

EBOOK



# UK CONSTRUCTION™ ONLINE



# PUBLIC SECTOR

# ACRYPOL+

FROM ACRYPOL PRODUCTS LTD



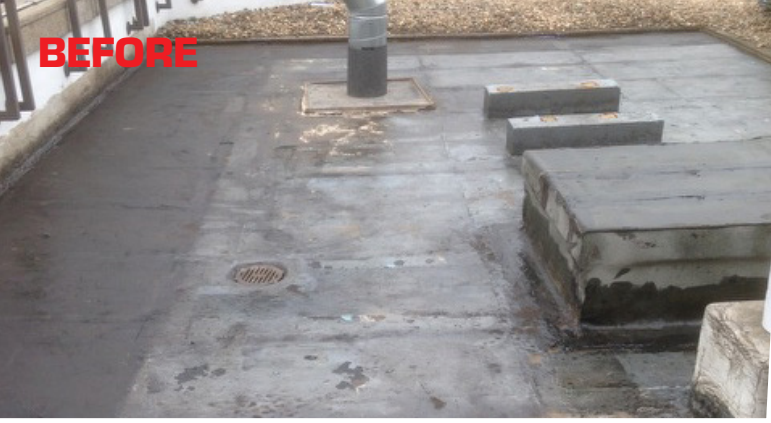
**ACRYPOL+** roof coating was specifically developed to provide a solution for carrying out the day to day maintenance requirements of those involved in roof waterproofing protection. As with most water penetration problems associated with leaking roofs, the need to carry out remedial repairs is very rarely possible during long spells of inclement weather. This is mainly due to the fact that in order to carry out an effective long term repair to leaking roofs, it is generally necessary to ensure that the surfaces to be treated are completely dry.

**ACRYPOL+** can be applied during damp weather conditions and at the same time provide a long term solution to the problem. The all-weather application properties, combined with the simplicity of application, makes this product a particularly attractive proposition to those employing their own labour for general property maintenance. The versatility of **ACRYPOL+** is acknowledged widely by Municipal Authorities and Maintenance Contractors throughout the United Kingdom.

## ALL WEATHER APPLICATION WATERPROOF ROOF COATING

**ACRYPOL+** available in PACKS OF 4 x 5kgs or DRUMS OF 20kgs



**BEFORE****AFTER**

**ACYPOL+** is an acrylic resin dispersed in a solvent to form a semi-liquid paste. The coating film dries into a tough durable elastic overlay that prevents the passage of water, yet is chemically structured to allow trapped moisture to evaporate, thus avoiding the formation of blisters. A specific feature is incorporated with added fibres, fibres that act like a built-in scrim. These fibres interlace when the coating is applied – filling and bridging gaps and cracks (up to 10mm wide). The fibres increase the tensile strength of the dry film making it more durable – **A BIG PLUS!**

**ACYPOL+** is available in two standard colours, Solar White for maximum solar protection of the roof surface, and Medium Grey generally used for day to day patching repairs where it is preferable to blend the coating into surrounding building material colours.

In certain areas where minimal structural movement occurs and tensile strength is not of paramount importance, eg. corrugated asbestos sheeting, or where spray application of the coating is required, the product is available without fibres under the description of standard ACYPOL which is also available in Solar White or Medium Grey colours.

### **SOLAR PROTECTION WARNING**

Due to the deterioration of the earth's ozone layer. We strongly recommend the specification of SOLAR WHITE **ACYPOL+** for maximum solar reflectivity and protection against the increased intensity and damage caused by ultra violet rays.

## **TECHNICAL DATA**

### **COVERAGE**

1-2kg/ m2 average  
(See application guide)

### **DRYING TIME**

2-3 days depending on ambient temperature and ventilation

### **FLASH POINT**

21oc - 55oc

### **WATER TIGHTNESS**

Several years with lid secure

### **SHELF LIFE**

12 months with lid secure, low odour

### **COLOUR**

Solar White or Medium Grey  
(other colours available on special order)

### **CLEANING**

Use Acrypol Cleaner to clean equipment

### **STORAGE**

Store in even moderate temperature

# Industry reacts to Autumn Statement

**THE** Chancellor Philip Hammond has delivered his first Autumn Statement as he set out his stall to prepare the UK economy for the impact of leaving the European Union.

UK Construction Media has gauged reaction to the measures outlined on Wednesday 23rd November to see if those involved in the industry believe they will be beneficial.

The mini budget covered the Government's plans to reinvigorate its house building programme that would see one million new homes built over the course of this Parliament.

Letting agents in England are also to be banned from charging fees to tenants in a move to make renting more affordable and ease the housing crisis. Currently tenants are liable to pay a range of administration fees including references, credits and immigration checks.

Jeremy Blackburn, Head of UK Policy at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) said the Chancellor

had delivered a "wait-and-see" statement but appeared to demonstrate a greater understanding of the housing sector than his predecessors.

He commented: "With increasingly unaffordable house prices, the majority of British households will be relying on the rental sector in the future. Now it seems that through the relaxation on grants to deliver a wider range of housing types, Hammond will drive an affordable rental agenda and can get Britain building in a way that benefits a cross section of society, not just the fortunate few."

Peter Vinden, Managing Director of The Vinden Partnership – a leading multi-disciplinary consultant company to the built environment – said that there was a great deal of work to do if the Government was to achieve its ambitious housebuilding targets.

He said: "The Chancellor confirmed the infrastructure and housing spending that we have been expecting for a few weeks now. These are positive steps but there is still major work to be done if the Government is to hit its target of building one million new homes by the end of this Parliament.

"The Autumn Statement probably won't do too much to sway those decision makers within the industry from sitting on their hands but improved infrastructure, both transport and digital, should help to improve regional economies and create employment.

"Such is the nature of politics that the Government can't reveal its hand too much on Brexit negotiations and we are unlikely



to find out too many details until the process gets underway. That being the case, the uncertainty that clouds the UK economy is unlikely to lift anytime soon."

Shraga Stern, Director of construction firm Decorean, called for a "real change" in the Government's approach to housebuilding citing the need to overhaul the planning system. He said: "The Government must enforce changes to the planning system and regulations, which act as a stumbling block for many smaller developers. As the UK's population continues to grow, we echo Mr Hammond's thoughts that for many 'the goal of home ownership is out of reach'. However, we have heard this all before and hope that this Autumn Statement acts as a stepping stone to providing a shelter over people's heads and somewhere comfortable and affordable to call home."

IEMA's Chief Policy Advisor Martin Baxter felt there was little to shout about in terms of environment and sustainability policy but broadly welcomed the investment in infrastructure, industry and skills.

He said: "Today's Autumn Statement has provided some level of confidence for business in terms of investment at a time of uncertainty, which is a welcome move. Investment in infrastructure, industry and skills is a strong trinity of themes that together, will bolster the UK's resilience, competitively and productivity. Given this direction, we are looking to the Government to ensure that

environment and sustainability skills are absolutely central to this programme. We are disappointed that this hasn't thus far appeared to be prominent. We look forward to seeing this come through in the imminent industrial strategy, the emissions reduction plan and the 25-year environment plan."

Richard Steer, Chairman of Gleeds, felt there was little to get excited about as Brexit uncertainty and party politics left the Chancellor slightly hamstrung. He said: "This was a budget produced by a Chancellor who has one hand tied behind his back by the Brexit result and the other by the PM trying to keep her party in line. There is still so much economic uncertainty that it is difficult to be excited by re-heated announcements of increased infrastructure spending and more housebuilding.

"Mr Hammond announced a National Productivity Investment Fund of £23Bn to be spent on innovation and infrastructure over the next five years. By closing the UK's productivity gap, the Chancellor plans to create the "high wage, high skill economy we want".

Mr Steer said that the new productivity fund sounded attractive on face value but was concerned that the measure may prove to be just rhetoric. He said: "The new productivity fund sounds good but we have heard this type of thing before and, whilst it is argued that it will be funded by increased borrowing, the main issue is

confidence in the UK and this was not a budget that is going to help enhance the value in the sterling which effects costs, or persuade private sector funders to invest.

Mr Steer felt that the jury would remain out on the housebuilding initiatives with the measures being little more than a "wish list" without knowing whether UK would have free access to skilled labour.

David Hawkes, the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) Policy Manager commended the Chancellor for placing productivity at the centre of his Autumn Statement.

He said: "It's clear that the Chancellor recognises that improving productivity is vital to economic prosperity. In construction, we know what can be done to improve productivity, but require certainty for firms to invest in innovation, skills and training in order to support it. For this reason, we welcome the £23Bn National Productivity Investment Fund, to be spent on improving innovation and infrastructure over the next five years."

He also welcomed the regional investment outlined by Mr Hammond, saying that reducing the investment and productivity gap between London and the rest of the UK was vital to the success of the economy. Mr Hawkes added that this would be only be successful if the investment was tied to training and job creation.



# Exclusive Interview: Adam Matthews, Chairman of EU BIM Task Group

**ABIGAIL** Burr talks exclusively to Adam Matthews - Chairman of the European Union BIM Task Group - about the UK's placement within the construction industry, the European Common Network, the drive for BIM, and how other countries are progressing on their BIM journey following Brexit.

Adam Matthews is Chairman of the European Union BIM Task Group which is a network of public sector stakeholders from over 20 nations and co-funded by the European Commission. He is also Director of International Development for the UK Government's BIM Task Group, and has more than 24 years of experience in information technology and change management in various industrial sectors. Adam holds an MBA from Kingston University which focused on sustainability and public policy for the construction sector.



## **SINCE THE LEVEL 2 MANDATE IN APRIL 2016, HOW WELL PLACED DO YOU THINK THE UK CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IS?**

'Standing aside' from my UK role and just looking at the evidence from surveys, conferences, institutes and associations would suggest that most of the industry has at least started on the journey towards BIM Level 2. That includes those just beginning to understand what BIM Level 2 is, to those that have immersed their Organisation's procedures as supporting Level 2 and the collaborative use of data.

We can also say that the industry has a much greater awareness and capability in "collaborative BIM" (the original phrase under the Construction Strategy 2011) than five years ago. This is a big step forward for the UK industry and it should be recognised for how enthusiastically it has embraced this change.

On a personal note, I think it must rank as one of the greatest national collaborative efforts the construction sector has seen. A building services engineer said to me once that BIM was one of the best things to happen in the sector in his lifetime, and that the UK Government's BIM programme was the best thing Government had done for the industry (with the notable exception of H&S improvements). I wouldn't disagree with his assessment.

To help the industry equip itself on Level 2, there are guides to explain and adopt the Level 2 approach which will be delivered shortly on: [www.bim-level2.org/guidance](http://www.bim-level2.org/guidance)

There is more to do, but we should also celebrate the progress we have made in a relatively short period of time. The CIC should also be

congratulated for their leadership and ownership of the programme since its launch at the end of 2011.

## **HOW IS THE EUROPEAN COMMON NETWORK DEVELOPING?**

The UK with Norway started the group in late 2013 with 12 other European countries by holding a get-to-know-you session in Brussels. Since it formed as the EU BIM Task Group, it has grown to over 20 European nations with support and co-funding from the European Commission. The aim of the group is simple - create a common understanding of BIM in Europe and aim to spread common practice across public clients introducing BIM to public policy or public works. We launched our website in early 2016 - [www.eubim.eu](http://www.eubim.eu) - and updates on our progress will be issued there.

We have just completed a survey of European practices by public stakeholders and now starting to draft a guide for public procurers on BIM. This BIM handbook will make recommendations for good practice based on the current European experience.

## **DO YOU THINK THE EU WOULD EVER HAVE A BIM MANDATE?**

Mandate is a strong word. Technically the UK BIM 'mandate' is policy encouragement to the UK's public construction client group to require the delivery of BIM information on centrally funded projects. It is not easy to see how a single BIM mandate would be applied across Europe - however, do I see common approaches and requirements for BIM being adopted by European governments and public clients? Yes, absolutely. And looking forward, I see these requirements aligning across Europe.

Over the next three to five years

it is likely there will be a growing momentum of consistent BIM requirements in public tenders at national and public estate levels. We are beginning to see this already. Clients are recognising it is not enough simply to request "It should be BIM" in public tenders: they want to specify standard digital information datasets at key project milestones.

**IN TERMS OF THE EU, IS THE DRIVE FOR BIM COMING FROM THE PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SECTOR?**

Both, but at some stage in a number of countries - the public stakeholders are taking a leadership role to help create the necessary conditions to deliver joint economic and environmental benefits for both the public sector and for industry.

What impact will Brexit have on closer collaboration with BIM in Europe? In my view, the collaboration has been a European exercise, not just EU - it actually includes members of the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) such as Norway (a leading partner in the project) and Iceland.

With regards to Brexit, the EU BIM Task Group is a two year project until end of 2017 which would mean the UK will be a full EU member at that time. And the goal of the group is to align the European approach to introduction of BIM. Beyond Europe, there is recognition that BIM is a global language - construction will transform to a global 'digital construction' sector over the next five to ten years. The Group is collaborating to place the European sector to compete effectively in this market.

I would add that it is a European success - nations sharing approaches and implementation descriptions in order to agree a common performance level to describe what BIM is to encourage trade across borders. It continues to be a positive and collaborative experience.

**WHERE WOULD YOU SAY THE MAJORITY OF COUNTRIES ARE ON THEIR BIM JOURNEY?**

This will be answered more fully in the report of the survey recently conducted. I wouldn't want to pre-empt its findings and conclusions. However, the group recognises that there is a full range from those just starting to explore what BIM means to a public stakeholder/client to those like Norway, UK and Netherlands that are implementing their programme with industry.





What is remarkable has been the journey since 2013, where we started the group with a just handful of nations with active programmes to now - with over 20 nations involved and the European Commission on-board. I think that speaks volumes about the recognition of the value proposition of BIM to the public sector.

### **WHAT COUNTRIES WOULD YOU SAY ARE FURTHER ALONG ON THEIR BIM JOURNEYS?**

There is no hard and fast rule here to describe 'furthest along'. For example, the UK programme has the goal to engage the whole value chain transformation of its construction sector, which employs near three million. Whereas Finland, a country of

five million people, has adopted a highly detailed approach to prescribing specific technical operations at the 'atomic level'. Which is furthest along?

What is easier to say is the group agrees that we are all heading in the same direction, along similar journeys but going at different speeds. Another important point is to encourage trading opportunities: no country is so far ahead that they can't be brought on to a common path with others to support common trading practice across borders. This for me is the real test for the group.

For me, one of the most impressive things about the EU BIM Task Group is that all nations are approaching with an open mind and prepared to debate different aspects of adoption and there is no sense at this time of protecting national positions to the detriment of harmonisation.

After all, BIM is just part of a broader digital transition across governments, across Europe and across the world.

### **WHAT IS BEING DONE TO HELP COUNTRIES THAT ARE NOT AS PROGRESSED?**

Approximately one third of the group have a BIM programme or are in the process of developing one, so this group is actually aimed to share practice with those nations that have yet to start developing a BIM programme.

The survey I mentioned will collate experience from around Europe on the public introduction of BIM and from this with a series of meetings and workshops will help to inform a general recommendation. This recommendation will be made available publicly as a handbook to inform public estate owners, public procurers and policy makers across Europe.

Looking globally, I think it fair to say that outside a few notable exceptions including China, Singapore and Hong Kong many countries are still evolving their response to BIM. So this handbook has a wider audience possibly.

### **WHAT IS BRITAIN'S ROLE IN THIS?**

The UK is the lead coordinator of the EU BIM Task Group as it was nominated by others to have the funding contract with the European Commission for the project. This contract is administered by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The UK provides a small project office to coordinate the programme and my time is provided to Chair. However, I do not represent the UK interest in the group, this is done by others from the UK BIM Task Group. My role is to independently represent the group members and the programme to the European Commission and to the lead coordinator.

### **WILL BREXIT AFFECT BRITAIN'S ROLE?**

No, not in this immediate project. The project has a two year timeframe, and we are already over eight months in - and the UK will remain a full EU member for two years after its exit is formally triggered. I cannot say that Brexit would have no effect on the UK's involvement in the future, however while I would accept there is naturally some uncertainty - I firmly believe that this project is part of a European agenda. I would very much hope the support received from the UK and towards the UK would continue in support of this vital work.



# A HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO **MEDIATION**

Search the web for long enough and you will be sure to find many scholarly articles and books on the subject of mediation. So why produce another one? Well, firstly, I wouldn't describe this article as scholarly. Secondly, too many articles I have read, whilst being laudable academic pieces of work, are not targeted at the user. This article is, I hope, targeted at users of the process rather than academics and lawyers. I hope it will encourage parties to try mediation, prepare well and hopefully have some success in the process. I struggled to find the right title. I hope it doesn't put people off reading it and that it proves to be of assistance.



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# [1] WHY TRY?

British industry employs a significant number of people in dispute resolution. Why would that be? Is it because there are large amounts of money to be earned from parties who can be persuaded to try their luck in the casino worlds of litigation, arbitration or adjudication?

Try asking anybody you know who has been involved in a dispute about his or her experiences. They are likely to tell you four things. One, it cost a fortune. Two, if he or she had known how painful the experience would be they would not have bothered. Three, he or she wants to avoid a repeat of the experience in the future. Four, when legal costs are taken into account, "winning" may not actually mean that you are financially better off. But who says you are going to win in any event?

So is Mediation an answer to this problem? I say it can be and I am not on my own. Even the judiciary is in on the act.

Litigation in this country is governed by "Pre-Action Protocols" or rules of engagement to you and me. Within these rules, which came into force as long ago as April 2006, is the following stark warning.

"The Courts take the view that litigation should be a last resort, and that claims should not be issued prematurely when a settlement is still being actively explored. Parties are warned that if the protocol is not followed (including this paragraph) then the Court must have regard to such conduct when determining costs".

What this statement is doing is to warn Parties that if they do not try mediation, painful cost orders may be imposed by the Court at the end of a trial. In other words, the courts are sending a clear message that parties would be better advised to try something other than litigation to resolve their differences. That something else is mediation.

Statistics indicate that 80-90% of mediations are successful. Not bad odds when compared with the casino approach.

Let's face the facts. How many lawyers do you know that can guarantee the outcome of a reference to a legal tribunal? Not many I suspect. I won't. If thirty years' experience of dispute resolution has taught me one thing, it is that there can only be one "winner". There are so many variables that can have a bearing on the outcome of a reference to legal proceedings that I will never do more than speculate on a range of possible outcomes and warn clients that adjudicators, arbitrators and yes, even judges get things wrong from time to time. We have a Court of Appeal and The House of Lords in this country, some would say, to allow parties to spend even more of their money on dispute resolution advisers.

At least in mediation it is the Parties that decide the outcome, on terms they are happy with.

**So stop gambling and try mediation!**





## [2] AN OVERVIEW

The process of Mediation is one of the most common forms of Alternative Dispute Resolution, or ADR. The 'Alternative' referred to is the alternative to a trial or an arbitral hearing and the process leading up to a trial.

Some may be unaware of exactly what is meant by 'a Mediation'. The following is a simple guide to a process which is a lot less harrowing and expensive than a trial.

Mediation can take place at any time but is better done when all the relevant facts are out in the open. Nobody is going to feel comfortable discussing settlement terms when they are uncertain about some important aspects of the case.

When both sides have their respective positions clear in their own minds, it might be sensible to consider Mediation.

A cost/benefit analysis might show how Mediation would compare with a trial and how both might compare with settling through solicitors. A

trial should be the last resort of a litigant so it is unlikely that the cost/benefit projection will show this as a fruitful route to follow.

Trying to settle by negotiation can take a lot of time and can be nerve-racking and works best only when both Parties have decided that dialogue and negotiation through a trusted third party is a sensible way forward. It can take some time for this synchronisation to take place.

By opting for Mediation, the Parties agree to meet with a readiness to try to find a mutually agreed settlement.

The Mediator is sent all the relevant papers by one or both/all of the Parties' solicitors, so that he/she can understand the background to the dispute. The Mediator sees the case summaries of the respective legal teams and might make some initial approaches to the Parties (or their lawyers, before the Mediation) so as to clear up any misunderstandings, obvious queries or inconsistencies.

The Mediator should take the opportunity of enquiring as to the Parties' experience of Mediation, to gauge the amount of help that might be necessary to overcome any anxiety.

Before the Mediation, each side decides who shall be present and who shall lead the negotiations. The leader might be one of the Party members or might be a lawyer. The team must include someone with the necessary authority to settle the dispute at the Mediation.

Before the meeting, the Mediator will agree the format of the Mediation with both/all Parties so that each knows who is going to be present and who has authority to settle.

On the day of the Mediation, the Parties meet at the appointed venue in their own rooms and the Mediator introduces himself. The room is a private one and available to the Party for the duration of the Mediation.

To commence the Mediation, it is customary for the Mediator



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to call the Parties together in a third room. The Mediator will then emphasise the two senses in which the Mediation is confidential. It is confidential as between the Mediator and each of the Parties and also confidential as regards the outside world. (At some point later in the Mediation, the Mediator might ask that the confidential views or information of one Party be divulged to the other, so as to make progress in the Mediation. Only with the tacit approval of the Party will the Mediator so divulge this 'confidential' information.)

The Mediator will ask the Parties to confirm their respective powers to settle the dispute. The Mediator will emphasise that all discussion is without prejudice - meaning that nothing said is binding on the Parties until they want it to be, when it is then committed to writing. Up until that time, any offer made can be withdrawn or varied.

The Parties are then invited to state their cases briefly - opening statements - and many believe it preferable that this should be done by the Parties themselves rather than their legal representatives, as the effect on the opposition can be greater.

Some discussion might continue after the opening statements but it is usual for the Mediator to break up the joint meeting and hold private meetings - caucuses - with each Party in turn.

The Mediator uses his skills to steer the Parties towards settlement during the course of the allotted period. The time available might be agreed in advance or be open-ended.

At any time that a Party chooses, it can leave the Mediation. The Mediator will do all in his/her power to prevent this, but this option is always available in any Mediation process.

When the Parties have agreed a settlement (and, surprisingly, between 70% and 80% of all Mediations do reach a settlement), an agreement is drawn up, usually by the legal representatives, for the Parties' signature. The agreement may call for certain actions to be taken, such as payment of an amount from one Party to another, but it should settle the matter once and for all without further ado and not least remove the uncertainty of taking the matter to a trial, perhaps winning the case, but then possibly having to fight the whole matter again if the opposing Party were to lodge an Appeal.

The mediator is usually paid in advance by both Parties and his fee will either be in the form of a lump sum or on an hourly rate depending on the size and complexity of the dispute.



# The Education State: Theresa May doubles down on free schools commitment

**THOUGH** the players have changed, the Government's free schools agenda continues unabated. In recent months, Justine Greening - Theresa May's newly-appointed Secretary of State for Education - announced thousands of free school places, with the intention of giving parents greater choice over where to send their children.

Meanwhile, 56 previously approved schools - including a specialist performing arts college,

which counts Sir Paul McCartney among its patrons - opened their doors to autumn's new intake.

Under Mrs May's stewardship, the Department for Education (DfE) looks set to continue the work of her predecessor. It was David Cameron who, during the divisive Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition, brought the free schools agenda to the fore - last year pledging 500 more by the end of his ill-fated parliament.

So far, Theresa May has made good on that commitment - encouraging new and existing free schools to open and expand, and compelling universities and independent institutions to consider supporting or setting up new schools.

"For too long we have tolerated a system that contains an arbitrary rule preventing selective schools from being established - sacrificing children's potential because of dogma and ideology,"

the Prime Minister stated.

"The truth is that we already have selection in our school system - and its selection by house price, selection by wealth. That is simply unfair.

"That is why I am announcing an ambitious package of education reforms to ensure that every child has the chance to go to a good school. As well as allowing new selective schools we will bring forward a new requirement that means universities who want to charge higher fees will be required to establish a new school or sponsor an existing underperforming school."

For the uninitiated, free schools are autonomous Government-funded institutions operating outside the bounds of local authority management. Typically, they are established by parents, teachers, charitable organisations or local businesses - those with a vested interest in the community - in response to public demand. There might be a shortage of places in a given area for instance, or dissatisfaction with the places currently on offer.

To date, 74% of mainstream free schools can be found in areas where there is a clear need for more school places, with around half situated in some of the most deprived communities in the country.

According to the Government, free schools are more likely to be rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted than state schools, and research has shown that their introduction is helping to raise standards in neighbouring schools by encouraging fresh ideas and competition.

Being independently-led, free schools are exempt from teaching the national curriculum

- a bone of contention for many - and afforded greater latitude with regard to term times and teacher wages. Free schools still answer to Ofsted however, and - as 'all-ability' institutions - they are prohibited from using any form of academic selection.

The free schools blueprint is not without its detractors however. Critics claim that the Government's endorsement will serve only to weaken existing institutions, while local authorities are wary of a system that effectively strips them of power, leaving councils with little or no say as to where new free schools are placed. Moreover, how well governed are they really? Is the system at all vulnerable to extremist agendas?

The DfE remains undeterred however. In September, 77 new free schools were approved to create in total 46,493 new school places. These include:

- Cumbria Academy for Autism: A special school, led by the parents of autistic children.
- The Saracens High School: A secondary school for Barnet in London - the result of an innovative partnership between rugby Premiership and European Cup winners, Saracens, and Ashmole Academy - an Ofsted-rated 'Outstanding' secondary school.
- The REACh2 Academy Trust: The largest primary-only academy trust in the country is set to open a further 22 primary schools, providing over 10,000 additional primary places by 2020.
- The Harris Federation: The Federation will open three new secondaries and a primary school. These will

join the Trust's 37 existing schools, all of which have been rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

Nigel Wray, Chairman, Saracens Rugby Club had this to say: "What a marvellous opportunity we have been given! At the Saracens High School we will combine our sporting beliefs to create a unique school environment where every individual student matters, academic achievement is important and a real emphasis is placed on teamwork and the creation of great memories. The hard work starts from this point."

Sir Steve Lancashire, Chief Executive Officer of REACh2 Academy Trust, added: "We are delighted to be given the green light for 22 new free schools, which we will open over the next few years. Free schools and academies are making a huge difference to the quality of education right across the country and we very much look forward to establishing these new schools so that we can offer exceptional opportunities for learning to even more children."

Ms Greening also confirmed that 56 new schools opened their doors for the first time in September, including 42 new free schools, 11 new university technical colleges and three studio schools. At full capacity, these will provide around 35,000 more school places.

But what of the future? It's heartening to hear that first-class education provision remains so fundamental to the Government's aspirations, and the Department for Education continues to work at a fanatical pace. With population growth a concern, fast action is required. But only time will tell as to whether free schools can truly ready the UK for an uncertain future to come.

# The Innovation Economy:

## UK businesses invest £133Bn in intangible assets





A new report, commissioned by the Intellectual Property Office (IPO), has revealed that the UK is spending larger amounts on innovation, know-how and ideas - so called 'intangible assets' - rather than traditional 'bricks and mortar' investment.

Research indicates that intangible investment, which includes expenditure on R&D, software development and product design, reached £133Bn in 2014 - 9% higher than straightforward spending on such tangibles as property, machinery, and IT infrastructure.

It's an intriguing trend - one that speaks volumes of the UK's shifting priorities. Since the turn of the century intangible investment has increased by an astounding £45Bn, further highlighting Great Britain's role in the global 'knowledge economy'. And while investment in tangible assets has risen by 38% - from £87.9Bn to £121Bn - over the same period, intangibles continue to outstrip more orthodox methods of spending at a quite considerable rate.

Why is this? Historically, British businesses have often been accused of underinvestment. Indeed, in recent past, former Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne claimed that the UK doesn't "train enough or build enough or invest enough". The IPO's findings fly in the face of conventional thinking however, indicating that UK businesses are perhaps more progressive than in previous years. The report also underscores the significance of both the manufacturing and financial industries to the UK's burgeoning innovation economy. Bafflingly, these two sectors account for just 20% of total hours worked but are responsible for 58% of all intangible investment.

Also of interest, in 2014 more than half of intangible investments (53%) were protected by Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) - a 3% increase from

2011. Of those assets:

- 25% were protected by copyright.
- 11% were protected by trademarks.
- 11% were protected by design rights.
- 6% were protected by patents.

The Government previously identified innovation as a crucial ingredient in the UK's drive towards economic growth up and down the country, and IP rights are playing a greater role than ever before.

Baroness Neville-Rolfe, Minister of State for Energy and Intellectual Property, said: "The UK has an impressive track record when it comes to innovation and creativity. Investment in intangible assets like research and patents helps businesses grow - which is why the UK has a strong system in place to protect their IP rights, and encourage further investment.

"Our intellectual property regime has helped create an environment in which innovators and creators can prosper knowing full well that their hard work will be rewarded and rigorously protected."

Tony Rollins, President of the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys, added: "Investment in the protection of intellectual property is a vital driver of economic growth: it helps to maximise profits which fund further research and development into new ideas.

"CIPA is proud of its excellent relationship with Government and innovative business. The IP system encourages investment and research thanks to high quality practices, insightful policy-making and excellent work such as this report."

To read the report in full, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk->

There's cause for concern however. The shock outcome of the EU referendum has led to some speculation over the future of many of the UK's long-standing intellectual property laws. Both the IPO and the industry at large have moved to allay those fears, with the Government publishing 'IP and Brexit: The Facts' to help clarify the situation.

In the short-term it's business as usual. As Jo Joyce, IP and Information Rights Associate for international law firm Taylor Wessing, states: "We know that the decision to leave the EU will be followed by withdrawal negotiations and an adjustment period likely to last several years. The most important thing for IP practitioners and owners to remember is that there is currently no need to panic."

But what exactly is up for debate? According to Jo: "The primary areas of concern will be working out what to do about EU rights currently valid in the UK and how to handle ongoing litigation involving such rights. More broadly, the UK will have to plan its transition to ensure that the decisions of UK courts are respected and enforceable beyond our borders. Whilst this might involve EEA and/or Lugano Convention membership, any number of mechanisms could be employed to achieve the desired ends."

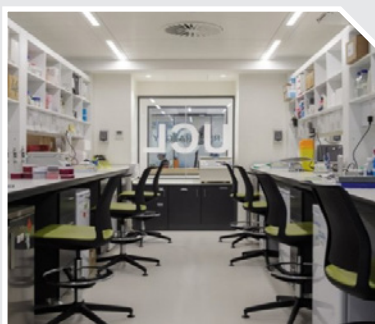
Intellectual property is just one of a myriad of issues that will need to be addressed once Article 50 is triggered. But if the UK economy is to remain in good working order, businesses will need greater assurance of their own intellectual property rights - and they will look to their Government for guidance.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ip-and-brexit-the-facts>



**PEAK CONTRACTORS** recently moved to ConQuest Estimating. They currently price tenders for refurbishment projects in London worth between around £100k & £5Million, typically education, healthcare, office accommodation, residential and some specialist projects.

Jacob Read has been an estimator for 9 years ever since completing his quantity surveying degree and joining a large regional contractor. He has used a number of other estimating systems over the last 9 years but when he came to Peak Contractors he was very clear that he wanted their system of choice to be ConQuest. Peak contractors reviewed the market and also decided ConQuest was the one for them.



### **UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON - RAYNE BUILDING - VALUE £2,700,00 – 19 WEEKS**

The works comprised of the complete refurbishment of the first floor of the Rayne Building to create new laboratories, offices and open plan write up areas within an occupied building.

Good estimators are increasingly difficult to find, at ConQuest we are hearing more & more that having the ConQuest system attracts a high calibre of estimator. People want to use something they know and something they can rely on. They want to use the best tool for the job!

We had some time with Jacob to ask some questions, get some feedback and discuss the ConQuest System.

#### **How do you think ConQuest has changed since you first used it?**

"I think it has become more user friendly, even though it wasn't very difficult to use to start with. I have never actually been for formal training at your training centre, I taught myself. The

chaps in the office at my last company showed me around the software and if I have any questions I just call ConQuest support and they help me"

#### **What do you think makes it user friendly?**

"Having used other estimating systems everything with ConQuest is where you want it to be. I like this because you spend less time worrying about the system and more time focusing

#### **What features in particular do you like about the ConQuest Software?**

"Everything is just so accessible. If other people look at your jobs or take them over it is easy for them to find the information they need. I like the amount

of statistics that are instantly available and the way it all ties together from module to module. The job to enquires to comparisons and back to updating the job. It just saves so much time and you can price more tenders"

#### **How do you find the Support offered By ConQuest?**

"Faultless. You ring up, they answer. You nearly always get through first time and you never have to chase anyone"

#### **How would you feel if you had to stop using ConQuest?**

"It would be horrendous! There are just so many negatives to think about. It would cost so much more money and tenders would take much longer"



**CONQUEST**

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# ***WHAT DOES THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION?***

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**WITH 110,000 CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS EAGERLY AWAITING YOUR GUIDANCE, WHAT WOULD YOU SHOW THEM TODAY IF YOU COULD?**

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For more information please contact us on  
01257 231900 or email [enquiries@promarkmedia.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@promarkmedia.co.uk)

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