

# Are Installers Cracking Under Pressure?

In what some have suggested is the UK's busiest trading period for thirty years, how are installation standards holding up under the pressures of skills and product shortages?

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**As the UK replacement window and door industry faces extraordinary pressures caused by strong demand and skills shortages – are installation standards being compromised?**

A review of the quality of work being carried out by FENSA Approved installers has been compiled by RISA Assessors. RISA carries out around 1,000 assessments each month towards the self-certification compliance requirements of the Building Regulations in addition to training installers and as such, it is able to provide the most accurate and in-depth view of installation performance.

## Minimum Technical Competence

More than 650 MTC inspections were carried out between January and June this year, which correlates with the increasing number of installers using the FENSA Training Academy to gain new qualifications and accreditations.

This would suggest that these facilities are being utilised to bring on installation staff from outside the industry, in a bid to overcome the skills shortage.

## Slight slip in standards

The statistics indicate that installation quality has remained stable, with only a slight dip in the 'Satisfactory or Better' figure of 96.6%, from 97.3% in 2020. It is clear however, that standards are slipping a little caused, according to inspectors, by added on-site complexities of social distancing and other Covid requirements, as well as staff shortages.

Dave Mecham, Director of Operations for RISA, says that quality has seen a very slight deterioration under difficult circumstances but overall standards are holding up well despite the pressures: "Anecdotally from the assessors and my personal on-site experience, quality is down very slightly at the moment but this is from an

incredibly high starting point.

"This covers quality of product, with fabricators trying to keep up with demand with the added pressure of social distancing at workstations; and installers being under the same workload pressures, with minor issues such as missing sealing under sills for example. The overall standard is still hugely impressive."

## Staff and skills shortages

Mecham adds: "It is also fair to say that we are in the midst of a skills shortage which is having a serious effect on the industry when consumer demand is so high. That said, a huge effort is being made within the industry to pick up the slack and the statistics show the overwhelming majority of FENSA Approved Installers continue to deliver a consistently high and compliant standard of work despite the challenges they are facing.

## The figures

Over the past four years the average (mean) inspector ratings of installations is completely stable at a rating of 3.4. RISA ranks this using a grading of 1 = poor, 2 = below average, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = above average and 5 = excellent. Assessors don't give out many 5s, however they give a lot less 1s. When the assessor ratings of satisfactory or better are totalled the figure is between 94.9% and 97.3% dependant on year. [f](#)