

Door and Hardware Federation (DHF) reflects on 2024 and looks forward to stability in 2025

11 months ago



Raising Standards
Advancing Safety

Tamworth-based trade association, [the Door and Hardware Federation \(DHF\)](#), is reflecting on what has been one of the most unpredictable years to date.

From the ongoing war in the Ukraine, the issues in Gaza earlier in the year and now the instability in Syria, DHF members have negotiated their way through a myriad of challenges that affected all construction industries this year. In addition, a change in UK Government and its Autumn budget gave members further challenges.

However, there are many positives from the year, not least that DHF welcomed 45 new members, reflecting the value of its technical support, training programmes, and focus on standards. DHF will continue refining its five-year business plan to ensure it meets the needs of its members and drives tangible benefits.

2024 brought some stability in the economy, with inflation now under control, currently running between 2 and 3%. But compared to two years ago when it was double digit figures, which impacted consumer confidence and market investment, the current stability in inflation is a positive economic backdrop for DHF members and the entire construction industry.

With the new government in place for a four-year term, this should bring consistency; historically consistency has, in turn, driven consumer and commercial confidence, which drives investment across the economy, and so with that in mind, DHF is hopeful of interest rates falling.

Economists are predicting that 2025 should see residential markets recovering, which could point to

residential markets leading the commercial market. So next year, a recovery of new house builds and residential RM&I is expected; optimistically in 2026, the industrial public sector infrastructure and commercial markets should begin to recover following on from residential.

As ever, training has been at the very heart of the trade association's activity (both face-to-face and online), and this year, DHF has helped 1365 learners with training, with the total number of unique learners standing at 5823. Virtual learning was launched in September, with courses delivered via an online classroom, connecting DHF trainers and delegates in real-time to complete training wherever they might be. As part of its training commitment, the federation is continuing to offer free webinars: the new EU Machinery Regulation and the UK PSTI Regulations, as well as launching new training and membership brochures and releasing three animated videos for automated gates & traffic barriers, garage doors and industrial doors regarding safe and compliant installation. The requirements of installers to prove competence, as stated in the revised Building Safety Act, means DHF is in a good position to meet the demands of the industry.

During the summer, the federation moved its application process online, a process described at the time by DHF's Commercial Director, Patricia Sowsbery-Stevens, as being driven by the need to simplify and streamline the process for its members, as well as 'contributing to its green credentials, reducing environmental impact and carbon footprint'.

In September, the final Grenfell report was released: A Landmark Conclusion to Seven Years of Investigations, and with a focus on the responsible person, DHF introduced a new short awareness course for owners and managers in a commercial setting. The trade association continues to help raise standards across the industry with regards to accurate installation and maintenance. In November, it published a new Code of Practice for fire and escape door hardware, in collaboration with GAI.

DHF & ADSA continue to work together and in partnership with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to complete a draft SKEB statement, Strategy Statement and Route to Competence. As a result of this work, it has been identified that the National Occupational Standard (NOS) for the for the Door, Gate & Shutter industry has some skills gaps and is in need of a review which will take place next year.

"DHF continues to flourish year-on-year and 2024 was no exception, despite the challenges," says Patricia. "A strong and highly dedicated team, an enduring commitment to training, and supporting our members through on-going legislation has helped to underpin our reputation as a centre of excellence. Raising standards and promoting best practice through training and compliance will always be our number one priority. We look forward to developing these initiatives even further in 2025."

DHF Members' Conference will take place on 5th February at RAF Cosford.