

# How Can The Industry Respond During Times Of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity & Ambiguity?



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**"What we need to be clear about as an industry, is that we can actually change, and actually bring real competency into the industry. That is absolutely key."**

CAROLINE GUMBLE | CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER | CIOB

## About This Report

On the 6th anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire, the CIOB in partnership with Builddots held a seminar among industry leaders to address the issues that came about as a result of the tragedy. The understanding that building safety requires reform and change sets the scene for the event's theme: Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity & Ambiguity.

This report reflects the key insights and summary from this seminar. Its purpose is to inform and guide those who are at the forefront of the construction industry about the issues discussed.

## Key Takeaways

### → Collaborative Approach:

Embrace cooperation to tackle industry challenges. Share solutions across projects and organizations for collective advancement and problem-solving.

### → Accountability Through Transparency:

Implement uniform standards and monitoring systems to enhance supply chain transparency, promoting accountability and aligned efforts.

### → Talent Investment:

Emphasize training, recruitment, and retention to invite fresh talent and ensure the industry's future.

### → Seek Government Stability:

A consistent governmental pipeline provides the industry security to effectively plan and execute projects. Collaboration across sectors is essential.

### → Act on Tech Surge:

Harness the current tech investment interest in construction. Seize the trend before it fades. Tech is here to help, not to replace us.

## Grenfell: Industry Wake-up Call

The Grenfell tragedy, not only shook the sector but the entire country, acting as a powerful catalyst to reform safety and accountability, and led to the implementation of the Building Safety Act (BSA). The Act includes the Golden Thread, which mandates that vital safety information about the design, build and management of buildings is now captured and maintained digitally. With the new legislation and changes required it is clear the industry is at a turning point.

Furthermore, those of us operating in the construction sphere, understand that each project is unique, from the design of the building to the teams working on the ground, and the materials used on-site. This, by nature, creates a highly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous ("VUCA") environment.

There are new innovative technologies out there tailored to meet the industry's challenges. These technologies, like Buildots, can help facilitate the changes, by improving accountability, providing accurate and detailed data throughout the build and access to historical documentation. However, their viability depends on our willingness to adapt.

***"As leaders and influencers, we have a responsibility to talk about how best to navigate through the volatility and uncertainty."***

**CAROLINE GUMBLE** | CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER | CIOB

With the entire industry gearing up for the next phase of the legislation to come into effect on 1st October, the industry requires support from all levels of the supply chain, from Government through to investors, to enact the change required. And, with the vague messaging around the roadmap to the BSA, it's crucial that the industry works together to create a future-proofed solution.

## What Is The Building Safety Act?

The BSA was introduced by the Government in 2022 to improve building safety standards and give more rights and protection to the people living in our buildings. The Act covers implementation of policies from historical defect remediation to ensuring the companies responsible for the delivery of the project are held accountable for the overall safety of the building and its inhabitants.

## How Will It Impact The Industry?

The BSA will impact all stages of a project, from the design phase to the construction phase, handover to the client and the 'operation', running and maintenance of the building. Each party involved needs to actively think about how their role will influence the safety of the end users, and affect the role of the succeeding party responsible for the next phase of delivery.

The Act, consisting of three Gateways, introduces new requirements during construction. To ensure everybody fully understands the implications and changes to their day-to-day operations, forward-thinking businesses will need to put more time and money into upskilling their workforce and implementing new solutions to streamline their processes to meet these.

## How Can The Industry Respond?

The construction industry has a habit of waiting to be told what to do, but if we don't take the reins and lead the drive for a solution ourselves, we will be caught in a dangerous storm. It's a matter of changing the culture and driving accountability throughout the sector.

There is a lot to navigate - with the current labour and skills shortage, but there are solutions that can mitigate these challenges. These innovators won't wait indefinitely; a delayed embrace might push the tech focus toward other receptive industries. This closing window of opportunity highlights the urgency to adopt the digital revolution or risk being left behind. With the problem-solving nature of construction professionals, we need to see this as an opportunity rather than a hindrance.

***"We're talking about the Building Safety Act, we have the opportunity, I believe, as an industry to answer those questions, and I actually agree with Dame Hackett, and I think we've got the skills in the industry. We've got people who are coming into the industry from these technology companies, and I support that... it's looking at how technology can support an industry that is desperate for external support."***

**ANDY STEELE** | CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, BUILDDOTS

Construction is a hugely passionate industry with a constant drive to do better, so it's everyone's responsibility to band together and work out the best course of action

## How Can The Industry Tackle It?

COLLABORATION, COLLABORATION, COLLABORATION

Projects run more efficiently when you're able to collaborate effectively with all levels of the supply chain, the industry needs to adopt that mentality on a wider scale and collaborate with other companies and industry bodies.

The industry typically works in silos, solving any issues within their own team or company, and not sharing the solutions externally. But it's hugely important that we work with large bodies like the CIOB and Build UK to tackle this as an industry, rather than simply within our respective organisations. This was seen when the construction sector came together during COVID to find a solution. It's time to do that again.

***"As long as we're really committed to working through it together, we should get to the right place on time."***

**AYO ALLU** | DIRECTOR OF DESIGN, TECHNICAL INNOVATION, CLARION HOUSING GROUP

The industry has a strong history of tackling new challenges and legislation head-on. We have an opportunity now, before the second round of legislation is released, to get ahead of the issue and collaborate with other professionals around the industry to work out best practices.

## Transparency

Another key element of the solution is transparency. It's required with all levels of the supply chain, starting with the local planning authority, through to the clients and the end users. Long-term clients are already invested in the quality of the scheme from its inception, as they want to ensure the product they're investing in will be long-lasting and fit for purpose. So transparency is already happening in some scenarios, but we need to unify it across the board.

Technology can provide this transparency, with accurate, real-time and documentation that can be implemented across projects and provide all stakeholders with the same information they can access at any time.

Second to that is the need for better licensing. Eddie Tuttle, Director of Policy, External Affairs and Research at CIOB, believes that this should be relevant for the companies themselves, rather than the individuals at those companies. He, in turn, recommends that the Government enforces a clearer strategy around competency.

***"We do need to professionalise the industry in a different way to what we are at the moment, and that actually will involve having to look at the skill sets in the industry, where we've actually got gaps, how we actually address that"***

**EDDIE TUTTLE** | DIRECTOR OF POLICY, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS & RESEARCH, CIOB

A lot of the ambiguity in relation to the industry comes from not knowing what lies within our domain. We each need to understand what we have the power to control and influence, and what we don't. Once we know what is in our power, we can change people's way of thinking from "But we've always done it this way" to "Could we be doing this better?" This process will help to make everyone more aware of what they're doing, why they're doing it, and the impact it has on both the project itself and the wider industry.

***"So the first thing is look at where we as the industry can take the lead, where we've got control, where we can make decisions and where we can actually do things. And there are a lot of things we can't, but we could put a lot of energy into the things that we can control."***

**SUZANNAH NICHOL** | CHIEF EXECUTIVE, BUILD UK

And what about the things we can't control? That's where bodies like CIOB and Build UK come in. If we don't have the power to change it ourselves, we need to be reporting to leaders in the industry who do have the influence and connections. It's important that businesses share their experiences and solutions further than just their own team. This is a bigger issue which needs to be addressed on a bigger scale.


***"We're in crisis time now and we need help. We need to start to look outside our own individual little bubbles as companies because we want to solve the problem in our own companies. That's the issue. We've got a big issue here. We need to collaborate."***

**ANDY STEELE** | CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, BUILDDOTS

## Attracting New Talent

The last piece of the puzzle is the challenge of attracting new talent to the industry and minimising the labour gap. There is huge untapped potential when it comes to training and apprenticeships in construction. One theme that came out of the panel discussion is that the industry needs to create a generic apprenticeship system which is unified and agreed upon by professionals across the industry. Apprenticeships are currently being handled on a case-by-case basis and on a very small scale within individual businesses, but in order for a career in construction to seem viable from the outside, there needs to be a standardised system in place. We also need to make sure that we're in a position to offer full time jobs once the apprenticeship is complete. That's where the reliable pipeline from the Government will provide support. If companies have a more stable flow of work, they can commit more time and money into training and employing new people.

This is also where technology ties in.




***"The art is to expand the skill base and to start to look at how we can involve technology and other industries to support what we're doing."***

**ANDY STEELE** | CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, BUILDDOTS

## Embracing Technology


The industry needs to make use of what is already available and unify its systems to improve performance. Technology is here to support the industry's workers, not replace them. For example, Builddots can provide an immense amount of data and insights that humans alone are not capable of. By delivering this data accurately and in a timely manner, this frees up the time of the workers to focus on other things, like quality control and safety. We need to be embracing technology and weaving it into as many processes as we can in order to enhance productivity, efficiency and provide comfort that we have an objective data trail to meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act and Golden Thread. It also reduces the heavy reliance on skilled workers, as technology can help to support the teams on a wider scale.



***"AI will not do us out of our jobs, AI will enable us to do the jobs that we need to do with the people that we've got."***

**SUZANNAH NICHOL** | CHIEF EXECUTIVE, BUILD UK

It's safe to say that we still have a lot to learn from the BSA and are eagerly awaiting more detail from the Government. But, it's also on us, as an industry, to work out the best solution to keep us working in an effective and accountable way. We need to make sure we are collaborating with other professionals across the industry, maintaining transparency throughout the lifecycle of each project, and embracing technology as an enhancement tool for our workers, not a direct replacement. We are at a critical turning point in the industry, and it's imperative that we get ahead of the curve before we get left behind. Let's work together to make our industry the best it can be.



**If you would like to optimise your operations, mitigate delay risk, and ensure a Golden Thread compliance with objective status updates throughout the fit-out lifecycle, check out the [Builddots website](#) for more information.**