



Architectural
Ironmongery
Journal

SUMMER 2025



INSIDE

- GAI Green Paper response
- Q&A with new GAI President
- Healthcare specification

PULLING POWER

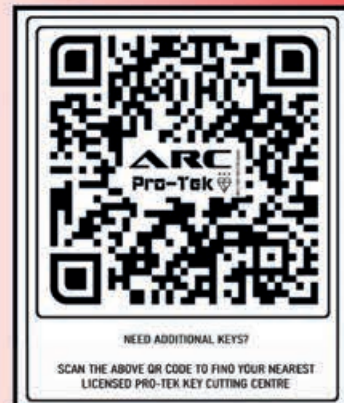
How can the ironmongery sector attract
the next generation of employees?



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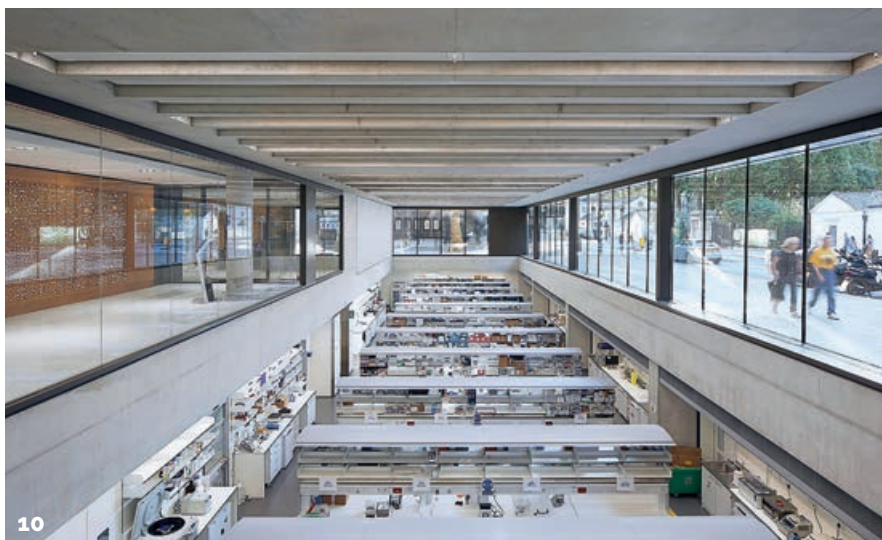
Anti-Drill



Anti-Plug
Extraction

FD
30

FD
60



CONTENTS

SUMMER 2025

NEWS AND VIEWS

- 04 Digest
- 06 Why patents are crucial
- 08 How to spot greenwashing
- 24 Community: GAI news, including new team members

FEATURES

- 07 What I specified for South Wilts Ski Club
- 10 A clinical space requiring a multi-functional ironmongery spec
- 12 Interview with ABUS MD Adam Evans
- 14 Cover story: how to attract young talent to a career in architectural ironmongery
- 18 Fire door safety for healthcare settings
- 20 The GAI response to the government Construction Products Reform Green Paper

BACK DOOR

- 30 The story of the stolen Banksy fire door

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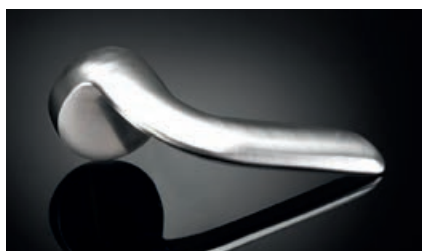
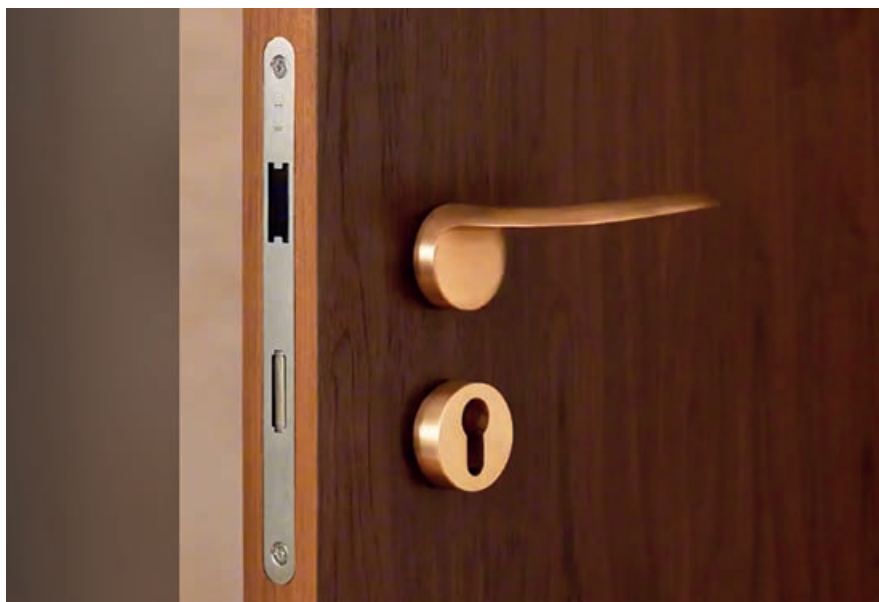


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Updates
Projects
Standards
Events

Digest



TOP, ABOVE & BELOW: Members of the Lota family now available from izé

Not one Lota: izé launches full designer range

izé is now offering the complete Lota range by acclaimed designer Sebastian Bergne. The collaboration dates back almost two decades and is based on the simple notion of subtraction from a supersized bar.

The Lota family now includes a knob, locks, drawer and cupboard pulls, all with a similar sculptural geometry. Their design language "subverts, distorts, and rethinks the everyday" says the ironmonger.

izé describes Sebastian Bergne's work as "that of a classic industrial designer but always leavened by a profound sense of the way things are used and made in the real world and a whiff of both humour and humanity."

"Crossing the worlds of design for mass manufacture and small-scale production, he has developed a recognisable, consistently elegant oeuvre, using everyday materials and the recognisable language of the utilitarian, made poetic."

Bergne has designed furniture, lighting and even wine glasses. His achievements have been widely recognised with international design awards, frequent publications, exhibitions and inclusion in private and museum collections.

The collection is available at
www.ize.info/designer/sebastian-bergne



Regional winners line up for building of the year

RIBA Regional Awards celebrate great architecture across the UK in 11 regions, along with awards in Scotland and Wales (RIAS AND RSAW).

Several projects are awarded in each area but one project is named Building of the Year and those form the shortlist for the RIBA Stirling Prize announced in October. Listed here are the winners of the Building of the Year for each region.



- West Midlands – Coventry University, College of the Arts & Society
- East – Young's Court Development for Emmanuel College, Cambridge
- London – Tower Hamlets Town Hall
- Yorkshire – RIBA named a series of winning projects but no building of the year.
- Northern Ireland – Student Hub, Queens Business School
- South – The Jackson Library, Exeter College, Oxford
- South East – Sheerness Dockyard Church

- South West & Wessex – The Story of Emily
 - East Midlands – Primary, Nottingham
 - North East – Ad Gefrin Anglo Saxon Museum and Distillery
 - North West – Vestige, a house in Cheshire
 - RIAS – 11 winners become the 'longlist' for the RIAS Andrew Doolan Best Building in Scotland Award announced in July ahead of the winner announcement in November.
 - RSAW – Nyth, Bangor
- See all the winners at architecture.com**



FIRE DOOR SAFETY WEEK

The British Woodworking Federation's Fire Door Safety Week takes place this year 22-26 September.

It aims to raise the awareness of the critical role that fire doors play in saving lives and protecting property in the unfortunate event of a fire.

Everyone plays their part in ensuring a fire door performs as it should in the tragic event of a fire, from the manufacturer through to the building users, and knowing what to look out for and what to do if you spot a problem might just save a life. The campaign website has a toolkit of resources to help check for faulty doors and poor installation, as well as resources to help you get involved with the campaign. firedoorsafetyweek.co.uk/

LEFT & ABOVE: Coventry University's College of the Arts & Society



Growth in Asia Pacific door hardware market

The door hardware market in Asia Pacific is undergoing significant transformation and set to reach a value of US\$15.8bn by 2033 according to new research.

Recent market data from Verified Market Reports has shown the growth in Asia Pacific is being driven by technological advancements, sustainability initiatives, and evolving consumer preferences. The report states that the market size was valued at USD 11.2 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach USD 15.8 billion by 2033, exhibiting a compound annual growth rate of 4.7% from 2026 to 2033.

The integration of IoT and home automation technologies is revolutionising door hardware, the research says, with increased demand for smart locks, access control systems, and remote monitoring capabilities. Growing environmental awareness has led to a focus on sustainable and energy-efficient door hardware solutions with manufacturers developing eco-friendly materials, energy-saving mechanisms, and recyclable products to meet these demands. And rising concerns about safety and security have increased the call for advanced locking mechanisms, biometric access control, and intrusion detection systems.

The report lists the largest manufacturers in the market as: ASSA ABLOY, Häfele, Allegion, G-U, dormakaba, Guangdong Huitailong Technology Co., Kinglong, Archie, Guangdong Bida Bida Gmt, Ekf, Norto Hardware, Vbh, Topstrong, Renas Hardware, Eco, and Seleco.

Patently obvious

It's time the industry stopped pretending trademarks equal security, argues **Neil Rule**

Let's cut to the chase. There's still a lot of confusion in the key security market – and it's not by accident.

Some companies are still peddling 'restricted' or 'trademarked' key systems, wrapping them in a ribbon of marketing spin and calling it 'security'. It sounds impressive, sure – but in reality? It's window dressing.

Here's the uncomfortable truth: trademarks don't stop unauthorised key duplication. Patents do.

So why are we still entertaining the nonsense? Some of our competitors are still pushing keys they call 'patented' – but dig a little deeper, and the patent they're talking about applies to an internal spring, a design flourish, or a housing finish – not the actual key security mechanism.

That's not protection. That's misdirection. We've even seen companies defending

these practices, omitting and side-stepping established EU case law – while conveniently ignoring the industry best practice guides, which clearly states: "Trademarking a key does not provide enforceable security."

Only a patented key design can give you the legal ground to protect against illegal copies. At Access2, we're not here to play games: 90% of our output is patented key systems. Our latest system, Premier 4, is the next-generation evolution of Premier 3 – with one major upgrade: a patent lifespan that runs to 2042.

Protecting what matters

Why does that matter? Because a secure system is a long-term investment. The longer the patent protection, the longer your keys stay exclusive, protected, and profitable.



"Dig a little deeper and the patent they're talking about does not apply to the actual key security mechanism. That's not protection, That's misdirection."

NEIL RULE

We're not here for gimmicks. We're here to raise the bar. And honestly? The bar needs raising. Too many so-called 'security systems' are built on loopholes and loose language.

So here's our message to the industry: Stop selling 'restricted' when you mean 'exposed'. Stop using 'trademarked' as a stand-in for 'protected'.

If your key system isn't patented at the point of the key and the barrel, it's not secure. Full stop. Because if your keys are going to protect lives, buildings, data, or dollars – they better be backed up by more than a fancy brochure. ♦

Neil Rule is managing director of Access2 Ltd.



ABOVE: Premier 4 from Access2

What I specified for...

South Wilts Ski Club

Helen Roach RegAI

Specification and sales at Door Controls Direct on an unusual recent spec



Door hardware might not be described by many as 'exhilarating' but its application on this project certainly is.

Over 700 miles from both the French Alps and the Pyrenees, the new South Wilts Ski Club in Bapton, Wiltshire, was something out of the ordinary from our usual specification projects. In over 30 years of specifying door and window hardware, this indoor 'endless' ski slope was a first for us at Door Controls Direct.

A local Wiltshire-based contractor, R Moulding, managed the adaptation of an agricultural building over a period of just a few months. Seeking a clean, modern look and feel, combined with robust and user-friendly design, plus a durable finish for such an unusual environment, there was one standout option – marine grade stainless steel.

Throughout the building, from pull handles and push plates down to the escutcheons, bathroom turns, and casement window furniture, Grade 316 satin finish ironmongery features.

With expected heavy-duty use, we specified Steelworx EN 1906 Grade 4 lever door handles with an accessible return to door design. Fire rated and with a 25-year guarantee, we have kitted these premises out with door hardware comparable to its uncommon and full-on function. Matching accessible bathroom turns

complete a cohesive look and accessibility for this sports facility.

ARRONE brand overhead door closers and DIN standard lockcases have proven themselves on hundreds of our specification projects so were chosen as an effective pairing for the stainless steel door furniture. Secured by Access 2 restricted profile cylinders, the lockcases safeguard staff only areas and the external doors.

To hang doors throughout the facility, we turned to G316 Enduro CE marked and Certifire approved hinges. Carlisle Brass satin stainless steel casement stays and fasteners, also Grade 316, secured the windows. Coming with both hook and mortice plate, these fasteners remove any concern about confusion over terminology or changes to the casements on site.

Because the site is open to the public, panic hardware was a must for this project. Tried and tested, Exidor panic bolts and OADs were fitted to the final exit doors, with both directional and operational signage present. We're pretty sure the Infinity Slope



ABOVE: ARRONE door closers
BELOW LEFT: Stainless steel door furniture

"In over 30 years of specifying door hardware this indoor 'endless' ski slope was a first for us at Door Controls Direct"

HELEN ROACH

doesn't terminate in the carpark, but you'll have to squeeze on your padded gloves and thermals and head to the South Wilts Ski Club to find out for yourself.

Specification, supply, and snagging won't see the end of Door Controls Direct at this unconventional Wiltshire premises. We are on hand for on-going support of its master key system from cutting additional keys to the pinning and supply of any new door locks and extensions to this undoubtedly popular venture.

What equally rare and individual building might be on the horizon following such a unique, local project? Who knows, but we're 'slopeful' for something special – the snow must go on! ♦

How do you spot greenwashing?



In the first of a regular column **Lara Coutinho** shows how to spot authentic sustainability

As sustainability targets tighten and expectations of environmental standards rise across the built environment, architectural ironmongers can play a key role in ensuring supply chains are genuinely sustainable and ethical – not just ticking boxes. With reputations and long-term compliance on the line, knowing how to identify truly responsible suppliers is now essential.

Environmental claims are everywhere, but not all are created equal. Greenwashing—making vague or misleading claims about sustainability—is still widespread. In fact, a recent survey by the Environmental Services & Solutions Expo found that 90% of professionals believe greenwashing persists in their industries.

To cut through the noise, look for hard evidence. Credible suppliers publish regular, detailed sustainability reports that link directly to recognised frameworks, such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For example, Zoo Hardware has committed to a 2030 Sustainability Roadmap and transparently reports progress each year, with measurable outcomes tied to energy efficiency and climate action.



“In today's market, integrity drives trust”

LARA COUTINHO

Platforms like Sedex (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange) can also help businesses verify the environmental and ethical credentials of their partners.

Membership indicates a willingness to share detailed supply chain data,

undergo audits, and work toward continuous improvement. Another indicator of sustainability integrity is the use of Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs), which detail a product's environmental impact across its lifecycle. EPDs are especially valuable to architects and specifiers seeking verified data for project assessments.

Packaging matters too. Look for suppliers actively reducing plastic use and switching to more sustainable alternatives. But again, scrutiny is key—valid sustainability efforts are backed by documentation and third-party certifications, not vague claims.

In today's market, integrity drives trust. By prioritising suppliers that publish clear, verifiable data and demonstrate a consistent commitment to environmental responsibility, architectural ironmongers can ensure they're specifying products that meet modern standards—without compromise. ♦

Lara Coutinho is supply chain sustainability manager at Zoo Hardware. She also sits on the GAI Sustainability Working Group, helping to drive positive change across the industry through collaborative research, discussion and actionable steps.

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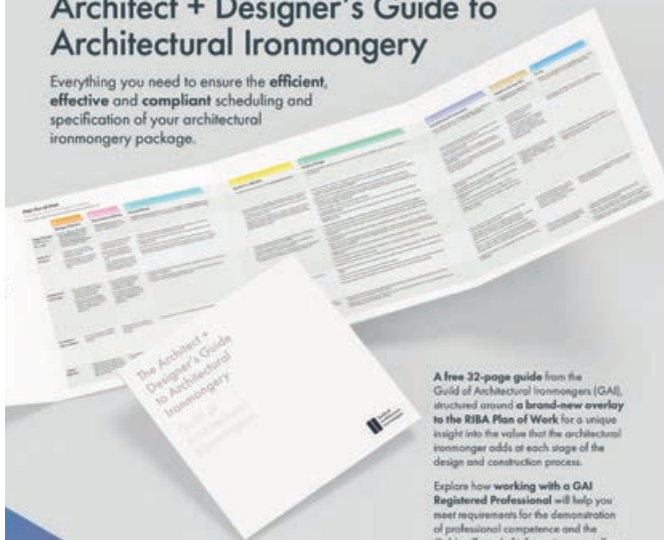


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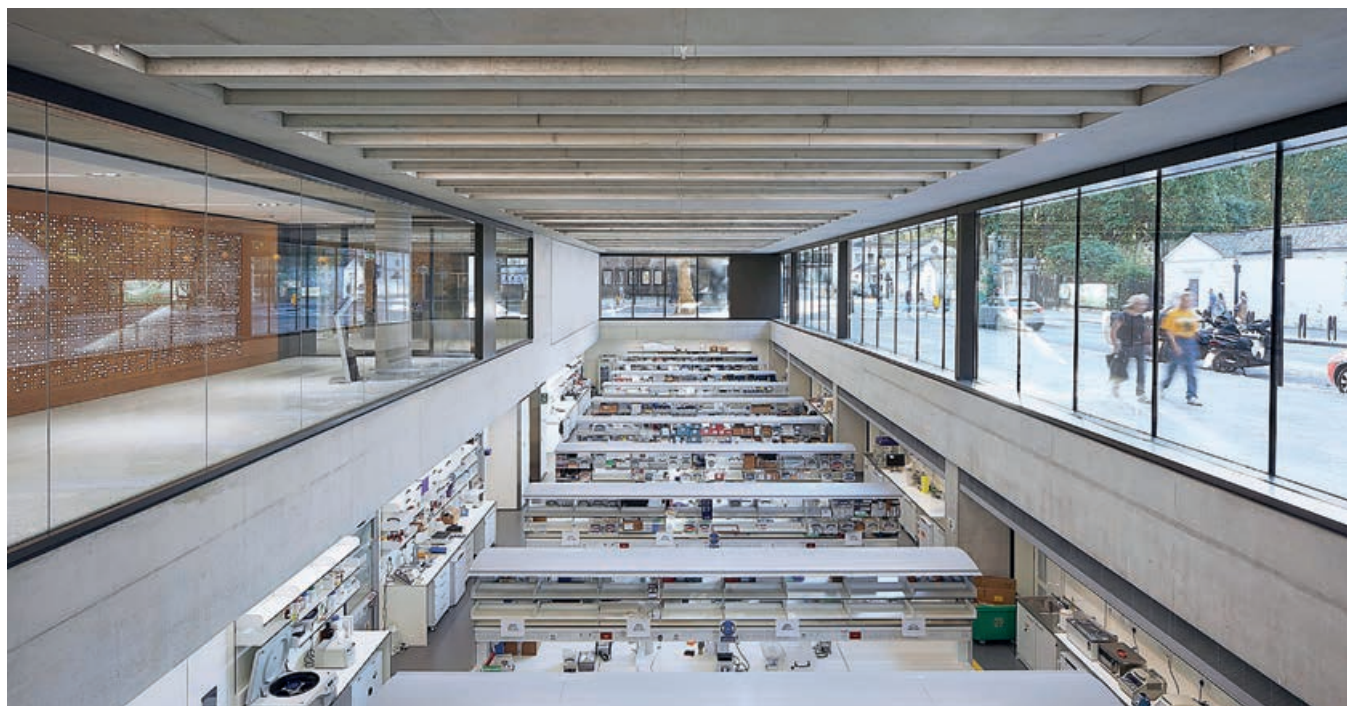
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BELOW & FAR RIGHT: The public-facing research offers passers-by a view of inside



Visible genius

The Zayed Centre for Research into Rare Disease in Children places science on show in its unorthodox design. Allgood's ironmongery solution had to meet the functional, technical and aesthetic needs

The Zayed Centre for Research into Rare Disease in Children is a globally significant facility. It is a building dedicated to advancing paediatric healthcare through world-class research, treatment, and collaboration. Located in central London, it brings together Great Ormond Street Hospital and University College London in a state-of-the-art building that optimises the clinical environment.

Designed by Stanton Williams, the centre sets a new benchmark for healthcare architecture. The cohesive design fosters connection through shared spaces

that are open, inclusive, and focused on the user experience.

Celebrating the often invisible but vital work of researchers and clinicians, the building engages openly with the public. At the base of this urban beacon of science and care is the double-height 600sqm principal laboratory, visible from within the building and from the street, allowing passers-by to observe the activities taking place inside. In a departure from typical clinical environments, a sense of openness and generosity creates a calm and dignified





"Great Ormond Street Hospital required ironmongery that would enhance the space and focus on elevating the user experience"

environment for young patients and their families. In the welcoming entrance shared by patients and staff, specially commissioned artworks serve to inspire and engage.

At Zayed Centre for Research into Rare Disease in Children, Stanton Williams has reimagined the clinical environment as a shared civic experience.

Designed for Great Ormond Street Hospital and University College London, the 13,000sqm building delivers world-class research space for more than 500 scientists and clinicians alongside outpatient clinics.

The public-facing research facility demystifies science by offering passers-by a sense of the life-changing work taking place inside the eight-storey building. As well as inviting views in at street level, the building gives views of the 600sqm lower ground floor laboratories to both pedestrians outside and to staff and outpatients inside as they make their way across the shared entrance bridge. In this way, the usually unseen activities of the researchers are made visible.

Within, the Zayed Centre for Research is organised around two 'hearts', an outpatient zone and a collaborative research zone. Each is planned as layered volumes around a daylit atrium. Physical and visual connections between the two zones encourage interaction between research staff and patients.

As well as specialist laboratories, research facilities include workspace, seminar and meeting spaces, all designed to encourage multi-disciplinary interaction.

Allgood was approached early in the design process to provide an ironmongery solution that would meet the centre's functional, technical and aesthetic requirements. "It was a collective effort to create a cohesive and seamless design," says Allgood managing director, Stewart Lauder.

A demanding brief

Great Ormond Street Hospital required architectural ironmongery that would enhance the space. This was achieved with the quality of Allgood's Modric® range, precision-engineered materials, and focus on elevating the user experience through subtle design.

"Working closely with the architects, we developed and presented a proposal that responded to the tone of the building – minimal, calm and functional," explains Lauder. "Durability and reliability were essential. As a result, our Modric Lever handles 3509 and 3510 were paired with 6599 pull handles and specified throughout the building. The hardware had to perform consistently under frequent use, without drawing attention to itself or disrupting the building's simple and clean aesthetic.

"At Great Ormond Street Hospital, every lever operates on Allgood's patented Quadaxial® rose – engineered to perform beyond one million cycles. That means 25 years of reliable, everyday use within the hospital, tested and warranted to handle a minimum of 110 operations per day."



ABOVE LEFT & BOTTOM LEFT: Allgood's Modric® range was specified

Across seven floors, the centre accommodates laboratories, outpatient facilities, clean rooms, and shared clinical spaces.

"The Zayed Centre for Research required an ironmongery solution that was aesthetically refined but also able to withstand the challenges of a complex and multi-functional environment with both public and private areas," explains Stanton Williams associate director Kalpesh Intwala. "Stanton Williams engaged the Allgood team from the start and received expert input, knowledge and experience to enable the specification of a high-quality ironmongery range that is an important part of the building."

The Zayed Centre achieved BREEAM Excellent - a standard Allgood supports through its British manufacturing site and ISO 14001 certified environmental management systems held since 2009. ♦

Watch a video of the Centre here.

<https://stantonwilliams.com/en/journal/zayed-centre-for-research>

"The market is evolving"

What does ABUS's new managing director Adam Evans have in store for the company? He shares his plans with **AIJ**

Tell us about your vision for ABUS; what goals do you have?

ABUS has a strong name in the UK and Ireland, known for over 100 years of quality, reliability and a wide product range. My role is to build on that, not reinvent it.

The immediate goal is to grow our presence in both residential and commercial markets and make sure we're front of mind when people think about security, whether that's in homes, workplaces, or public spaces.

Growth must be meaningful. That means deepening relationships with our customers, being even simpler to do business with, and continuing to evolve our offer. With the research and development invested, we have a real chance to proactively move with the market in our digital and smart security portfolio with no compromise to our mechanical growth.

At a practical level, I want us to be sharper commercially, faster operationally and even more joined-up as a team. There are many opportunities out there, but we need to be proactive in how we go after them. We've got good people, a



"Customers still want the reassurance of mechanical products but they're also looking for smarter features"

strong brand, and a clear sense of purpose – my role is to bring that together and keep it moving forward.

Thinking about door security/access, what challenges is the industry facing right now and how is ABUS meeting them?

At ABUS, mechanical security remains the heart of what we do. That's where our

credibility comes from, and it's something we take a lot of pride in - offering locks, padlocks and access solutions that are well engineered, durable, and trusted by professionals and consumers. That won't change.

The market is evolving. Customers still want the reassurance of robust mechanical products, but they're also

looking for smarter features - whether that's digital access, integration with other systems, or more flexibility in how they secure their homes or businesses.

Our challenge, and our opportunity, is to bring those two worlds together in a way that feels natural. We're not looking to replace mechanical; we're looking to enhance it.

That means focusing on products that are intuitive, not over-complicated. It means investing in innovation that builds on what already works, rather than abandoning it for the next trend. We're making sure our digital and mechanical ranges sit side by side and are supported with the same level of quality, reliability, and technical support.

Sustainability is an increasingly key part of the picture. Whether it's through responsible sourcing, designing for longevity, or reducing waste in our packaging and production processes, we're taking real steps to make our product lifecycle more sustainable.

Customers are paying more attention to this, and rightly so. We want to make sure that choosing ABUS doesn't just mean choosing security - it also means choosing a more responsible product.

What is your leadership style?

I'd describe my leadership style as collaborative and customer focused. I believe in setting a clear direction, but also in empowering teams to take ownership and deliver results.

Trust is crucial. I want our team to feel confident in making decisions, challenging the status quo, and pushing the boundaries of what we can achieve.

Coming from a commercial and sales background, I've always been deeply involved in frontline operations. That perspective keeps me grounded and helps me ensure strategic decisions always reflect real-world needs.

I also believe in transparency and communication. As we go through change

and growth, it's important that everyone in the organisation understands the 'why' behind what we're doing. Creating a shared vision and purpose is how you get the best from a team.

Lastly, I place a high value on individual learning and development. The industry is changing rapidly and innovating, and we need leaders and a team who are continuously improving and not afraid of change.

Elsewhere in this issue we have discussed the challenge of encouraging young people into the industry? How is ABUS approaching this?

ABUS is committed to building a team that reflects the future of our industry. This means being proactive about talent attraction and making sure we're seen as an employer of choice - not just in security, but in tech, logistics, innovation and customer experience.

One of the key challenges is perception. The security industry, particularly the mechanical side of it, isn't always seen as exciting or innovative by younger generations.

But that's a misconception. We're at the forefront of some incredible technological shifts; supporting smart

ABOVE & BELOW: Mechanical gets smart



"That means investing in innovation that builds on what already works, rather than abandoning it for the next trend."

ADAM EVANS

homes, connected cities, AI-enabled access control. There's so much opportunity for people who want to work at the intersection of technology, safety, and real-world impact.

To attract young talent, we need to tell that story better. That means working more closely with educational organisations, creating meaningful entry pathways such as internships and apprenticeships, and promoting career progression within the business.

It's also about culture. Young professionals are looking for workplaces that are inclusive, purpose-driven, and flexible. At ABUS, we're investing in those areas - creating a dynamic, collaborative environment where people can grow, contribute, and feel valued.

We're proud to be part of a global organisation, which allows us to offer international exposure and diverse experiences. Whether it's in engineering, commercial strategy, marketing or logistics - there's a place for talented individuals who want to make a difference. ♦

Talent magnet

How can the ironmongery sector attract the next generation? **Nicky Roger** reports



The architectural ironmongery sector is a vital but often overlooked cornerstone of the built environment. From door closers in hospitals to access control in commercial buildings, architectural ironmongery ensures the safety, security, and functionality of our spaces. Yet despite its importance, the sector faces an ongoing challenge: attracting and retaining the next generation of talent.

Like many technical and specialist industries, architectural ironmongery is experiencing the effects of an ageing workforce, a lack of visibility among younger jobseekers, and increasing competition for skilled labour. At the same time, the complexity of construction projects continues to grow. Regulations evolve, sustainability demands intensify, and technology – especially in the form of smart and integrated systems – continues to reshape the scope of what ironmongery professionals must know and do. The result is a growing skills gap that, if unaddressed, could have long-term implications for the quality and efficiency of building projects across the UK.

Visibility and image

The issue is not just about numbers; it's about perception. To many outside the sector, architectural ironmongery remains a niche or even invisible discipline. Careers advisors rarely mention it, and young people often enter the field by accident rather than design. There's a clear need to tell a more compelling story – one that highlights the intellectual challenge, the creative and problem-solving aspects of specification, the satisfaction of contributing to iconic buildings, and the potential for a meaningful and varied career.



"Mentoring and modern learning tools also play a big role in keeping the industry relevant and accessible"

KAZ SPIEWAKOWSKI

There's also a cultural shift underway. The rising workforce – particularly Millennials and Gen Z – are not just looking for a job; they want purpose, growth opportunities, and inclusive workplaces. That means the sector must not only raise awareness but also evolve its approach to training, career development, and workplace culture if it's to remain competitive.

Lindsay Winters, human resources business partner at Allegion UK, says the age gap is the basis of the issue. "There is a generational issue concerning talent in our sector. Those grouped into the 'Generation Z' bracket have very different attitudes and expectations towards work. Where previously employees would be asking what they can do for a business, this has now shifted to what a business can do for employees.

"The younger generation is naturally drawn towards digitisation and are now less inclined to approach a career in manual roles as found in the ironmongery sector. To attract

and retain new employees, we must look at the whole package being offered to young people, including environmental, social and governance considerations and investment."

Kaz Spiewakowski, managing director of GEZE UK says the answer lies in promoting the industry to young people early on. "Visibility and image are big challenges. Architectural ironmongery is not always seen as modern or progressive, yet the industry is evolving through smart tech and sustainable design. Many people simply aren't aware of the industry or the range of careers it offers. We need to tell a more compelling story – through school outreach, open days, and social media – about the impact and opportunities in this sector. We need to highlight formal education routes and career progression, especially through GAI-accredited qualifications, to help young people see it as a serious, long-term career. Mentoring and modern learning tools also play a big role in keeping the industry relevant and accessible."

Codelocks managing director Jo Milne-Rowe agrees. "Awareness is a significant challenge. Many people just don't know what architectural ironmongery encompasses, or what roles exist within the sector. We need to celebrate individual achievements within our sector, highlighting the human and innovative side of what we do. Seeing where it can take them, from the shop floor to the boardroom and travelling the world, people will start to envision their career path in architectural ironmongery, helping us build a stronger talent pipeline.

"We could also do with clarifying the term 'architectural ironmongery'. Most people outside our sector don't know what it means or understand the breadth and relevance ►



ABOVE: Kyle, an apprentice at Instinct Hardware

of the field. I'm not suggesting a rename or rebrand. However, the sector is about more than just hardware, and people aren't aware of that. What we do is about smart, design-driven and innovative solutions with technological integration at their heart. There are diverse roles available, and the skills gained are highly transferable and create opportunities across industries. Ours is a foundational, global, and creative profession.

"Although the GAI offers comprehensive training programmes, lots of the essential skills required to succeed are industry-specific and not taught elsewhere. That can create a steeper learning curve in some parts of our field, which may deter new people. There's also a perception that the field isn't digitally aligned, when in reality it is, which limits its appeal to younger generations."

Apprenticeships

Milne-Rowe says workplace development and training are essential to this mission, as well as offering apprenticeship programmes that expose them to all areas of the business, especially digital. "Though it may be cliché to say that young people like digital things, the fact of the matter is, the pace of technological change means digital

integrations are a part of a wide range of today's products. Our industry could also highlight these aspects more strongly. Lastly, companies should be open to hiring people without prior experience, providing supportive paths for early career learning and advancement."

These are issues Codelocks has had to address. "To attract new talent, we've had to be flexible and aware of generational expectations around in-office collaboration and remote working. We've also emphasised career progression that appeal to people seeking new positions.

"Attracting and retaining young talent is an ongoing priority for us, as we recognise the value fresh perspectives bring to the business. We've had positive experiences with individuals entering our industry from a variety of backgrounds, and we're beginning to see the benefits of bringing apprentices into the team."

Instinct Hardware has also opted for the apprentice route to offer opportunities to the next generation. Haq Meharban, director of sales and marketing, says this helps to plug knowledge gaps too. "Our industry is predominately made up of an aging workforce, where workers are nearing

retirement. There is a lack of younger skilled workers to replace them. This has had a direct impact meaning we're seeing a loss of institutional knowledge and a gap in essential skills, such as toolmaking, machining and finishing. The apprenticeship route is the perfect solution for us. However, there has been a decline in vocational education and hands-on apprenticeships. This once again affects our sector. New entrants often lack the technical skills specific to this niche sector, such as forging, casting or precision metalworking. When the opportunity arose to take apprentices on, we had those specific things in mind - teaching the young entrants skills that they would not normally get taught in an educational setting."

However, Meharban says the industry has an image problem to face. "The acquisition of



"The acquisition of talent is proving challenging as ironmongery in particular is often seen as outdated or unappealing to young people"

HAQ MEHARBAN

talent is proving challenging as ironmongery in particular is often seen as outdated or unappealing to young people. This has led to a low uptake of roles despite strong demand and often stable employment prospects. We have tried to combat this by tailoring our training around design and engineering, giving it more of an appeal."

And in an increasingly digital world this appeal is even more crucial. "Our sector is undergoing a digital transformation and we must be agile to stay competitive," says Meharban. "This can be more difficult when upskilling mature workers who are used to more traditional engineering. We don't want to lose these skills, so we work hard to blend practical knowledge with the newest technology. A key way to do this is to bring in apprentices with the necessary skills to adapt to these changes."

Instinct has hired apprentices in two key sectors of the business (machining and design) to aid the challenges the business is facing in digitalisation. "We are seeing them go from strength to strength and who knows, they might even train the next generation coming through one day. And that's the way it should be!" says Meharban.

ASSA ABLOY Door Group is also benefiting from apprenticeships. "We firmly believe that attracting and nurturing the next generation of talent is essential for the long-term health and innovation of door solutions and wider construction sectors," says Brian Sofley, managing director.

"We recognise the importance of aligning our talent development efforts with the skills being taught in local education institutions. We're working closely with our local college to identify students whose courses and interests align with the technical roles within our business.

"Our past apprentices have made significant contributions to the business, and we're proud of their progression. One former mechatronics apprentice, for example, now leads our quality function, while another

AIMING HIGH

Two recent GAI training alumni share their experience



Aimee Townsend
Ironmongery
contracts manager
and sales team
leader with Aspex.

"I began my career in architectural ironmongery over five years ago in a part-time office junior role. However, once I began to understand the nature of Aspex's work, I quickly became intrigued and eager to learn more. Over the past three years, I've grown significantly within the company, successfully completing GAI Stages 1 and 2 – proudly achieving a Credit – and I am currently studying for Stage 3. Throughout this time, the company has been incredibly supportive of my professional development and training. Although the industry is traditionally male-dominated, I've been warmly welcomed by colleagues, suppliers, and peers alike. I genuinely enjoy working in this field: it's engaging, challenging, and rewarding and I see a long-term future for myself within the industry.



Aimee Parry
Sales Assistant
HOPPE (UK) LTD
I came to the industry
as I have some family

members in the ironmongery trade. It's very interesting and I learn new things every day. I think promoting the training opportunities will make the sector more attractive: advertising chances to refresh our knowledge, GAI training courses, and creating CPD sessions for people to get involved in is always good. Posting this on social and websites would be useful.

"I genuinely enjoy working in this field: it's engaging, challenging, and rewarding"

AIMEE TOWNSEND

has developed into a project engineer after gaining hands-on experience with our CNC equipment. Several other apprentices, particularly those in engineering and vocational subjects, have remained with us and continue to develop their careers in both factory and project-based roles," Sofley adds.

In addition to apprenticeships, ASSA ABLOY Door Group is supporting young people through other initiatives. It has previously hosted internships in R&D, engineering and marketing, and has recently welcomed a new University Associate as part of a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) in its R&D team.

It is also an Impact Sponsor of Young Enterprise Northern Ireland (YENI), supporting educational programmes that introduce students to business and engineering concepts at an early age.

"These initiatives are vital for opening young minds to the diverse career paths available within manufacturing and engineering, including ironmongery" says Sofley. "Attracting young talent isn't just about filling roles – it's about creating meaningful opportunities, showcasing career development, and engaging with education providers to ensure mutual understanding of the skills industry needs." ♦

Prevention before cure

What more can be done to ensure fire door safety is being met with competency and not complacency in health care settings? **Alex Airnes** discusses



Healthcare environments are synonymous

with caution, wellness and safety. So, wherever National Health Service professionals work determinedly to meet the needs of their patients, equally critical are the fire door safety procedures practiced in NHS facilities.

Fire safety management plays a crucial role in all healthcare settings, where protecting staff, visitors and potentially vulnerable patients is a continuous effort. Even with a host of unique operational challenges, hospitals, for example, are often considered to be among the safest public buildings. In fact, a survey conducted by The British Woodworking Federation discovered that 52% of respondents believed hospitals to provide the highest level of fire safety in a building.

Despite these perceptions, NHS data has previously reported a concerning rise in fire incidents across sites around the country. The inherently busy nature of healthcare settings and around-the-clock use of facilities containing vulnerable patients, medical equipment and even flammable materials, presents a complex set of fire safety issues that must be addressed. With that in mind, is there perhaps more work to be done to ensure fire door safety is approached professionally to further mitigate risk?

Health and fire door safety

In the three months ending January 2025, an average of 46,000 people visited major hospital A&E departments each day in England, with a further 27,300 visitors attending minor A&E facilities every day. Fire doors play a vital role in protecting each of those individuals, but when paired with the fast-flowing traffic often found in healthcare facilities, this sustained level of footfall can create relentless environments that are unforgiving on fire doors and their hardware.

LEFT: Fire doors in healthcare settings see a lot of use



“Fire doors can only operate effectively when working in tandem with their hardware components”

ALEX AIRNES

As a critical element of passive fire protection, fire doors are designed to compartmentalise fire and smoke for a specified period of time. Where fire could spread quickly across the interconnected sections of healthcare estates, fire doors will form protective barriers for a minimum of 30 minutes (FD30) or 60 minutes (FD60), allowing occupants to escape and preventing potentially life threatening smoke inhalation in the process. Fire doors can only operate effectively when working in tandem with their hardware components, such as hinges, seals and door closers. Yet, all too often in healthcare settings, fire doors and their hardware become damaged and fall victim to improper maintenance and use, with some self-closing doors even propped open to improve the flow of traffic and ease of access for beds, wheelchairs and medical trolleys. In turn, this leaves closers disengaged and renders doorsets useless in the event of a fire.

Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, healthcare management

teams are given a direct responsibility to ensure employees and patients are safe within their premises. With this, NHS trusts must nominate a 'responsible person', which is often an individual who possesses a legal responsibility to demonstrate effective fire safety procedures, undertake risk assessments and meet fire safety compliance. In demanding healthcare environments, regular fire door inspections are key, and as part of their duties, a designated responsible person must have a firm understanding of fire door checks and maintenance, whilst also raising staff awareness on the importance of fire door safety. For this, ongoing education is key.

Prevent and protect

In order to retain the integrity of a fire door and its components, healthcare estates must consider how accurate specification, professional installation and ongoing maintenance can help to reduce common hazards and the possibility of danger before it surfaces.

Routine fire door checks can save lives and should form the agenda of anyone responsible for fire safety management. They consist of reviewing the specification, installation, condition and certification of:

- The door furniture
- The hinges
- Locks and latches
- Door closers
- Hold open devices
- Signage
- Exit devices
- Door seals
- The gaps around the door (3mm is recommended for fire doors)

When performing a closing action, a fire door calls upon each of these components and as such, not one element can fail in the event of a fire. To meet the necessary standards, the complete fire doorset must pass a series of tests as part of third party certification requirements.

Correct specification is essential to long-term performance too. For high-use areas in large hospitals, for example, electromagnetic hold-open devices are a more appropriate choice and allow fire doors to close once a fire alarm is activated, automatically releasing the door in a safe and controlled manner. In smaller, slower-paced settings, cam-action closers with slide arms can fulfil fire door regulations whilst providing ease of operation and accessibility for vulnerable users who may otherwise struggle with heavy doors.

Regardless of size, layout and the building's needs, all healthcare facilities must look to create a regular maintenance plan for their fire doors and emergency exit routes. This enables spotting any early signs that a fire door is not performing as it should, which can help prevent irreparable damage to the door and its hardware. When a fire door and its hardware is no longer compliant, teams must ensure repairs and replacements are made quickly and to a professional standard. ♦

Alex Airnes is business development manager at Allegion.

An online quiz based on this feature is available on the GAI Learning Hub. Completion of this quiz is worth one CPD point towards Registered Professional status. learninghub.gai.org.uk/totara/dashboard/index.php



Call for reform

In a special report, **Douglas Masterson** presents the GAI response to the Construction Products Reform Green Paper



The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2

Report presented detailed evidence of a construction products regulatory regime that failed to keep residents safe, and which allowed manufacturers to engage in dishonest and manipulative practices with no recourse. The Inquiry further evidenced the persistent, systemic problems within the construction products sector identified in the Hackitt Review and the Morrell-Day Review.

The UK government has now formally responded to Sir Martin Moore-Bick's Phase 2 Report which drew the Grenfell Inquiry to a close. The most relevant detail within the Government response is the publication of the Construction Products Reform Green Paper. This is a hugely detailed document which sets out their proposals for system-wide reform of the construction products sector, the regulatory regime that governs it and the institutions that must fulfil their responsibilities in assuring safe products that can be safely used.

The GAI has submitted its response to the Green Paper. The comments, summarised here by chapter, reflect input from the GAI Technical Committee, direct responses from GAI members, and consultation with other industry bodies such as the Construction Products Association and the Construction Leadership Council. They also reflect participation in UK Government roundtable discussions on this subject.

2 An overview of the problems within the construction products sector and regulatory regime.

- The GAI agrees with the Green Paper's direction of travel that reform is needed within the construction product sector.
- While acknowledging the robustness of the consensus-based standard development process, the GAI recognises that the EU Construction Products Regulation (CPR's) initial focus on removing trade barriers within Europe has led to EN standards that are not always directly related to safety.
- We support extending the scope of harmonised/designated standards but express concern about the resource implications.
- The need for better information on the safe use of products and more robust enforcement is emphasised in our response.
- Examples of good practice within the construction products industry which were highlighted include:
 - Guidance and best practice documents

"The GAI highlights potential conflicts between existing guidance"

DOUGLAS MASTERSON

from Industry Trade Associations (e.g., the "Code of Practice for hardware for fire and escape doors" from GAI and DHF).

- Third-party certification schemes.
- Ongoing audit testing of hardware and fire doors.
- Factory Production Control (FPC) for CE and UKCA marking.
- The Code for Construction Product Information (CCPI).
- Companies providing product traceability solutions.

3 UK Government Vision for Reform

In response to what should be considered within the new construction products regulatory regime, the GAI emphasises the importance of considering existing statutory guidance documents, standards, and best practice guidance from industry stakeholders.

We also highlight potential conflicts between existing guidance documents and stress the need for coherence between accessibility, fire safety, and security considerations as there are currently occasions within statutory guidance documents that one can conflict with the other.

4 Interaction with the UK Internal Market and the European Union

This chapter sets out the relationship between the United Kingdom (UK) construction products regime and the European Union's (EU) regulatory regime,



the UK internal market and the substantive reforms being introduced by the EU.

The Guild responds to the proposals by agreeing that the UK should adopt a definition consistent with the revised EU-CPR to avoid problems arising from differing standards.

We also stress the need for a level playing field for UK Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) and Technical Assessment Bodies (TABs) through a mutual recognition agreement with Europe.

5 Scope and Definitions of Reform

This chapter describes the definitions the UK government proposes adopting to underpin the future regulatory regime.

In our response the GAI supports clarity on accountability for safety, particularly regarding systems. While product standards exist, poor installation of fire doors is a concern. Better regulatory requirements for competence in fire door installation are needed, and third-party certification should be mandatory.

"Better regulatory requirements for competence in fire door installation are needed, and third party certification should be mandatory"

DOUGLAS MASTERSON

6 Product Requirements – A Regulatory Approach Based on Safety Risk

This chapter focuses heavily on how to bring all products within scope of the regulatory regime and how they will be regulated. In response to the specific questions asked within the chapter the Guild responds as follows:

- We point out that the proposed definition of 'economic operator' does not include product specifiers, who have significant influence on product selection, particularly in the door and ironmongery industry. We suggests including designers as defined in the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.
- We agree with the framework for regulating products not covered by designated standards or technical assessments. It emphasises the importance of manufacturers understanding and controlling safety risks. We also note the importance of independent third-party certification schemes.
- We believe that verifying product information is important and welcome measures to ensure this, despite potential slowdowns in supply.
- We acknowledge the usefulness of technical assessments, particularly in cases where harmonised/designated standards are lacking.
- We stress the need to define "products critical to safe construction" and suggest applying risk assessments to products within systems (such as fire doors) and not just products themselves. ►

- We highlight the importance of correct and competent ironmongery specification for safety, security, sustainability, and accessibility. Our response calls for a mandatory change control document for specification changes and emphasises the need for stringent installation requirements, especially for fire doors. We also suggest a register for fire door installers and inspectors.

- We acknowledge that implementing higher standards, including demonstration of competency and third-party certification, could increase costs but would ultimately improve quality and help to avoid a "race to the bottom" in terms of quality of product.

- We agree that minimum requirements for third-party certification are necessary to ensure transparency and compliance.

- We support upfront approval from the national regulator for third-party certification schemes to help enhance their credibility.

- We suggest legislation via the UK Construction Product Regulation or statutory guidance documents to increase the uptake of third-party certification schemes.

- We also emphasise the importance of verified marketing information, such as that provided by the CCPI. This can provide comfort that manufacturers' product information is reliable and trustworthy.

- We have pointed to third-party certification schemes for installation and the ongoing work of the Industry Competence Steering Group (ICSG) as ways to address gaps in installation competence. ICSG Sector Led Group 10 is specifically involved in creation of competence frameworks on installation and maintenance.

- We also recommend that the UK government promotes industry training schemes produced by Trade Associations (such as GAI) also that it should insist on mandatory requirement for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in all disciplines related to fire safety. The promotion of the new BS 8670 2 standard

on construction product competence which is currently being created and is due for publication by Autumn 2025 would also assist in increasing levels of competency across the sector.

7 Clear Accessible Information

This chapter sets out Government's plans in relation to availability of test results, creation of a new construction products library and the way forward for Digital Product Passports, as well as the future of UKCA marking.

The GAI details manufacturers' concerns about publishing test information data, citing the complexity of interpreting reports and the risk of misuse by non-specialists. We also highlight legal issues related to confidentiality and GAI members' concerns about protecting intellectual property. A potential compromise could be a summary of test reports reviewed and approved by an accredited third party.



"A final decision on UKCA marking is needed, given the significant costs already incurred"

DOUGLAS MASTERSON

The Guild expresses concern about the practicality and cost of maintaining a construction library. If implemented, useful information would include product data sheets, manuals, fitting instructions, maintenance information, EPDs, certifications, contact details, and dimensional drawings.

We see the benefits of digital labelling, ensuring product information is available throughout the supply chain. However, concerns exist regarding implementation, cost, and the need for mandatory requirements for all products.

The GAI believes more specific guidance on minimum standards for product information is needed to improve traceability. It argues strongly that a final decision on UKCA marking is needed, given the significant costs already incurred by the ironmongery and door industry. CE marking is seen as a viable option, but a mutual recognition agreement is necessary to allow certification and testing by UK Bodies being equally accepted in the UK and vice versa with their European equivalents. The future of UKNI marking also needs clarification.

GAI supports voluntary product marks to demonstrate higher standards but cautions against further markings that could confuse the market.

8 Assurance and Oversight of Testing and Conformity Assessment

The proposals in this chapter aim to ensure strong accountability across the testing and certification landscape, and sufficient oversight.

The GAI believes that oversight of Conformity Assessment Bodies through the National Construction Product Regulator would be beneficial but calls for clarification on the role of UKAS.

We also support the government's ability to recognise conformity assessment activity undertaken by CABs established outside the UK, provided there is a robust framework to ensure equivalent standards and proper

“The Guild firmly supports a stronger role for the national regulator in enforcing misleading marketing”

DOUGLAS MASTERSON

oversight. We recommend succession planning and that broadening out of skills for UK CABs should be implemented.

The Guild highlights the strengths of the standards development process as used by BSI, CEN and ISO (consensus, public comment, industry expert involvement). We detail the pride we have in our strong representation on standards at national and international level. We also acknowledge weaknesses within the system including time taken due to reliance on volunteers. The GAI also welcomes increased government involvement in BSI committees.

The GAI believes that harmonised/ designated standards should be freely available due to their legal status and suggests government subsidies could be used to help with funding of these.

We acknowledge a gap in the provision of fire testing as well as the provision of test reports as demand continues to be huge.

9 The National Regulator.

The GAI strongly agrees with the proposed functions of a national regulator, emphasising the necessity of a single point of contact for effective reporting, triage, oversight, and enforcement. We highlight the shortcomings of past experiences with Local Authority Trading Standards due to a lack of sector expertise and centralised coordination. The GAI stresses that while Trading Standards and other authorities should provide support, they should not lead the regulatory function. Significant investment in staffing levels,

expertise, and competence within the national regulator is deemed crucial.

The Guild firmly supports a stronger role for the national regulator in enforcing misleading marketing. Visible involvement in such cases will act as a deterrent.

10 Environment and Sustainability

This chapter sets out how the sector can have a role in improving the sustainability and circularity of construction products, supporting sustainable growth without undermining product safety.

The GAI agrees that environmental aspects, as outlined in the revised EU-CPR, should cover products subject to designated standards or technical assessments. They support the use of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) to measure a product's environmental impact across its lifecycle, aligning with the EN standard BS EN 15804 and supplemented by product-specific standards like BS EN 17610 for building hardware.

For products brought into the regulatory regime through a general safety requirement, the principle of market-driven

LCA/EPD should apply. If a manufacturer makes an environmental performance claim, it should be substantiated by an LCA to BS EN 15804. While not advocating for mandatory LCAs/EPDs, the GAI insists that any environmental claims must be evidenced by a preferably EN-standard compliant LCA/EPD.

11 Further Evidence Requirements not featured in the Green Paper

The GAI expresses concern regarding the omission of BS 476 standards from Approved Document B from September 2029. We are concerned that a move solely to EN 1634-1 with its more rigid Extended Application (EXAP) rules without assessment would significantly restrict the scope of hardware and fire doors. The GAI is willing to collaborate with government to find solutions to bridge this potential gap. ♦

An online quiz based on this feature is available on the GAI Learning Hub. Completion of this quiz is worth one CPD point towards Registered Professional status. learninghub.gai.org.uk/totara/dashboard/index.php



Conclusion

GAI acknowledges the need for radical reform and supports the creation of a robust, transparent framework that enforces compliance and ensures products perform as claimed throughout their lifecycle. The Guild argues that the status quo is insufficient, especially regarding safety-critical items like door hardware, which must meet stringent standards not only at the point of sale but also in operation. We urge the government to adopt our recommendations to avoid future tragedies and help to build a credible, transparent regulatory regime that protects building occupants and restores trust in the construction products sector.

GAI TALK

Rachael Bliss

GAI chief executive



One of the biggest challenges facing our industry – and one of our greatest opportunities – is the future of skills.

Attracting and developing the next generation of professionals has never been more important for our industry. We're seeing the landscape change – more digital, more sustainable, more integrated – and we need to make sure our workforce is ready to meet that challenge head-on. That means not only investing in skills, but also in the people, systems, and leadership that will carry us forward.

That's why I'm delighted to welcome our new GAI President, Steve Bewick, whose background and leadership will bring fresh perspective to the Guild at a critical moment. His commitment to lifelong learning and professional development mirrors our own as we continue to grow and modernise.

I want to thank Kaz Spiewakowski for his outstanding service as GAI President. His energy, insight, and steady leadership over the past two years have laid strong foundations — setting us up for success as we move into this next phase.

You'll also start to see more of our new membership team, Kiren Gill and David Dealtry, who are here to help make your experience of GAI membership more personal, more accessible, and more valuable. Whether you've been with us for years or have recently joined, we want every member to feel supported, engaged, and heard.

I'd love to see as many of you as possible at our upcoming AGM and Summer Party. It's a brilliant opportunity to connect with fellow members, share ideas, and celebrate the progress we're making together.

The future of our industry will be built by those we empower today. Let's keep doing that — together.

GAI Community...



Architectural Ironmongery Specification Awards open for nominations

The GAI and Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) have launched the AI Specification Awards 2026, a search for the world's best architectural ironmongery projects and products.

Architects, specifiers, building contractors, clients and their architectural ironmongery partners are being urged to submit entries for the biennial awards – designed to identify and reward excellence in the specification of architectural ironmongery in the construction industry, and the design and innovation of new products.

Announcing the launch, GAI President Kaz Spiewakowski said: "The AI Specification Awards continue to hold a unique and prestigious position in our industry because they recognise and celebrate every dimension of excellence in architectural ironmongery.

"When evaluating the effectiveness of a project's architectural ironmongery specification, our judges examine not only its contribution to aesthetics, functionality and durability, but also how it enhances building security, accessibility and safety through innovative solutions.

"The winners truly exemplify the pinnacle of what architectural ironmongery can achieve, making these awards a fitting celebration of the craftsmanship, innovation and ingenuity driving our industry forward."

The AI Specification Awards, sponsored by ASSA Abloy, comprise 10 categories:

- Commercial and Retail
- Public, Health and Education
- Hospitality
- Residential
- International

- Small Projects
- Sustainability
- Product Design and Innovation – Mechanical
- Product Design and Innovation – Electronic
- Winner of Winners (chosen by the judges from the six project categories).

There are two new categories for 2026. While sustainability continues to be a judging criterion in all categories, the increasing importance of this issue to the architectural ironmongery and wider construction industry is reflected in the inclusion of a new Sustainability category for projects which show exceptional attention and contribution to environmental standards and best practice.

The new Small Projects category celebrates ironmongery specifications which reflect the professional skill of the ironmonger where the hardware budget is limited to £25,000 or less.

Introducing the new categories, GAI chief executive Rachael Bliss said: "The addition of these two new categories for 2026 reflects our evolving industry priorities and recognition of excellence in all its forms. Both categories expand our definition of

"The addition of two new categories reflects our evolving industry priorities"

RACHAEL BLISS

excellence beyond prestigious or premium projects, highlighting that true innovation and craftsmanship can be found at every scale and budget level across our industry."

To be eligible for these awards, projects and products must have been either completed or released on to the market between 1 October 2023 and 30 September 2025. Nominations can be made by GAI members, RIBA members, or for any project in which a GAI Registered Professional was involved. Nominations open on 16 June and close on 31 October 2025.

Shortlisted projects will be visited and scrutinised by experienced assessors, with judges looking at the scope of works, the suitability of the architectural ironmongery

and its fitness for purpose, its compliance with relevant regulations and standards, and its aesthetic excellence. The winners will be announced at a prestigious awards ceremony in London in May 2026.

The judging panel consists of architects, designers, specifiers and manufacturers as follows: Dr Vanessa Brady OBE (The Society of British & International Interior Design); Donna Davison (Hoppe UK); Tim Dies (Opitome); Robert Fry (Aukett Swanke); Jonathan Hall (Allford Hall Monaghan Morris); Eryl Jones (ASSA Abloy); and Jo Milne Rowe (Codelocks).

Rachael Bliss added: "These awards highlight the critical importance of synergy between designers, specifiers and architectural ironmongers. Such collaborative partnerships are increasingly important as we navigate the complex integration of traditional craftsmanship with emerging technologies and sustainability."

For more information, and to enter the AI Specification Awards 2026, visit www.gai.org.uk/specificationawards

LEFT: The Old War Office, winner of winners in 2024. **OPPOSITE:** Winners collecting the award



Book now for GAI Education Awards 2025

The GAI Education Awards return to the elegant Grand Connaught Rooms in Covent Garden, London for the 2025 event on Thursday 20 November. This prestigious annual event honours outstanding students and rising stars from across our industry, offering a unique opportunity for celebration, inspiration and networking.

Booking is now open, so be sure to secure your ticket early as spaces are limited.

www.gai.org.uk/educationawards

The heart of the matter:

Meeting the new GAI membership team



ABOVE: David Dealtry and Kiren Gill

AIJ talks to Kiren Gill and David Dealtry about building stronger connections, delivering greater value, and putting members first.

With the membership function playing a central role in the Guild's future strategy, the GAI has made significant investment in systems, services, and people. That investment includes the creation of a new dedicated membership team comprising membership executive David Dealtry and membership relationship manager Kiren Gill.

To find out more about the team's priorities, AIJ caught up with Kiren and David.

AIJ: Kiren, welcome to the Guild.

Can you start by telling us a little about your new role?

Kiren Gill: Thank you. I've joined the GAI to lead on member engagement – supporting existing members, welcoming new ones, and

ensuring that every member gets the most from their relationship with the Guild. This means opening up conversations, listening to individual needs, and helping members access the services and benefits that are most relevant to them.

It's also about building for the future. That includes reaching out to new companies and professionals who could benefit from joining the Guild, and encouraging more active participation from across the membership.

David, how does your role as membership executive complement that?

David Dealtry: My focus is on the operational and service delivery side – ensuring that members receive timely, accurate and helpful responses across all the practical aspects of their membership. Together, Kiren and I are building a fully rounded membership function: one that supports

individual and company members across all points of contact – strategically and operationally, personally and professionally.

Both of you bring strong backgrounds in membership organisations. Can you tell us more about that?

Kiren: I've worked with several professional membership bodies including the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), Federation of Master Builders (FMB), and the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH). Across these roles, I've helped shape membership propositions, deliver training programmes, run events, and – most importantly – stay in close conversation with members to make sure their voice drives the organisation.

David: I've worked in member-focused roles for many years, always with an emphasis on good service, clear communication and continuous improvement. Whether we're supporting large international organisations or small and medium sized companies, it's about creating real and lasting value for members – and that's what I'm excited to help deliver at the GAI.

What are some of the sector-specific challenges you see that GAI members may face today?

Kiren: Like many sectors, architectural ironmongery faces challenges around

"This means opening up conversations, listening and helping members access benefits."

KIREN GILL

"It's about creating clear and lasting value for members. That's what I'm excited to deliver"

DAVID DEALTRY

regulation, skills shortages, sustainability, and now the rapid rise of AI. We know members are navigating a complex and changing landscape. The Guild has a key role to play in supporting their professional development and helping them stay ahead of these pressures.

Based on your experience, what are the core principles for membership success?

Kiren: I'd highlight five key principles:

- A member-centric value proposition – understanding what members need and shaping services to deliver real, practical benefits.
- Engagement through personalisation – tailoring support and communications so members feel heard and involved.
- Clear growth pathways – offering opportunities for professional development, leadership, and contribution at every stage.
- A strong sense of community – building relationships between members and fostering a shared identity.
- Transparent communication – keeping members informed and engaged in the Guild's direction and progress.

If we do those five things consistently and well, we'll deliver a membership experience that is current, compelling and collaborative.

What differences will members start to see over the coming months?

Kiren: A renewed focus on listening, on relationships, and on making sure members feel supported and valued. You can expect

more two-way communication, new opportunities to engage, and a clearer sense of how to get the most from your membership.

There will also be work on refining the membership offer – looking at the services available and how we can align them more closely to your day-to-day professional needs. I'll be actively reaching out, but members can also book time with me directly – I'd love to hear what's working, what could improve, and what new ideas you have.

What can members do to play an active role in shaping this work?

Kiren: Get involved! This is your membership body, and your insight is vital. We'll be creating more opportunities to share feedback – but informal conversations are just as valuable. If you have thoughts on how we could enhance the value of membership or ideas about what you'd like to see next, please let us know.

David: Even a five-minute chat can provide insight that helps us evolve. And of course, if you need any help with practical membership matters, I'm always here to assist.

What's your ambition for the future of GAI membership?

Kiren: I want to see growth, yes – but also a deeper, more engaged relationship with every member. The Guild should be a genuine professional home: relevant, responsive and rewarding. That's the culture we want to build.

David: It's about making membership not just a credential, but a partnership. When that happens, everyone benefits – the members, the Guild, and the wider industry we all serve.

To contact Kiren or David, or to book an introductory call, visit www.gai.org.uk or email membership@gai.org.uk.



GAI promises new pathways in 2025/26 education year

The GAI has announced improvements to course options and the student learning experience, which will be introduced for the 2025/26 education year.

In a significant development of its educational offering, the GAI is broadening its course catalogue beyond traditional hardware-related subjects. New topics will include health and safety, accident investigation, risk assessment, data protection, coaching, project management, and negotiation techniques.

Students will also benefit from clearer learning paths, designed to help them easily identify progression routes after completing their current qualifications.

All courses will be accessible through a refreshed Learning Management System (LMS), featuring an updated interface designed to make navigation more intuitive and course access smoother.

GAI learning manager Cathal Olaoighre said: "This year marks an important period of development and growth for the Guild's education programme.

"We've listened to feedback from our members and students, considered best practice from across the construction and comparable industries, and introduced improvements that will benefit every single GAI learner."

Enrolment will open for the full suite of GAI qualifications on 1 September. Further details of the new topics and updated processes will be published over the summer at www.gai.org.uk/LEARNING.

Steve Bewick begins GAI presidency



Steve Bewick, chief commercial officer for Dormakaba moves into the GAI presidency role in July. He talked to AIJ about his vision for the next two years..

What are your ambitions as President?

I want to ensure we work on ensuring our value proposition is very clear, working alongside our chief executive. There is real value in the training we offer and the insight we have into standards and the application of those standards and we have to make sure this message is heard clearly. I would also like us to focus on diversity in our industry and ensuring we are relevant and accessible to all. Finally I am fortunate to have a global role in dormakaba and the GAI is held in very high regard around the world, especially our training offering, and I think there is opportunity to add internationally to our membership.

What do you see as the biggest challenges and opportunities currently for GAI members and for the ironmongery sector.

I believe that we are on the cusp of

significant changes in our industry driven by digitalisation and also by the increasing use of artificial intelligence.

My desire is we as the GAI keep entirely relevant in this transformation process by ensuring our offering suits the market trends. But also I see this as an opportunity to appeal to a broader audience when it comes to our training offering and

subsequently a growing membership.

We have to make sure our value proposition is clear to all interested parties and stakeholders, both in the specification of our offering and maintaining the standards alongside that offering.

What is your favourite building? And favourite piece of door hardware?

Ok I'll pick two – one modern and one a little older. The Natural History Museum in London has fascinated me since a child due to the exhibits but more so its architecture. On a more modern note the Marina Bay Sands hotel in Singapore stands out for me; a real iconic building and one I've had the pleasure of visiting in a professional context. My favourite piece of door hardware has to be a door closer – I couldn't give any other answer.

How do you spend your spare time?

In my spare time I enjoy travel, especially Africa, and after two knee replacements my martial arts days are behind me so its cycling and gym to keep fit. I also have a small dog that keeps me active in the outdoors.

A summer AGM and celebration

Members of the GAI will gather high above the London skyline on 15 July for a special day of celebration, connection and recognition.

Taking place at the striking 30 St Mary Axe – better known as 'The Gherkin' – the event will combine the Guild's Annual General Meeting with a summer party.

As well as conducting the essential business of the AGM, the event will mark the official start of Steve Bewick's term as GAI President with a handover ceremony.

There will also be a presentation of the GAI Fellow Award, the Guild's highest individual accolade.

Following the formalities, guests will enjoy an exclusive summer party at this iconic City of London venue – a chance to celebrate the achievements of the Guild and the valued members and volunteers whose enthusiasm and expertise help drive the organisation forward.

For more details about the day and how to book your place, members should visit www.gai.org.uk/AGM2025.



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Stealing the exit

A fire door worth half a billion pounds gets stolen.

"The Sad Girl/La Jeune Fille Triste" was

a stencil by famous British street artist Banksy. It was painted on the exit door of the Bataclan Theatre in Paris, the door through which many concertgoers escaped the massacre by terrorists in 2015 when 90 people were killed and 413 were injured.

The artwork is estimated to be worth nearly £500m, making it the most expensive fire door in the world. The mural was spray-painted on the door in 2018. In January 2019 the door was stolen by three masked men, but police tracked down the door in June 2020 in an attic on a farm in Italy. Eight men were convicted. It was such a story it was made into a documentary in Italy entitled *Banksy and the Stolen Girl*, a film which explored what happens when someone steals a piece of art that has no owner, but belongs to everyone. The mural had been created for the people, existing in a public space as a form of shared expression. Stealing it for personal gain strips it of its meaning and distorts its purpose.

And this is why the door is so valuable. Firstly, it's a 'Banksy'; as one of the most enigmatic and celebrated street artists, Banksy's works are highly sought after. His anonymity and the rarity of his pieces contribute to their immense value.

The mural had been created for the people. Stealing it for personal gain strips it of its meaning and purpose



GUALDING

Secondly, it has significance; the mural, featuring a veiled woman, is a poignant tribute to the victims of the 2015 terrorist attack at the venue. The Bataclan fire door is more than just a piece of art; it symbolises remembrance and resilience.

Whether you're an art enthusiast, a safety professional, or simply someone who appreciates the intersection of art

and culture, this story is a compelling reminder of the value found in unexpected places.

The story had a happy ending. Once the door was recovered the City of Paris and the owners of the Bataclan building were involved in a legal dispute about ownership but a judge ruled that it be returned to the owners of the building. ♦



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