

BESA conference will focus on the 'four Rs'

2 years ago



The eighth [Building Engineering Services Association \(BESA\) Annual Conference](#) will take place on Thursday, 17 October at the Brewery in London.

It will set out to: '*Inspire a better building engineering services industry for a safe, sustainable, and efficient future*' with a broad programme of technical and topical seminars.

[Registration is now open](#) for the one-day event, which is sponsored by [Mitsubishi Electric](#) and is designed to appeal to a broad range of industry professionals, young engineers, manufacturers, specifiers, and procurers of building services projects. Young engineers can attend free of charge.

Presenters and debaters will seek to deliver the 'four Rs' of Roles, Responsibilities, Risks and Rewards giving delegates an insight into growing legislative pressures and the associated contractual risk, but also highlighting the growing business opportunities available to building services specialists.

[This year's conference](#) will feature more panel discussions and fewer lengthy PowerPoint presentations in response to calls from previous delegates and members that the Conference should focus as much as possible on practical sessions with clear takeaways.

While the programme of technical topics is wide ranging, there will be a common thread covering competence and compliance in line with the increased amount of legislative scrutiny created by the Building Safety Act.

Pitfalls

The Association will be showcasing its 'Play it Safe' awareness campaign that helps all supply chain members identify their specific roles and responsibilities under the Act. This will be supported by a detailed legal & commercial update highlighting the likely additional contractual risks associated with the Act and

providing practical guidance on avoiding potential legal pitfalls.

There will be an enhanced focus on skills during the 2024 conference, again with a view to ensuring all BESA members and others across the building services landscape have access to the appropriate training. There will be sessions covering the support and advice available to contractors about how to provide evidence of their skills, knowledge, experience, and behaviours (SKEB) in tune with the new culture around building safety and performance.

A dedicated 'Skills Zone' will introduce employers to a comprehensive suite of training services and recruitment support along with guidance on how to identify and address skills shortages. BESA is engaged in a major exercise to identify and map skills and competence requirements and will be sharing its findings with delegates.

Net Zero will be another key topic but again with a strong focus on ensuring the industry has the right breadth of skills and experience to meet the unprecedented challenge of retrofitting and refurbishing the UK's existing 30 million buildings to meet climate change goals.

The latest developments around heat pump technology along with the transition towards lower global warming refrigerants, including increased safety fears linked to flammable gases, will dominate one highly anticipated session. Another seminar will provide the latest updates on the deployment of heat interface units (HIUs) and the wider topic of heat network performance, including the newly launched quality assurance scheme to safeguard consumers.

Having a suitably diverse and fleet footed workforce came over as the main preoccupation of building engineering employers at last year's BESA Conference, so once again BESA's young engineers – represented by its growing NextGen Network – will take a prominent role. They will lead several sessions with a particular emphasis on emerging technologies and the need for more industry mentoring.

They will also lead a session on Artificial Intelligence (AI) which will demonstrate how this technology can improve productivity and project quality using digital-led building maintenance as an example.

As ever, the theme of Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) will feature prominently, but this year the session will focus specifically on retrofitting buildings to address the growing health crisis caused by poor standards of ventilation and air filtration, particularly in the social housing sector.

Barriers

The role of offsite fabrication of building services modules will also come under renewed scrutiny with a discussion exploring its potential to improve productivity and address skills shortages. Leading exponents of this approach will share their positive experiences and debate the barriers that continue to restrict its use.

Similarly, the topic of commissioning will be in the spotlight with leading practitioners sharing their frustrations over the continued lack of time and resources given to this essential service while also explaining the latest developments.

Several updates to BESA's technical guidance will be unveiled during the day including the much-anticipated new version of the DW145 standard: 'Guide to Good Practice for the Installation of Fire and Smoke Dampers'. This fire safety critical issue has become even more high profile in the wake of the

Grenfell Tower disaster as insurers and fire officers increase their scrutiny of the industry's work.

Water efficiency, performance and management will be on the agenda for the first time with the involvement of the regulator OFWAT who will be examining the industry's ability to address water shortages and hygiene issues.

The BESA Annual Conference 2024 will once again feature an exhibition area and will be followed that evening by the [BESA's Industry Awards](#), which is also sponsored by Mitsubishi Electric.

[You can register for the conference here](#) and for more details about the event, along with exhibition and sponsorship opportunities, please contact: Charlie.pierpoint@theBESA.com