

# Home/work improvements



Modern workplaces no longer fit neatly into four walls. Hybrid schedules, remote setups and co-working spaces are here to stay, and traditional risk management frameworks must catch up writes Lisa Sharman, (pictured right) national head of education and commercial training at St John Ambulance

**M**ental health risks, like isolation, anxiety and stress, are rising. Physical injuries can go unreported. And often, first aid provision, both mental and physical, is ill-equipped for a workforce that might be everywhere at once.

Added to this, a lack of direct supervision by managers or assessment by health and safety professionals can result in less controlled working environments, less accessible support and slower emergency responses. And when trained first aiders work remotely, the workplace may be left exposed unless regular reviews and detailed planning ensure adequate cover.

In this new reality, workplace safety cannot remain static; it must evolve with the people it aims to protect.

### Evolution of the workplace

The workplace as we knew it has fundamentally changed. Where once fixed locations were the norm, with predictable risks and clear boundaries, today's reality is far more fluid. According to the Office of National Statistics, around 28% of employees now work from home at least some of the time, with 13% fully remote – a dramatic shift from before the pandemic.

This transformation has blurred the lines between work and home, raising complex questions about employer responsibilities and creating a new employee wellbeing dynamic.

### Clarifying

For distributed teams, it is often unclear who the first aiders are or who is responsible for leading in a first aid emergency. Transient workspaces mean unfamiliar environments and colleagues who may not be aware of each other's needs or capabilities – or who might have a life-threatening allergy, for example. However, it is important to realise that organisations still have the same legal duty of care in these remote and hybrid environments as they do in traditional setups – particularly when it comes to mental wellbeing.

The impact of this workplace evolution is borne out in the data. CIPD research from 2022 found that 44% of HR professionals report increased mental health and stress issues among remote staff. And 2025 figures from St John Ambulance show that anxiety (40%), depression (30%) and burnout (23%) are the top three wellbeing issues affecting the UK workforce. It is also widely believed that while the Health and Safety Executive reports 680,000 non-fatal injuries at work in Great Britain in 2024/25, a large number of work-related accidents among remote workers go unreported.

### Limitations of traditional frameworks

If we continue to try and fit our traditional first aid models to this new working reality, we risk leaving employees vulnerable. It's much easier to have clear chains of communication and responsibilities laid out when your staff presence and risks are more predictable. First aid kits and equipment are more likely to be easily accessible and locations known by consistent teams working in the same place.

But with a more fluid workforce, shift working and people based across multiple locations, organisations are being caught out. First aiders aren't always where they're expected to be; more first aiders might be needed to provide enough cover; and skills risk becoming outdated without keeping on top of refresher training.



**Lisa Sharman**

Almost a third of employees have experienced times when no one in their workplace was first aid trained, St John Ambulance data shows. And despite 90% of people believing trained mental health first aiders will reduce staff absenteeism and 85% believing they will cut staff turnover, the reality is many workplaces are still failing to give equal priority to mental and physical health.

### The confidence and skills to act

This shortfall – and the important difference first aiders can make – was thrown into focus recently. When first aider Roy Peach was on his day off, one retail store was left short of trained first aiders.

“I was on a day off but had cause to drop in briefly. I'd been in the shop no more than 10 minutes when a colleague had a seizure,” he says.

Peach coordinated a team to help manage the situation and keep the casualty safe, then gave the paramedics a clear handover when they arrived. “I was told by colleagues I had been so calm, and they wondered how. First aid training can't prepare you for every scenario, but what it can do, though, is place you in a better position of support and ability to think clearer.”

These kinds of scenarios could happen anywhere, and if it were not for Peach's confident actions, the outcome may have been quite different. “I always update my training. You never know when you can help someone. I'm glad to have refreshed mine a couple of months prior to this incident. I feel it made a huge difference to how I handled it,” he says.

### First aid for today's workplace

Legacy processes, often static and rooted in traditional work models, no longer suffice.

The future of workplace safety lies in adaptable, trained, confident people, rather than in fixed protocols. Organisations that embrace this shift will build resilience, ensure employee wellbeing and protect staff beyond the office walls so make sure your training is fit for purpose. ▣

<https://www.sja.org.uk/the-missing-tl>

# Security and colours

DoorCo's Firecore FD30S composite fire door range is enhanced further with more glazing, hardware and smart options across the range. Ian Glenister, technical and sales manager for DoorCo, gives an update on the fire door market and the new products being introduced in 2026



The UK fire door market has been under significant scrutiny for a number of years, however today, the market offers significant opportunities for the sector. Renewed market confidence is being driven by stricter building safety regulations (post-Grenfell) resulting in housing associations, local authorities, and new build developers actively specifying more composite fire doors. The key is to be in the stable, approved and ready to deliver bi-directionally tested, triple-certified doors that are compliant with BS EN 1634, are aesthetically pleasing with design options, side and top lites and glazing, that come from a strong supply chain which offers technical support.

That's exactly how we are positioning our commercial customers that are in the process of adding Firecore to their product portfolio. It's a long process and there's significant investment involved, not only in obtaining the third-party certification to meet fire, smoke and security regulations, but also to ensure all the training, experience, and knowledge of relevant fire safety regulations and standards are met. We're supporting customers every step of the way of the process, starting, naturally, with the product.

"With Firecore, we were determined to deliver a complete end-to-end, fully certified fire door solution that not only exceeds regulatory requirements but ensures complete peace of mind for the end user, and everyone in between."

Firecore is accredited to EN 1634-1 from both sides, achieving 47 minutes of fire resistance, fully Q Mark 170 scheme 3rd party accredited, with regular independent audits to ensure consistent quality and compliant with

MHCLG Annex A recommendations, providing essential smoke and security resistance. It is also PAS 2024 security tested, incorporating a range of TS008-compliant hardware. We've partnered with Winkhaus to incorporate its FD30 / FD60 FireFrame outerframe into the doorset, along with the Winkhaus AV2 auto-locking multi-point door lock with optional access control, which has been tested to resist security and fire including TS008 compliant letterplates, numerals, eye viewers, door knockers and security chains. This partnership means that Firecore is now part of the Winkhaus UK FireFrame doorset scheme.

For 2026, we are expanding our range further to incorporate more product permutations. For example, the farmhouse door has been enhanced with more approved glazed options using our FLiP cassette. We've incorporated new hardware and door furniture options from Winkhaus to the collection. We're also introducing the option of NFC tags for digital audit trails support, the golden thread of information which is a major compliance focus in the market.

Firecore E is proving to be an attractive proposition to the market. We have existing customers choosing to adopt Firecore for the high-quality specification and wide range, as well as new customers that have taken up the full one supplier offering and our broad range of products to get Firecore into their portfolio and open up more opportunities for their businesses. □

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