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Building a Safer Future Charter launches with first companies on way to becoming ‘Charter Champions’

The [Building a Safer Future \(BSF\) Charter](#) has launched its ‘Charter Champion’ company initiative to help companies drive the systemic culture change required to put building safety first.

Through robust self-assessment, benchmarking and independent verification, the BSF Charter Champion company initiative will help companies identify potential issues and, in turn, develop continuous improvement plans to advance their overall approach and performance on leadership and culture in relation to building safety. Through their participation in this process companies will be able to identify ways in which they can help to reduce their risk profile in terms of building safety.

The first 12 companies, who are demonstrating real sectoral leadership, have signed up to begin the journey and engage in the robust benchmarking and independent assessment process. The organisations include BAM, Galliford Try, Kier, Mace, mhs homes, Persimmon Homes, Places for People, Salix Homes, United Living, Vistry Group, Wates and Willmott Dixon.

Dame Judith Hackitt’s independent inquiry into building regulations and fire safety clearly identified failure of leadership and culture as key underlying causes of the Grenfell Tower disaster. The ‘Building a Safer Future Charter’ was initiated in response by a group of early adopters including contractors, housing associations and local authorities supported by MHCLG with a vision of having an industry committed to putting people’s safety first.

The BSF Charter has been highlighted by Dame Judith Hackitt and the Industry Safety Steering Group (ISSG) as a key mechanism for leading the culture change required for industry in their report for the Secretary of State and the Minister for Building Safety published in August 2020.

The BSF Charter benchmarking and verification process is now open for participation from across the construction industry. All UK organisations involved in the built environment can proactively participate and demonstrate their commitment to building safety by becoming Registered Signatories to the Charter and, if appropriate, progress to undertaking the ‘Charter Champion’ benchmarking process. This is particularly the case for Duty Holders.

Lord Greenhalgh, Minister for Building Safety said:

“We are taking firm action to ensure that we never repeat the mistakes of the past, with this charter representing a major step forwards in delivering much-needed culture change in the built environment industry.

“I warmly welcome its introduction and commend the twelve organisations already signed up to become ‘Charter Champions’.

“I would strongly encourage more to get involved, especially those who will be playing a key role in the future building safety regulatory regime.”

Peter Baker, Chief Inspector of Buildings at the Health and Safety Executive, said:

“Self-assessment, benchmarking and independent verification are important elements of a robust system to enable businesses to properly lead, manage and control major building safety risks.

“Businesses across the industry need to start preparing now for the new building safety regime. The ‘Charter Champions’ scheme is a valuable contribution to driving the necessary change in culture and performance across the sector to ensure that residents are safe, and feel safe, in their homes.”

Dame Judith Hackitt DBE, Author, Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety said:

“I am delighted to see the formal launch of the Champions of the Building a Safer Future Charter. My congratulations go to Amanda Long and her team for the way in which they have built upon approaches which have been tried, tested and proved effective in other sectors to create the Charter initiative.

“I have consistently called for the built environment sector to recognise the need for culture change which can only happen when leaders in the sector stand up and are prepared to demonstrate what good looks like and to be held to account for delivery. I look forward to watching the Charter Champions group grow as others see the benefits of becoming part of this important programme which offers a real market differentiation opportunity.”

Andy Mitchell CBE, Co-Chair of the Construction Leadership Council said:

“The Construction Leadership Council welcomes the launch of the Building a Safer Future Charter and its Charter Champions initiative. This is an important step towards an industry that is committed to putting building safety first.

“The promotion of cultural change and leadership in the sector is vital and those that wish to demonstrate real sectoral leadership in relation to building safety should be engaged with the Building a Safer Future Charter.”

Stephen Elliott, Chair, Building a Safer Future Charter said:

“The BSF Charter provides a robust, independent verification process which will drive continuous improvement in leadership and culture in relation to building safety across the industry.

“We have taken learning and insights from tried and tested approaches and responses to major accident hazard safety in other sectors such as aviation and chemicals - both

nationally and internationally - and contextualised these for the UK built environment sector.”

Amanda Long, Chief Executive, Building a Safer Future Charter said:

“In the built environment sector, the Grenfell Tower Disaster has put building safety at the top of everyone’s agenda. From a moral, social and economic perspective it’s now imperative that we embed enduring values, attitudes and ethical behaviours at the heart of all we do.

The launch of the Building a Safer Future Charter’s ‘Charter Champion’ status is an important step in driving forwards the systemic culture change in relation to major hazard safety that is required across the built-environment sector and through the entire value chain. As we progress on this critical journey we should be seeking to raise standards and build public trust.

I am delighted to welcome the first 12 companies on their journey to becoming a Charter Champion.”

The Building a Safer Future Charter is referenced in the publication “A Reformed Building Safety Regulatory System: Government response to the ‘Building a Safer Future’ consultation” published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government in April 2020. The publication states that “the Government encourages duty-holders to be signatories and commit to the Building [a Safer Future] Charter” as part of a more rigorous approach to accountability.

For more information about the Building a Safer Future Charter and how to get involved, visit <https://buildingasaferfuture.org.uk/charter-champions-benchmarking-about/>.

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Notes to editors

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About the Building a Safer Future Charter

The Building a Safer Future Charter has been created to promote an urgent and positive culture and behaviour change in the safety of the built environment. There is an urgent need to put people’s safety first in how we plan for, design, build, maintain, and look after the safety of the buildings we live, work or play in and protect those that use them.

The Building a Safer Future Charter consists of [five commitments](#) that demonstrate commitment to protecting life by putting safety first, ahead of all other building priorities.

It was initiated by the Early Adopters Group as a first step towards spearheading the cultural and behavioural changes required across the industry to achieve a safer building system and has already gained over 150 registered signatories from across the built environment.

The [Considerate Constructors Scheme](#) (CCS) were appointed as the Charter's Administrative Partner by the Early Adopters. The CCS has established Building a Safer Future Ltd, a not-for-profit company with its own independent Chair and Board. Building a Safer Future Ltd develops and manages the Building a Safer Future Charter.

For further information, please visit www.buildingasaferfuture.org.uk

Twitter: [@BSFCharter](#)

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