

University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD)

Health and Safety and Welfare

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Introduction

The prioritisation of health and safety placed upon the workers and nearby bystanders needed on construction jobs is vital to the completion of the project without legal issues. From 2019 to 2020, 40 deaths were involved in the construction industry, which is increasingly becoming more than agricultural and manufacturing (HSE 2020).

The UK law has a strong framework to keep safety on construction sites the top priority to help reduce accidents and delays (CITB 2018). Through promoting a safety culture and keeping in line with these rules and regulations, it is possible to lower or even avoid injuries and expensive disruptions during the period of a construction project.

Recently high-rise public buildings have come under reform in the UK buildings safety laws which were introduced after the Grenfell Tower fire incident in June 2017 that took 72 lives, exposing failures with building safety regulations. Due to this, the need to comply with the Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015 and the Building Safety Act 2022 is paramount.

Throughout this essay, I will look at the Kings Road development at Swansea's waterfront which includes the construction of 104 cost-friendly flats going up to six stories high (WalesOnline 2024). The design of these apartments is meant to be affordable, managed by the Coastal Housing Group and to be rented below normal market prices for people looking for somewhere to live (WalesOnline 2024).

Building Safety Act 2022 for the Kings Road Project

The Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA) shows a substantial change to the building regulations in decades (Hughes and Ferrett 2020). As it was first introduced to remedy for the failings of past buildings, it is relevant to our Kings Road project as it is classified as a high-risk building.

Adhering to the BSA this ensures that safety is a key feature managed through the phases of the project from initial design stages all the way to the building and occupancy stage. This is done through employing trained personnel, mechanisms and responsibilities

Duty Holders and Their Responsibilities

The Building Safety Act 2022 has made it clear that people known as the duty holders are responsible in the eyes of the law for the safety of everyone during a construction project. These can include, daily, people like the site manager, etc. The role of one of these duty holders is like that of the CDM 2015 regulations to clarify any confusion. The client and developer of the project oversees making sure the work is planned and run safely from the start and that only capable and trained people are employed for the project (Hughes and Ferret 2020)

The main designer and contractor work together to mitigate any risks or problems that may arise, ensuring the finished building meets all the legal requirements, keeping a detailed report of how safety was prioritised and managed.

Building Safety Regulator (BSR)

The Building Safety Act created a building safety regulator, it is ran by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and oversees tall and residential buildings, approving of key safety documentation, and can enforce compliance, such as issuing stop notices and carrying out safety inspections (HSE 2023). For the Kings Road project, this means regularly communicating with the appointed BSR and demonstrating and safety compliance throughout the project.

Golden Thread of Information

A main section of the Building Safety Act 2022 is the requirement for a golden thread of information. This is essentially a digital record of up to date, essential information and safety details about the building throughout its creation to its end. This usually includes information from its design and construction phase through to its maintenance. The golden thread must be up to date, accurate, and accessible for everyone to ensure that everyone involved, such as designers and contractors, or owners, has the correct information at their disposal to keep the building and those employed safe (DLUHC 2023). This information thread should include data such as materials used and any information on its design, modifications and inspection results. For the project of Kings Road, this means using tools such as Building Information Modelling (BIM) to keep track of safety-related decisions and updates, which are then given to the building owner once construction is finished.

Gateway Process.

The Building Safety Act brings a three-stage process to improve regulatory checks:

Stage 1 (Planning).

This includes submitting a fire safety statement with planning permission.

Stage 2 (Pre-construction).

Requires approval of building control documents by the BSR before construction can begin.

Stage 3 (Completion).

A safety case file must be submitted and approved before the flats can be occupied (DLUHC, 2023).

Non-Compliance Issues

If, for any reason, these requirements are not met, it can cause long delays and legal action. Stop notices and criminal charges can be given out (HSE 2023). Even more important, however, it puts human life at risk. To prevent this, the following of this act is crucial to protect the construction, the building, and human life. It also shows the importance of environmental responsibilities, such as the protection of local biodiversity and ecosystems during construction. To lower this, the following of this act is crucial to protect the construction, the building, and life.

Key Health and Safety Legislation and How to Overcome Barriers

If you look at any construction project, the health and safety laws are a fundamental part of the development. Regarding the Swansea flats, many key pieces of legislation are needed to ensure the safety of the workers in the construction industry.

Firstly, The legislation is the Health and Safety at work act 1974 (HSWA) which describes the required ask for employers to protect their workers (HSE 2020). It makes sure safety systems in work are in place and require the employers to have suitable training of their workers and for it to be safe. This will apply to the Swansea site.

Secondly, the second legislation is the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 needs any risk assessments or emergency drills in place and ready (CITB 2018). Site risks like being near a busy road or higher wind levels must be looked at and managed appropriately.

The third legislation is the Working at Height Regulations 2005 and is vitally important regarding the Swansea project. Building a multi-story flat like the King's Road project requires working at height and (consideration of) risks falling from a great height; the leading cause of death in the construction industry (HSE 2020). Risks can be mitigated using guard rails, fall arrest systems, and regular training, use of visual aids can remind them of hazards.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 are very important for ensuring safety. Workers on this site will be exposed to materials such as adhesives, dust, and solvents. These substances must be stored properly, labelled correctly, and used with appropriate PPE and ventilation (CITB, 2018).

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) mandate that tools and machinery used on-site are safe, maintained, and operated by trained personnel. This includes equipment ranging from cranes to cement mixers.

Overcoming Barriers to Compliance

While having laws in place, some problems can prevent us from creating a safe working environment. Such as-

No training – Some workers may forget or not understand the risks they may be subject to and the legal duties they may have, especially new or subcontracted workers.

Bad (Poor) communication- Instructions given may not be communicated properly or in a way that is easily understood or not emphasized as being vitally important.

Resistance to change- Workers may ignore rules they don't agree with, typically the older workers.

Financial considerations- Safety is seen as expensive and an additional cost, impacting especially on smaller businesses. If it is ignored or overlooked it may cost more in legal fees later when/if something occurs (CITB 2018).

How to address these problems?

Making safety an integral part of daily work can reduce risks and make Kings Road safer for everyone. Examples of practical ways this can be done include-

By training new employees well, using signs /diagrams to aid communication considering some workers may have communication needs.

Completing daily safety briefings and using digital systems (IHS, 2020) to keep track of incidents and training.

Promoting safety by rewarding safe behaviour and encouraging near-miss reporting is a good way to keep these problems in line.

Address mental health and fatigue by adding wellness checks, rest breaks, and staff welfare facilities to accommodate their behaviour regarding health and safety, using simple measures like offering food, drinks, or a warm, rest spaces can go a long way.

CDM Regulations and Responsibilities.

The Construction Design and Management regulations 2015 (CDM) goal is to better health and safety for developments this will apply to the Kings Road development throughout the project and to everyone who works on the project.

Applying CDM, the duty holders include the client, principal designer, principal contractor, designers, and contractors.

The client, being UWTSD Construction, needs to make sure that suitable management is in place employing a competent and skilled individual for each key role of safety. They will also need to consider that time and resources are a priority for the project run smoothly (HSE 2020).

A principal designer also has responsibility for managing and the health and safety during the design phase. For the Kings Road project, considerations should be given to the risks of height, fire safety, and whether it's a safe work environment.

A principal contractor manages health and safety throughout the construction timeline. Their job is to coordinate work, keep ahead on training, and make sure regulations are complied with.

Contractors and subcontractors hired by the client must work together with the principal contractor to follow site rules and report issues.

All workers must be properly trained and use the correct PPE. They have a responsibility to report unsafe conditions to the employer and hse if needed and attend training when required.

One of the most important CDM requirements is the creation of a Construction Phase Plan before work begins. This document shows how health and safety will be managed and must be kept up to date throughout the project.

The CDM regulations promote collaborative working with clear communication. For Kings Road, clear planning and coordination through CDM will be important to meet deadlines, reducing the risks of accidents, protecting workers and residents.

Case Study: Didcot Power Station Collapse (2016)

Like the Grenfell tragedy, the Didcot Power Station collapse in 2016 had influenced building safety altogether. Four workers died when a boiler house fell during demolition because of bad structure and ignored warning signs. The HSE and CITB saw failures in risk management, communication, and procedures. This tragedy shows the risks of unclear roles under CDM Regulations.

For Kings Road, it shows the need for proper planning and collaboration, in regards to higher risk tasks. Under the Building Safety Act, early identification and clear management of structural risks are vital to stop these incidents.

Conclusion

New regulations such as the Building Safety Act 2022 have caused debate in clients and property owners. Where some argue that further rules slow down construction and heighten costs. Whilst others argue that these measures are needed, and these standards may lower the availability of affordable housing. The choosing of a balance between safety and efficiency with prioritising affordability is a challenge in this construction industry.

In summary, the King's Road project needs to meet health and safety standards due to its high-rise nature. Laws like the Building Safety Act 2022 and CDM 2015 ensure clear roles, strong

oversight, and safe practices from project design to finish. Key factors such as the golden thread, gateway process, and Building Safety Regulator improve the accountability and risk management. The project should prioritise communication and training to promote a safety environment. Learning from past tragedies such as Grenfell and Didcot, Kings Road can become a safe, affordable housing development to protect workers, residents, and public through effective planning and legal compliance.

Appendix.

Risk Assessment

Hazard	Risk	Control Measures	Chance of occurring	Severity	Responsible Person	Review Duration
Falls from height	Severe injury or fatality	Addition of guardrails, using safety harnesses, Do regular scaffold inspections	Medium	High	Site Supervisor	Weekly
Falling objects	Head injuries to workers below	Hard hats, install toe boards, create exclusion zones under activity areas	Medium	Medium	Site Foreman	Daily
Untrained Ladder Use	Slips and falls	Provide proper ladder training, ensure anti-slip bases, regular ladder inspections	Low	High	H&S Officer	Monthly
Weather Conditions	Increased fall risk	Monitor weather forecasts, atop any work in high winds or heavy rain, secure equipment	Medium	High	Site Manager	As required

Glossary of Terms

CDM Regulations- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 – UK legislation assigning duties to parties in a construction project.

BSA – Building Safety act 2022

BSR - Building Safety Regulator

PPE- Personal Protective Equipment – helmets, gloves, masks etc. worn to protect against health risks.

COSHH- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health – legislation requiring safe handling of harmful materials.

HSWA- Health and Safety at Work Act, UK law covering workplace safety.

EMP- Environmental Management Plan, document outlining environmental safety controls.

PUWER-Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations.

RIDDOR- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations – law on reporting workplace incidents.

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