

# Principles for Informed Clients

## Context

These high-level principles have been developed to define, support and promote competent and informed client behaviour, reflecting the duties set out in Part 2A of the [Building Regulations 2010](#). They respond to the increasing emphasis on client responsibility for building safety, compliance and delivery outcomes, and to the need for clearer expectations of what competent and informed client behaviour looks like in practice.

The principles are intended to provide a common framework that can be applied across different project types, procurement routes and organisational contexts. They focus on behaviours, governance and decision-making rather than detailed technical requirements and are designed to complement existing legal duties and guidance, supporting clients to meet their responsibilities in a diligent, practical and proportionate way.

## Culture and the Client's Role

Clients are dutyholders under the Building Regulations 2010 as amended in 2023, with a responsibility to appoint competent people to undertake any work on their building. This responsibility includes ensuring decision-making is undertaken with the highest regard for life safety, with honesty and integrity, throughout the lifecycle of the building to ensure it is safe for occupants.

Creating a climate that is supportive for all those engaged in any works should be encouraged. Decision-making should be clearly aligned to the core objectives of safety, quality, time, and cost. Acting with unnecessary expediency, prioritising cost savings over necessary expenditure (sometimes referred to as value engineering), preventing or restricting safe performance, and inhibit effective communications, should always be avoided.

Clients have no legal requirement to be competent. However, they are accountable and do have a legal responsibility as they have the greatest influence on whether competence, safety and integrity are enabled or undermined. Awareness of the importance of their role, and the instrumental effect their behaviour has, in forming a culture founded in the determination and confidence to deliver a quality building or project, is fundamental to ensuring a safe and beneficial outcome.

The following principles describe how clients can demonstrate their commitment to embed such a (positive and supportive) culture required to ensure competence,

collaboration and safety are present across every stage of a project.

### **1. Clear Responsibility and Leadership**

Clients understand and accept their legal and moral responsibilities as dutyholders. They lead by example, actively shaping and sustaining a positive culture, setting expectations that prioritise safety, integrity, and compliance. Leadership involves taking ownership for outcomes across the full life of the building or project, including handover and occupation stage. They ensure that roles, responsibilities, and expectations are understood and that decisions reinforce the wider public interest, not just project cost or schedule.

### **2. Competent and Informed Decision-Making**

Clients ensure they have, or can access, the right expertise to carry out their due diligence by making well-informed and accountable decisions. They appoint competent dutyholders and act on evidence, risk, and professional advice rather than commercial expediency. Decision-making processes should be transparent, documented, and defensible demonstrating that choices are made in good faith and with full understanding of implications for safety, quality, and performance of the building.

### **3. Collaboration and Constructive Relationships**

Clients must promote collaboration across all parties involved in a project. They must establish shared goals, encourage open dialogue, and welcome challenge in a way that supports problem-solving and continuous improvement. Constructive relationships are built on trust and fairness, recognising that good collaboration is essential to achieving safe and compliant outcomes.

### **4. Balanced and Proportionate Oversight**

Clients must recognise that different projects require different levels of control, oversight, and assurance. Expectations and requirements should be proportionate to the level of hazard(s) and complexity in the building: with appropriate resources and expertise put in place to match that risk, ensuring that compliance is achieved and maintained without unnecessary bureaucracy. Balanced oversight includes periodic and proportionate checks over the life of the building, understanding when to seek specialist advice and when to allow professionals the autonomy to deliver within agreed parameters.

## **5. Transparency and Effective Communication**

Clients must provide clear and consistent information to all stakeholders throughout the project. They must communicate decisions, risks, and constraints openly, promoting accountability and trust. Transparent communication helps prevent misunderstandings, reduces conflict, and strengthens public confidence in how projects are managed and delivered.

## **6. Ensuring Safety and Health**

Safety and health must be managed in a proportionate way, balancing risk with other requirements related to design, construction and building regulations. Clients establish expectations that all work will comply with statutory duties, building regulations, and relevant safety standards. Clients ensure that design, materials, and methods are selected to eliminate foreseeable risks and protect both building users and those undertaking the work.

## **7. Quality and Performance**

Quality is embedded from procurement through to completion and maintenance. Clients prioritise value and performance over lowest cost and ensure that quality assurance measures are in place to verify compliance with building regulations, specifications, and user needs. Continuous assurance of workmanship, testing, and validation supports both safety and durability.

## **8. Continuous Learning and Improvement**

Clients are encouraged to capture lessons learned from each project and apply them to future buildings or projects. Sharing insights openly with project teams and supply chain partners helps raise standards across the industry.

They use available case studies, standards, and data to improve performance, transparency, and accountability. Promoting learning and knowledge-sharing, helps to strengthen competence and confidence at all levels of the built environment and reinforces a positive culture of accountability and improvement.