

## Building Safety and Regulation Update

The building safety and regulatory landscape continues to evolve following the conclusion of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the Government response to the Inquiry and the launch of the Prospectus for the Single Construction Regulator.

With Architectural Technology professionals at the leading edge of delivering safe, high-quality buildings and managing risk and regulatory compliance as Principal Designers, CIAT maintains a strong focus on building safety and regulatory reform.

The Institute meets regularly with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) to receive updates and discuss challenges facing members. In addition, CIAT works with the Construction Industry Council and others to enhance and promote best practice in building safety. CIAT VP Technical Dan Rossiter FCIAT is currently a part of advisory group supporting the Government's "fundamental review of building regulations guidance" (i.e. Approved Documents), while Professor Sam Allwinkle PPBIAT FCIAT is chairing design working group of the Construction Industry Council (CIC) Competence Steering Group.

### **The Single Construction Regulator & regulatory reform**

As recommended by the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Government is now moving forward with [establishing a Single Construction Regulator](#) (SCR), which will be responsible for regulation of buildings, construction products (with a White Paper due in Spring 2026) and professionals.

The SCR will build on the existing BSR and the National Regulator for Construction Products (NRCP), and will target four key outcomes:

- Buildings and built environments are safe, high-performing and deliver a healthy, accessible, secure, and sustainable environment for occupants.
- Companies and individuals are enabled to thrive when they operate in the interests of current and future building users.
- Products for building are fit for their purpose and users are provided with accurate product information.
- The building system is trusted; users have confidence the system will act to prioritise the safety and needs of occupants.

The [Prospectus for the SCR](#) is now **open for consultation until late March**, and members are strongly encouraged to respond to this, and to share any views with CIAT via [externalaffairs@ciat.global](mailto:externalaffairs@ciat.global), to inform a central response.

Looking ahead, it is clear from the prospectus and wider [industry moves](#) that reform professional regulation will be a key issue in the year ahead, with ("a comprehensive programme of reform" to professional regulation is to be published in the spring). This will be highly consequential for CIAT and its membership. The Institute is already actively engaging with Government, CIC and others to make the case for regulation that is fair, proportionate and focuses on competence rather than specific titles. Members will have opportunities to engage with CIAT as this work progresses.

More information on CIAT's position regarding regulatory reform can be found in Usman Yaqub's recent [letter to members and affiliates](#) and in the June 2025 position paper, [Safety, innovation and diversity in building design](#).

## **BSR governance & operations**

In parallel with establishing the SCR, Government continues to support the development of the BSR. This Summer, Government announced that the BSR would move from the Health and Safety Executive to an independent entity under the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government. This transition is now underway, led by Andy Roe and Charley Pugsley (both former senior leaders of the London Fire Brigade) as Chair and Chief Executive respectively. [Legislation](#) to create the new body has now been laid before Parliament, and this legal process should be complete by January, with staff moving gradually thereafter.

BSR aim for this move to have minimal impact on the sector, in the meantime, BSR remains focussed on addressing the backlog of gateway 2 approvals and improving processes in general.

Andy Roe has acknowledged systemic failures in the regulators first iteration, notably in delays to Gateway 2 decisions. The Regulator's aim is not to prevent building (without which people are likely to remain in unsafe housing for longer).

To address these failings, BSR is taking several steps including:

- Establishing a “fast track” innovation unit on a permanent basis, to do away with the need to create new multidisciplinary teams (MDTs\_ for each individual application.
- Batching applications for review by single teams.
- Escalating outstanding cases to Senior Leaders to accelerate resolution.

These steps do seem to be bringing some benefits. The number of “legacy cases” has fallen to 63 in the most recent [BSR data](#), and the number of decisions is trending upwards (with a record 272 determinations in October) – recent press coverage even celebrated a project in Hackney which received a Gateway 2 decision within 13 weeks. Nonetheless, significant problems remain. As the number of applications is increasing, the overall BSR caseload has remained stable, and average decision times remain well above target, undermining the viability of projects and putting residents at risk. Government has therefore announced that it will consult on options to improve the proportionality of the building control process, so that smaller, safety critical works to higher-risk buildings are not delayed by having to go through the full BST process.

## **House of Lords Report – Building a better regulator**

In view of the ongoing pressures facing the BSR, the House of Lords Industry and Regulators Committee launched an [Inquiry into the working of the BSR](#) in June, which reported on 11 December 2025. This report is robust in its criticism, highlighting a lack of guidance from the BSR, poor quality submissions from industry, insufficient workforce resourcing, and processes which are overly burdensome, particularly for smaller applications such as bathroom renovations in high-rise buildings.

The report calls for:

- Stronger guidance from BSR for its teams on how compliance with the Building Regulations should be evidenced and assessed to ensure greater consistency.
- The removal of smaller works from the BSR's building control approval processes or introduce a streamlined approval process for them.
- Allocation of the same MDTs to similar buildings or projects built by the same organisation, which could improve efficiency and consistency.
- The Government to provide long-term funding for the training of new building and fire inspectors.

As the inquiry coincided with reforms at the BSR, some of its fundings are outdated, and some of these changes are underway; for example, BSR is working to improve consistency and is appointing account managers to handle all projects from a given developer. BSR and MHCLG are also exploring legislative changes which would allow for small works to be subject to lighter touch oversight.

### **Definition of higher-risk buildings**

One recommendation of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry was that the definition of a higher-risk building (HRB) be reviewed. At present, a higher-risk building is any residential building that is at least 18 meters tall or seven storeys (except for hotels, military accommodation and secure residential institutions; hospitals and care homes are also excluded from the definition as it applies to occupied buildings).

[This review](#) has now concluded, and for the following reasons, the existing definition is to be retained for the time being.

- There is clear evidence that beyond the 18m/7 storey threshold there is a significant increase in risk to life due to fire
- Lowering the threshold may create an unmanageable burden and increase costs for the BSR, which is already struggling to keep up with applications
- There is no consensus on a more holistic definition (addressing factors such as vulnerability)
- Risks to excluded buildings, such as military facilities, are managed via other legislation

CIAT nonetheless continues to recommend that best practice in terms of risk manage and maintenance of the Golden Thread of building information be maintained for all buildings, and notes that many of the duties for designers and principal designers apply equally to non-HRBs.

### **Gateway 2 & 3 guidance**

To support successful submissions, BSR and CLC have prepared joint guidance on what is required in Gateway 2 applications, and what BSR are looking for submissions to evidence. The guidance can be found [here](#). Higher level guidance on Gateway 3 has also been developed, which can be found [here](#).

### **Built Environment Competence Hub**

BSI and the CLC Industry Competence Steering Group are launching a new central resource hub, bringing together competence standards, frameworks and practical guidance. The hub is to launch in January 2026 but is open for registration now. Those interested in learning more or registering should visit <https://competence.bsigroup.com/>. Please note, CIAT has not reviewed or endorsed the hub.

### **Opportunity: Building Advisory Committee Chair**

The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) is seeking to appoint an experienced leader to Chair their Building Advisory Committee (BAC).

The BAC will provide expert advice to the BSR on its building regulation functions (e.g. gateway processes, but not professional competence) and will coordinate various working groups and task and finish groups as necessary.

This is an excellent opportunity for an experienced Chartered Architectural Technologist to use their professional expertise and skills to shape the regulatory landscape for the built environment. We strongly encourage Members to consider applying, if they feel they have the appropriate skillset.

To apply, Members should send a CV and covering statement of suitability as separate documents to [bsrsecretariat@hse.gov.uk](mailto:bsrsecretariat@hse.gov.uk) quoting 'EOI – BAC Chair' in the subject field. Applications close at midday on **Monday 5 January 2026**. More information on the role can be found [here](#).

### **CIAT Building Safety resources**

CIAT's building safety resources are available at <https://architecturaltechnology.com/resources/building-safety.htm>. Members seeking technical advice (for example, on the application of specific regulations) should contact [technical@ciat.global](mailto:technical@ciat.global), while broader policy concerns can be highlighted to [externalaffairs@ciat.global](mailto:externalaffairs@ciat.global).