack has had on his professional and personal life.



Nathen Nutt is a 40-year-old skilled and accomplished tradesman who left school in 1997 after completing an NVQ in business studies and finance. His first job was subcontracting through the Rullion Trades agency with Barratt Homes.

It was here that he worked as a labourer on a building site before gravitating towards plastering after being paired with an experienced colleague. What started as a short-term contract with Barratt Homes continued for 11 years.

While subcontracting at Barratt Homes on developments nationwide, Nathen honed his skills in plastering, putting up ceilings, dot and dabbing, and installing floors and partitions in a domestic and commercial environment.

Upskilling to the Blue Skilled Worker CSCS Card

Unfortunately, the subcontracting work dried up at the end of 2016 when he could no longer get on-site with a Green Labourer CSCS Card and site managers began

insisting he have a Blue Skilled Worker CSCS Card. Throughout his career, the chance to achieve further qualifications had never arisen. Before 2017 Nathen had always been able to continue working because the quality of his work spoke for itself and the Green Labourer CSCS Card enabled him access to sites.

Following the change in requirements, what followed next was 18 months of unemployment and extreme hardship. Nathen tried enrolling onto college courses for an NVQ Level 2 so he could get his Blue Skilled Worker CSCS Card but, in his own words, “Training colleges wouldn’t touch me because of my age and I couldn’t get work without the qualification and right CSCS Card”.

Stuck in an impossible situation with no qualification and no means to access further education, Nathen was out of work despite being a competent and skilled tradesman.

This soon led to mental health issues such as depression, taking

tablets and contemplation of suicide because he felt he could no longer support himself and, more importantly, his family – two teenage sons and a daughter – who relied on him. Things were made worse by having to consider jobs which he had no interest in.

BuildBack provided a way forward

A ray of hope came in the form of the BuildBack drylining programme which was brought to Nathen’s attention by his work coach. Nathen jumped at the chance to sign up and he was interviewed at the assessment stage by both Bill Henderson, head of training at the jobcentre, and Paul Glover, the BuildBack project manager. He was selected to complete the Specialist Upskilling Programme (SUP) in drylining at TyneMet College in Newcastle.

Nathen completed the two weeks’ SUP in drylining and passed with flying colours. The course was so well structured and the trainers so helpful and patient that Nathen felt they were completely invested in the success of the trainees. His previous experience also enabled him to help fellow trainees, which was a huge confidence boost.

After completing the SUP in drylining at college, Nathen did his two weeks’ work experience at Lawson and Cowell, an FIS contractor member, in Newcastle. This was extended to a further four weeks of drylining and plastering subcontracting work. In the absence of working for an employer directly, the next six months were spent going on-site, working for free to assimilate the

evidence and references required for each module of the NVQ Level 2 and building the portfolio he needed – photos, videos and on-site practicals – to show assessors the work he was completing. Assessors were called out four times in total.

Nathen achieved his NVQ Level 2 in drylining in November 2018. He said: “The whole experience was fantastic because the FIS BuildBack scheme paid for the qualification and this is one of the vital supports the programme provides for trainees to get qualified.”

Skilled and setting up on his own

Nathen decided to start his own business because he felt he was constantly judged by employers on outward appearance alone without giving him the opportunity to prove himself. Tyne Property Services Ltd is in its infancy and already Nathen is on the list of approved contractors for Market Village, an outdoor market where he is responsible for the maintenance of ceilings, as well as a shop fitting contract with Ladbrokes and also subcontracting with Gateshead Council through the Ranstad agency.

This move demonstrates a massive positive step into the unknown for Nathen, with lots to learn about all elements about running his own business, but he is enjoying it. Nathen is full of praise for Paul Glover, project manager of the BuildBack programme, who has mentored him and helped him along every step of the way.

Currently working with BG Partitions in Sheffield on a housing development building around 200 new houses, Nathen’s full skill set across plastering, drylining, taping and jointing are required. For the first time in a long time, Nathen has not had to worry about finances and is optimistic about the future.

Looking to the future, Nathen is hoping to grow his business to the point where he can provide employment, skills and development for other tradespeople who have been in his position and share his passion, commitment and love of construction. He is already planning his first appointment in six months’



time, when he may be able to take on a drylining trainee from the BuildBack programme itself.

Of his experience of the BuildBack programme, Nathen said: "From start to finish, the team at FIS has been behind me. They have treated me like a person and not just a number or statistic. Paul, Yasmin and the team are amazing at what they do.

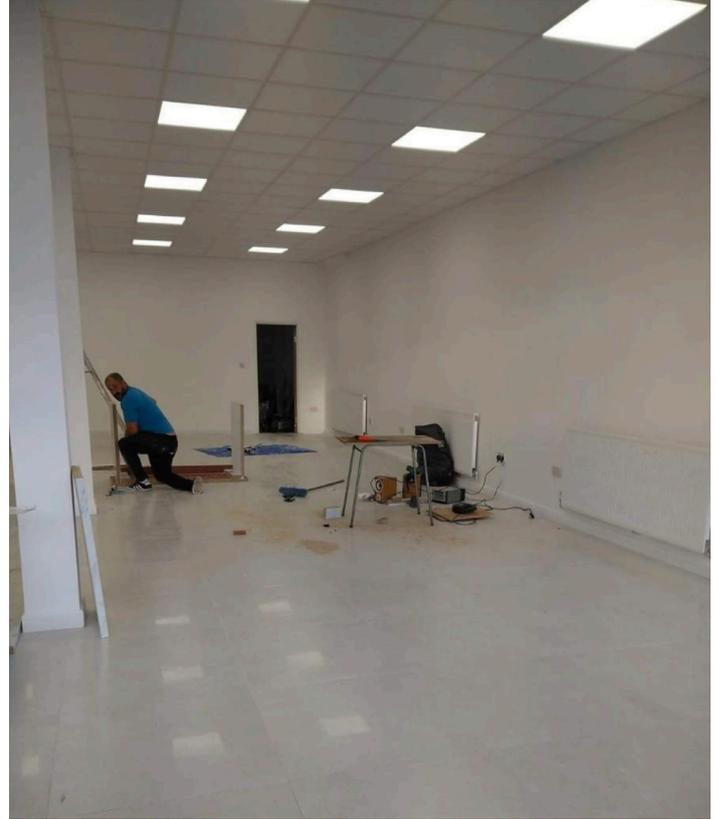
"The course is fantastically well structured and delivered and the whole team invest in you.

I'd recommend the BuildBack scheme to both employers and trainees alike.

"I have found this to be an ideal route for me as I was able to put my experience into practice, gain my NVQ Level 2 qualification, get my Blue Skilled Worker CSCS Card and get back to what I love doing most – and that is working."

FIND OUT MORE

www.thefis.org/skills-hub/sector-training/buildback-programme



#iBuiltThis2019 open for entries

FIS will open this year's #iBuiltThis2019 competition for entries next month.

#iBuiltThis2019 is designed to change the perceptions and image of construction and promote careers in construction to young people.

The competition has been divided into three age groups: 13 and under, 14-18 and 19 and over with some fabulous prizes to be won. Entrants are encouraged to showcase their creativity and skills, whether using Lego, Meccano, sand or even chocolate.

The winners will be announced at the awards ceremony at UK Construction Week from 8 to 10 October 2019 by TV personality and architect George Clarke.

FIS

#iBuilt This2019

FIND OUT MORE

www.thefis.org/skills-hub/i-built-this-2019

FIS to take part in Inspiring Change Conference

FIS will be part of the Inspiring Change Conference 2019, taking place on Tuesday 21 May 2019 at No 11 Cavendish Square, London. The conference will bring together inspirational speakers including industry stakeholders, politicians and representatives from many sectors.

The conference is free to attend and will provide an opportunity for the sharing of client expectations and good practice from within the construction industry and beyond.

The aim of this is to advance understanding of the business and societal benefits of developing a culture of fairness, inclusion and respect within the workplace.

The Inspiring Change Awards highlight and reward organisations within the construction and infrastructure sector that have created more inclusive cultures in their workplaces, in education and in the community.



FIND OUT MORE

www.inspiringchangeawards.com

Calendar of events



Ceiling Industry working group

Saint-Gobain Multi Comfort Centre, London **13 March**

Drylining working group

Plasterers' Hall, London **19 March**

Heritage Plastering working group

Plasterers' Hall, London **21 March**

Partitioning Industry working group

Saint-Gobain Multi Comfort Centre, London **27 March**

SFS working group

Knauf Showroom, London **28 March**

FIS Awards Lunch

The Dorchester Hotel, London **4 June**

FIS Scottish Awards Lunch

The Principal, Edinburgh
19 September

For more information on upcoming events and working groups, please visit: www.thefis.org/events

Welcome to new FIS members

Indeglas

www.indeglas.co.uk

Indeglas provides design solutions, project installation and a dedicated maintenance service for internally applied glass and system partitions.

Si Comm

www.sic.ie

Si Comm is a demountable glazing partitioning specialist that provides design and space planning through to the finished working environment.

Richard Kemble Contracts

www.richardkemblecontracts.co.uk

Richard Kemble Contracts completes projects ranging from external structural framing systems to interior finishes.

West Drylining and Facades

www.westltd.net

West Drylining and Facades provides drylining, SFS/Metsec, facades, rendering and screeding services throughout London and the South East.

GEM Interior Contracts

www.geminteriorcontracts.co.uk

GEM Interior Contracts complete projects in domestic and commercial spaces, specialising in retail, hotel, office and restaurant fit-outs.

Garrett Developments

01895 676530

Garrett Developments undertakes complete interior fit-out and refurbishment projects throughout the UK.

FIS appoints new technical engagement manager

FIS has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting its members with the appointment of Nigel Higgins as technical engagement manager. Mr Higgins has extensive experience working for some of the most well-respected and recognisable companies in the sector.

Iain McIlwee, FIS CEO, said: "We are delighted to welcome Nigel to the team. This is a new role that we have created to improve engagement, from both a supporting delivery and an active listening perspective. It is vital to ensure that as many voices as possible are steering our work so that we deliver against our core values of supporting members, raising standards, improving safety, enhancing productivity and driving innovation in the finishes and interiors sector."

In this new role, Mr Higgins will split his time between supporting the FIS working groups, expanding engagements with the wider industry and helping to support the ambitious growth plans of the organisation.

Mr Higgins added: "I have spent all my working life in interiors, coming from a family involved in partitions. I have been proud to work for contractors, distributors and manufacturers who have fed my passion for innovation and high-quality commercial interiors.

"Working for FIS will allow me to share my knowledge and it's a pleasure to join an organisation that is the voice of this dynamic and diverse industry."



FIND OUT MORE www.thefis.org

East Anglian interiors specialist launches new division

Great Yarmouth Ceilings has launched a new division, GYC Glass Partitions, dedicated to serving the market for glass office partitions.

Owner Stuart Adams said: "We're working on an increasing number of glass partition projects for our existing client base who know we have plenty of experience and expertise in that area. To the wider market, however, that might not be so obvious.

"By launching GYC Glass Partitions, we're leaving customers in no doubt as to what we can do. We have a dedicated team in place to give these projects their full attention and we believe this move will enable us to give those customers the very best service."

The new dedicated division will work on projects across Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire and offers a free estimating service.

FIND OUT MORE www.gycglasspartitions.co.uk



Portview appoints new head of finance

Darragh Rutherford has been appointed as the new head of finance for leading luxury fit-out specialist Portview. Mr Rutherford was formerly the financial controller for Terex Corporation and he brings with him 15 years' experience in the manufacturing, construction, mining and retail sectors.

As head of finance, Mr Rutherford will oversee all aspects of the finance department in Portview, including the production of financial accounts, ensuring the integrity of financial information is maintained and financial risks are minimised, through robust internal controls.

FIND OUT MORE www.portview.co.uk



Mac Group becomes FIS member

Specialist construction and fit-out contractor Mac Group has joined FIS in an effort to help raise industry standards.

Martin Adie, operations director at Mac, said: "I joined Mac in November 2018. We decided to join FIS in order to increase both our presence and our influence in the UK fit-out industry. We also have an aspiration to spread our geographical reach in providing fit-out projects beyond Ireland and London.

"Additionally, on a personal level, I wanted to continue my working relationship with [FIS CEO] Iain McIlwee. We go back a few years and share similar thoughts on how our industry's obsession with making decisions based only on cost affects our ability to innovate, train and inspire future generations, as well as produce quality finishes and products.

"We want to be an active member of FIS to help the industry collectively improve its productivity and performance which will, in turn, improve the public's perception."

FIND OUT MORE www.mac-group.com

Lorient Group MD retires

Following the acquisition of Lorient Group by ASSA ABLOY Group, Maria Powell, managing director at Lorient, has announced her retirement after 23 years with the company.

Ms Powell said: "I have loved (almost) every minute of owning Lorient with my fellow shareholders, Tom Kingdon and Jason Williams, and I am immensely proud of what we've achieved both in the UK and throughout our international group.

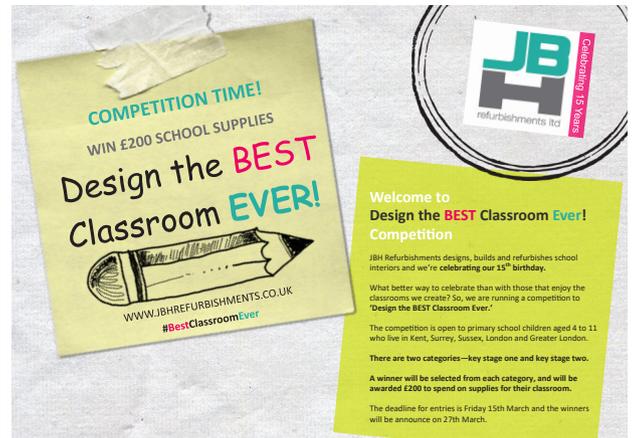
"I have also been very proud to have worked with some very passionate and talented individuals outside of Lorient."

Kerry Hicks, former sales director at Lorient, has been announced as Ms Powell's replacement. Mr Hicks' career with Lorient started in 2003 and, over the last 15 years, he has built up a strong reputation for delivering excellent customer service, leading, guiding and motivating teams of people, and making a significant contribution at board level.

Ms Powell added: "I will watch with pride as Lorient continues to thrive and prosper as part of the ASSA ABLOY Group under the leadership of Kerry."

FIND OUT MORE www.lorientuk.com

Fit-out 500. Interested to find out which members are most active on social media? Read our report on the top 10 performers at www.specfinish.co.uk



JBH launches 'best classroom ever' competition for schools

To celebrate its 15th birthday, JBH Refurbishments, which specialises in the refurbishment and fit-out of commercial educational facilities, has launched a competition challenging primary schools in the South East to design the 'Best Classroom Ever'. There will be two categories, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, with the winning design from each category securing £200 in vouchers for their school to spend on classroom supplies.

The competition is open to primary school children aged 4 to 11 who live in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, London and Greater London and JBH is urging children to be as creative as possible and to allow their imaginations to run wild.

The winner will be chosen by a panel of judges, including FIS CEO Iain McIlwee, and announced on 27 March.

FIND OUT MORE www.jbhrefurbishments.co.uk

Linear Group unveils new business and new MD

Linear Group has unveiled a brand-new business – Linear Design & Construct (LDC) – which will sit alongside Linear Projects. The new business will be headed up by newly appointed managing director Ryan Broadley, who joins from Kier Scotland. Mr Broadley brings more than 26 years' practical construction management experience through working for large contractors across a range of sectors and major projects.

LDC is set to provide intelligent design and construction solutions through collaboration from project inception to aftercare. As a principal contractor, the business will strive to ensure the right expertise to inform the right solution, tailored to the specific requirement of its clients.

Commenting on the new business, Stephen Holmes, CEO of Linear Group, said: "We are delighted to be unveiling our new venture and welcoming Ryan on board. With collaboration and client-focus at its core, Linear Design & Construct will be committed to meeting the long-term needs of our clients, whilst ensuring the highest standards of safety and quality."

FIND OUT MORE www.linearuk.com

PATTRESSING PETE'S PERFECT SOLUTION

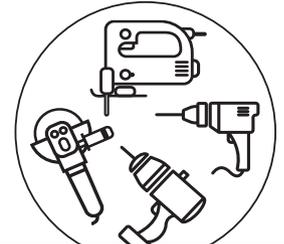
WITH SMARTPLY PATTRESS PLUS



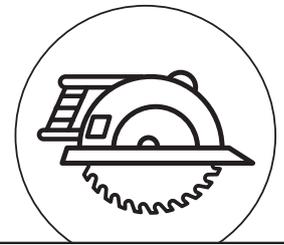
REDUCED DUST



REDUCED NOISE



REDUCED POWER TOOLS



REDUCED INSTALL TIME

Available Thicknesses	Available Widths	To Fit Stud	Lengths
15 or 18mm	397	400	1250mm or 2397mm
15 or 18mm	597	600	1250mm or 2397mm

*some sizes and thicknesses available to order only.

Designed to fit inside steel stud partitions, to allow hanging of heavy fixtures and fittings.

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