# Building safety act 2022 impacts recruitment and development in construction



The implementation of the Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA 2022) has brought significant challenges to the construction and development sector in the UK, particularly concerning the new requirement for second staircases in residential buildings. Christine Scott, director of development and construction at recruitment firm Madison Berkeley, has highlighted the widespread disruption caused by this regulation, which has led to project halts, redundancies, and a reassessment of hiring strategies across the industry.

Originally, the BSA mandated second staircases only in buildings taller than 30 metres. More recently, the threshold was lowered to 18 metres, a move intended to enhance safety but which has placed unexpected demands on developers. Many projects that were already underway now require redesign to accommodate these extra staircases, a change that is both spatially and financially challenging. Some schemes have become unviable, leading to cancellations or significant delays.

Scott explained to Building.co.uk: “Companies who are hiring are becoming more selective, because they are wary of making costly recruitment mistakes in such an unpredictable environment.” At Madison Berkeley, the recruitment agency has observed a sharp rise in candidates entering the job market due to stalling developments, while at the same time seeing companies pause hiring plans while awaiting regulatory clarity. Project managers and other professionals such as quantity surveyors, site managers, and architects find their roles uncertain as projects linger in limbo.

One notable example involved a major London-based residential developer forced to halt three high-rise projects mid-development following the change in staircase regulations. These projects, previously approved under earlier rules, had to return to the planning phase, causing delays exceeding a year and resulting in immediate redundancies among project management staff.

The impact extends beyond recruitment uncertainty; it is also affecting the broader real estate market, causing stagnation and a shift towards an employer-led recruitment environment with slow growth and fewer opportunities for progression. However, Scott notes a contrasting positive trend: “The regulatory changes have led to a growing need for specialists in fire safety planning and compliance. Developers are looking for professionals who understand the new rules and can navigate complex planning processes.”

Some organisations are adjusting recruitment strategies accordingly. For instance, a national surveying firm has pivoted towards hiring building surveyors with expertise in fire advisory roles. Yet, as Scott pointed out, “These professionals are in short supply,” leading to fluctuating salaries and complex negotiations as employers compete for a limited talent pool.

This shortage is not confined to private developers but also affects local authorities and housing associations required to comply with the BSA 2022. The demand for fire engineers, compliance officers, and technical consultants is rising, but the industry's capacity to supply qualified personnel remains insufficient. Addressing this skills gap will take time, as upskilling and training are required to develop the necessary expertise.

Scott advises that “Companies must invest in training and development” and recommends that candidates consider further qualifications in fire advisory and regulatory compliance to improve their employability. She also emphasised that government clarity and support are crucial to enable the industry to adapt to shifting regulatory requirements and restore developer confidence in long-term frameworks.

Beyond recruitment and training challenges, the delays associated with the BSA 2022 could exacerbate the housing shortage, particularly impacting high-rise developments that include affordable housing. There is concern that some developers may opt for lower-rise projects to avoid the second staircase rule, a solution that may be impractical in dense urban areas constrained by limited land availability. Such shifts could have ripple effects throughout the supply chain, affecting contractors, suppliers, and other stakeholders reliant on continuous development activity.

Scott concluded that while safety remains paramount, “changes must be implemented in a way that allows the industry to adapt without bringing construction to a standstill.” She suggested that measures such as phased implementation of the staircase requirement or financial support for developers might help mitigate the disruption. For now, the industry is encouraged to adapt its hiring approaches, invest in workforce development, and engage in ongoing dialogue with regulators, developers, and recruiters to navigate the evolving landscape.

The introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022 signals a profound shift in the construction sector’s operating environment. As Scott noted, “The recruitment industry and available resources will not look the same as it did before the BSA 2022,” underscoring the need for businesses and professionals to evolve alongside the changing regulatory framework.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.pbctoday.co.uk/news/building-control-news/why-sector-needs-more-clarity-building-safety-act/139532/> - This article confirms that the Building Safety Act applies to residential higher-risk buildings over 18 metres tall, and discusses the widespread confusion and disruption in the construction sector caused by the Act’s complex requirements, supporting the claim about the lowered height threshold for second staircases and consequent project delays.
* <https://aecom.com/without-limits/article/what-does-the-uks-building-safety-act-mean-for-the-industry/> - This source explains the significant shift the Building Safety Act 2022 has introduced to design, construction, and building management in the UK, corroborating the article’s framing of the Act as a major regulatory challenge for developers and the construction industry.
* <https://www.turnerandtownsend.com/insights/tackling-the-challenges-of-building-regulations/> - This article highlights the challenges, delays, and increased costs that arise from compliance with the Building Safety Act regulations, particularly noting the impact on project management and the need for updated hiring strategies, aligning with the account of redundancies and recruitment shifts.
* <https://www.procore.com/en-gb/library/the-building-safety-act> - This Procore library resource outlines both the challenges and emerging opportunities caused by the Building Safety Act 2022, including accountability and the requirement for new expertise in fire safety and regulatory compliance, supporting the article’s point on growing demand for fire safety specialists and recruitment adaptations.
* <https://www.standrewslawreview.com/post/balancing-the-scales-the-building-safety-act-2022-s-impact-on-consumers-and-firms> - This detailed analysis discusses the increased regulatory scrutiny, extended approval gateways, and the resulting delays and potential liabilities faced by developers, matching the article’s description of project halts, redundancies, and complex regulatory compliance burdens post-BSA implementation.