

'There's still work to do': Study finds alarming 'knowledge gaps' on Building Safety Act responsibilities

2 years ago



A new study by NBS, the UK's leading specification platform, has found that nearly half of specifiers are still unsure of the responsibilities attached to the Building Safety Act 2022, a worrying sign that a high number of 'knowledge gaps' persist within the industry.

Findings from [NBS' Building Safety Survey](#) showed that half of respondents were either unsure or had no idea of duty holder responsibilities for Higher Risk Buildings (HRBs). What's more, just 12% felt 'very clear', demonstrating that more industry-wide training is needed.

The figures could be seen as concerning given that around two in three respondents (66%) have past experience working on HRB projects (although these are more likely to be suppliers and contractors than architects).

Delving deeper, nearly half (44%) of respondents are unsure or have no idea what steps to take within the new building safety regime. These figures come nearly a year after the BSA was passed in Parliament, first introduced back in July 2021. Surprisingly, the figures are almost identical to that seen in NBS' 2022 report (43%), showing that understanding of legislation has seen little improvement in this area.

Worrying still, was that attitudes towards the Golden Thread and the crucial role it plays within HRBs appeared lax. As well as providing a continuous flow of information throughout the entire lifecycle of a building, it ensures all relevant safety-related information is readily accessible and up to date. However, only around half of respondents (45%) were clear as to how they would manage building information to realise the Golden Thread and just one in ten had a solid plan in place.

Again, these are similar to 2022 figures, where in fact, more people felt confident managing building information than they did in 2023 (+2%). This is despite the increasing number of advanced construction-tech platforms designed to help specifiers capture each decision-making stage to form the Golden Thread.

However, despite the obvious informational disparities, the study did highlight some more reassuring stats, particularly around third-party testing and the information being supplied by manufacturers – which is

increasing safety within specifications. The report flagged that nine out of ten suppliers now provide 'clear and accurate' building product data in a digital format. At least eight out of ten also provide third-party certification with their products and have robust internal sign-off and version control processes.

Commenting on the survey's results, David Bain, NBS' Research Manager, said, "Consistency is the backbone of progress and the stakes have never been higher when it comes to HRBs. These studies serve to highlight 'trouble spots' and importantly, offer an understanding of how to take the industry forward as a whole."

Russell Haworth, Chief Executive Officer UKI at Byggbakta Group, NBS' parent company, said "At our Construction Leaders' Summit last October, Dame Judith Hackitt told the audience, in no uncertain terms, that regulatory change is coming, and it's unstoppable, so the construction industry needs to be fully prepared. Fast-forward to April 2024, and our research shows many specifiers are struggling to get to grips with the requirements, and this needs to be resolved. All designers must have the correct approach to specifications if the industry is to raise the bar on building safety. This includes getting to grips with the 'nitty gritty' of the BSA if they want to operate in the new regulatory landscape."

[Download the white paper here](#)