

Building Safety Act

Richard Hall, managing director of Reynaers Aluminium, looks at the challenges, trends and changes expected for the fenestration industry in 2025

While there is no doubt the past couple of years have been tough for the construction industry, growth is being tentatively forecast across trade and retail and commercial sectors for 2025.

With the latest Glenigan Report predicting an average of 8% rise in project starts, this could see confidence return and, in turn, renewed investment in commercial and residential markets. This would be welcome news.

However, caution remains with mixed messages around exactly what the economic outlook might be. Homeowners are still feeling the effects of the cost-of-living crisis and the Construction Products Association has predicted growth will be slower than initially anticipated.

A complex landscape remains in terms of navigating new and updated legislation with the introduction of the Building Safety Act, and question marks remaining over Part L, F and O of the Building Regulations, which has been exacerbated by general political uncertainty.

Furthermore, project starts have been impacted by delays at the new gateway 2. There are new protocols and procedures to follow with various reasons why projects aren't swiftly making their way through.

[Gateway 2 is the building control approval application stage for a higher risk building. It occurs prior to construction work beginning on site and requires a rigorous inspection of building regulations at each stage of the design and construction process.]

Despite the economic challenges the industry has faced, this is a time when companies that have continued to invest in systems and products to help to meet the need for best practice in safety, performance and sustainability will be well placed to move forwards.



Richard Hall

In addition, the need to demonstrate – and action – a commitment to sustainability to support the global pledge to meet Net Zero will need a rigorous approach, with a magnifying glass being put against ESG policies to ensure this is supported throughout the supply chain as contractors look to document their own environmental credentials.

Demonstrating the ability to support the golden thread and to meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act will be non-negotiable in the coming years, and this move to put building safety front and centre is to be embraced.

While short term delays, and a residual level of confusion of how this will work in practice currently remain, comprehensive performance testing, expert technical support and accessible data will be vital to supporting the industry through the changes.

Reynaers Aluminium has invested heavily in the past few years into creating tailor-made systems that deliver up-to-date sustainability and performance data that moves with the

product to provide lifetime access, with product passports now accessible via Reynaers' bespoke DigiTrace system. These cover the materials used, end of life/recycling information, performance data, and installation requirements – along with the capacity to demonstrate competent installation by uploading images to support the golden thread.

As a manufacturer, Reynaers believes it is the company's role to support its stakeholders in being best placed to meet legislative requirements – and to provide the reassurances installers, fabricators and the wider construction industry need when working with systems.

Changes to Part L have long been mooted for 2025, however, with the year already underway there is no clear outline as to what changes the industry can expect to see to support changes to lower carbon emissions in the built environment. While a consultation has taken place into the Future Homes Standard, the industry still awaits the response – with the change of Government possibly being a catalyst for further change. □