



INSIGHTS REPORT

**Collaborating
to Shape the
Future of
Firestopping**

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Executive Summary

The construction industry is undergoing one of the most significant transformations in decades. Regulatory reform, new safety standards, and rising expectations from clients and communities are reshaping how we design, build, and maintain our buildings. Within this context, firestopping has emerged as a critical area of focus. It is no longer just a technical requirement to be addressed late in the project cycle, but an integral part of how we deliver safe, resilient, and trusted spaces that lead to better built environments, better homes, better places to work and better lives.

This Insight Report brings together perspectives from across the supply chain - architects, specifiers, contractors, installers and distributors - to explore how we can navigate this evolving landscape together. It is based on research and engagement across the industry, with the goal of providing not only insights but also encouragement. The intention is not to highlight failings or point to shortcomings. Instead, it is to highlight the opportunities we share, the progress already being made, and the collective steps that can help us go further.

Our central message is simple: we achieve more when we act together. By embedding collaboration, sharing knowledge, and supporting one another with practical tools and tested solutions, we can build confidence in compliance, reduce risks, and ultimately protect lives. This Insight Report is therefore both a reflection of where we are today, and a roadmap for how we can move forward – together.

Respondents included:

**ARCHITECTS,
SPECIFIERS,
CONTRACTORS,
INSTALLERS &
DISTRIBUTORS**

The Evolving Regulatory Landscape

Few areas of construction have changed as quickly or as significantly as fire safety through the years. The introduction of the Building Safety Act and the Golden Thread of Information has fundamentally reshaped requirements across the entire sector. These reforms signal a new era of accountability, transparency, and shared responsibility. At the same time, significant changes to thermal requirements have contributed to the fire safety challenges we face today, highlighting the importance of understanding how regulatory shifts in one area, such as energy efficiency, can unintentionally impact others, including fire and acoustics.

For the vast majority of professionals, the principles of the reforms are welcome. The Golden Thread provides clarity about how information should flow seamlessly from design, to procurement, to installation, to operation. It creates an auditable record that benefits not only regulators, but everyone involved in the project lifecycle. Architects gain confidence that their designs are being respected. Contractors have a clear record to show compliance. Building owners inherit valuable information for long-term maintenance. And communities benefit from knowing that buildings are designed with safety at their core.

Yet, while the principles are clear, putting them into practice is not always straightforward. Research across the supply chain shows that professionals are aware of the new rules but often uncertain about the detail of implementation.

For specifiers, the question is how to select systems that both meet design needs and deliver compliance. As it stands, 68% of specifiers cite their biggest knowledge gap as keeping up with evolving regulations, suggesting there's a real opportunity for targeted support and resources to help professionals stay ahead and confident in both compliance and project excellence.

For contractors, it is about ensuring that what is installed on-site reflects what was specified. Nine in 10 contractors report that the Act has changed their approach to firestopping – encouraging news – but the fact that the same proportion say there are pain points in achieving full-system compliance highlights an opportunity to reconcile the legislation with real-world applications.

And for distributors, it is about knowing that the products they supply will stand up to scrutiny. These are not signs of resistance – they are signs of an industry working through change together.

At the same time, the regulatory scope is expanding. Firestopping compliance is now a priority across all building types, from high-rise residential to commercial, industrial, and mixed-use developments. This wider reach means that every professional in construction is touched by these requirements, and that consistency matters more than ever. As an industry, our collective challenge is not only to understand the new rules but to embed them into everyday practice.

Manufacturers like British Gypsum recognise the role they play in this transition. Compliance is not just about products, but about support. Clear data, reliable testing, accessible training, and responsive technical guidance are all part of the package. By working hand-in-hand with industry partners, manufacturers can help translate regulatory expectations into practical, achievable steps.

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Nine in 10 contractors report that the Act has changed their approach to firestopping – but that same number also say that achieving full-system compliance remains a challenge. A major part of the problem is knowledge.

58 %

58% of specifiers admit they're not fully confident in specifying firestopping under the new rules, while 68% cite keeping up with evolving regulations as their biggest knowledge gap.

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And just six in 10 contractors say they actively keep their skills up-to-date through training.



* Based on 169 external respondents across the UK supply chain. Research was conducted independently on behalf of British Gypsum.

Firestopping as a Shared Responsibility

Firestopping has always been important, but its role has often been underestimated. In the past, it was too frequently viewed as a finishing detail – something to be addressed late in the project cycle, sometimes under pressure of deadlines or budgets. Today, we know that this approach is no longer acceptable. Firestopping must be seen as central to building design, specification, construction, and long-term performance.

The idea of shared responsibility is vital here. Every part of the supply chain contributes to firestopping outcomes. Architects and specifiers set the direction by incorporating tested systems into their designs. Contractors carry this through by installing those systems correctly and documenting the process. Distributors provide confidence that the right products are available, supported by the right information. Manufacturers underpin the whole process with testing, training, and warranties that provide assurance. None of these roles can succeed in isolation. Only by working together do we achieve consistent, compliant results.

Our research highlights that many professionals feel generally confident in their knowledge, but almost all also recognise gaps.

For instance, the vast majority of architects (96%) and specifiers (88%) report being at least mostly confident in specifying firestopping solutions that meet new regulations, but contractors would benefit from more support as more than one-quarter (28%) say they currently struggle with Building Safety Act compliance in firestopping.

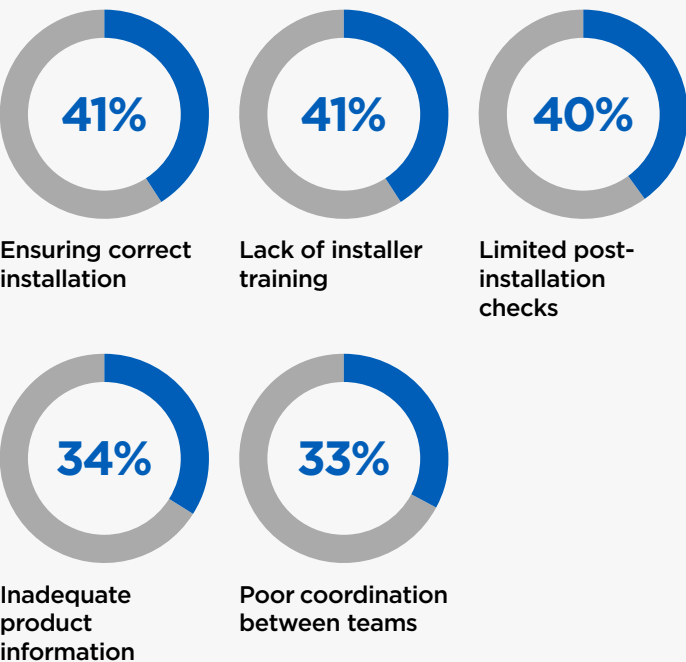
These gaps are not a reflection of neglect, but of the pace of change. Regulations are evolving, building designs are becoming more complex, and labour pressures mean that practical delivery is challenging. In this environment, it is natural for professionals to feel that they are on a learning journey. The important point is that we are on that journey together – and with the right support and resources, everyone in the supply chain is equipped with the tools to meet the latest standards with confidence.

With the right approach in place, we can make a real difference in helping construction professionals feel more confident across the entire firestopping process. Currently, according to our research findings, 81% say maintaining firestopping compliance from specification through to handover can feel challenging. Unclear design specification emerges as the top issue, highlighting a gap between design and delivery.

Yet examples from across the industry show that when firestopping is treated as a collective responsibility, outcomes improve. Early coordination meetings between specifiers, contractors, and manufacturers reduce the risk of late-stage substitutions. Clear communication of design intent, supported by digital tools, helps ensure that what is drawn matches what is built. On-site training, provided in collaboration with manufacturers, builds installer confidence and reduces the likelihood of rework. These examples show that the challenge is real, but the solutions are achievable when we share the responsibility.

By recognising firestopping as a shared responsibility, the industry can strengthen both compliance and trust. It gives clients, regulators, and communities confidence that every stage of the process is working towards the same goal: safety.

Other notable issues include:



This suggests that confidence doesn't always translate to clarity. What architects and specifiers consider appropriate for installation may not align with the practical realities on-site.

* Based on 169 external respondents across the UK supply chain. Research was conducted independently on behalf of British Gypsum.

Perspectives Across the Supply Chain

One of the strengths of the construction industry is its diversity. Different roles bring different expertise, and different challenges. By listening to one another, we gain a fuller picture of how firestopping is experienced in practice, and how we can better support each other.

Architects and specifiers place a high value on simplicity and confidence. Their primary concern is that firestopping solutions are compliant, tested, and warrantied. They also highlight the importance of clear digital resources, such as BIM libraries and online specification guides, which make it easier to embed compliant systems from the start. Many architects tell us that while they prioritise compliance, they also face cost pressures and competing demands. What they want most is confidence that the systems they specify will be carried through into construction without unnecessary substitution.

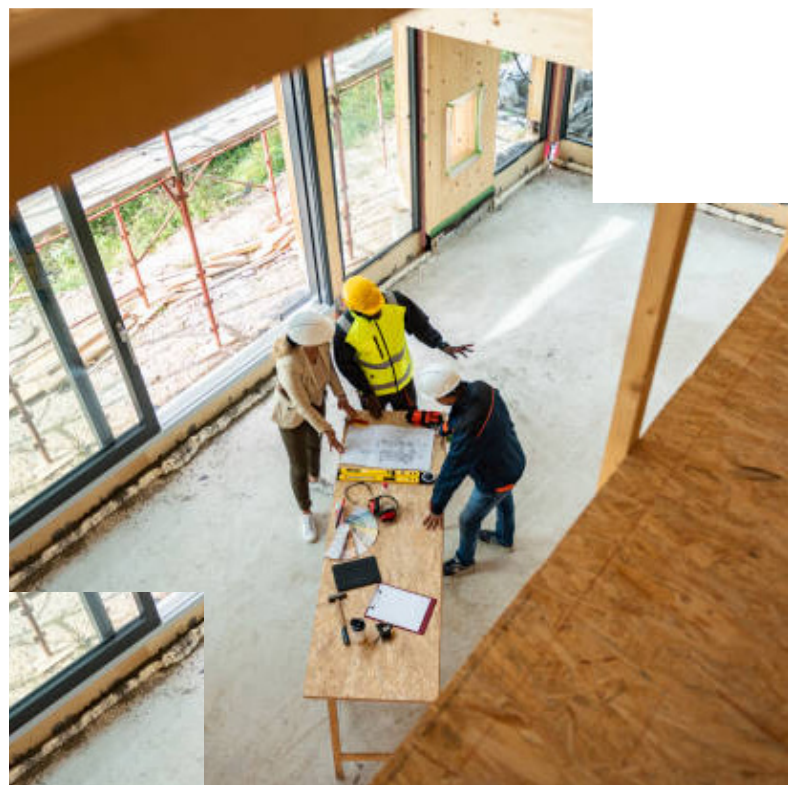
Contractors approach firestopping from a different angle. Their focus is on the practicalities of installation, sequencing, and delivery. They manage multiple trades, tight schedules, and real-world site conditions that may not always align neatly with design drawings. For them, clarity is essential. Systems that are pre-tested and proven to work together give contractors real peace of mind, helping them focus on delivering quality with confidence. It's encouraging to see that 94% of contractors recognise the value of a fully compatible firestopping range, not only for improving efficiency but also for reducing project risk.

Such systems reduce ambiguity, save time, and prevent costly rework – supporting smoother project delivery and helping construction professionals navigate on-site specification with greater clarity and efficiency. While our research shows that around four in 10 projects currently experience remedial work due to firestopping non-compliance, and 88% of contractors sometimes encounter installation challenges on-site, these figures pinpoint the real value of solutions that simplify specification.

Contractors also emphasise the importance of training. Six in 10 contractors are already taking initiative by actively keeping their skills up-to-date through training. But many say that while their teams are skilled, they benefit greatly from refreshers and updates on new systems or regulations. Training is not an add-on, but a vital part of keeping projects on track – and delivering continuing personal professional development, something which is now an industry focus and championed by the main trade body Association for Specialist Fire Protection (ASFP).

Distributors, too, bring a critical perspective. They are the bridge between manufacturers and contractors, and they want confidence that the products they supply are reliable and compliant. Clear product data, straightforward procurement processes, and technical support all help distributors provide better service to their customers. They also highlight the importance of consistency – having access to tested systems that can be supplied together reduces complexity and builds confidence at the point of sale.

Bringing these perspectives together paints a clear picture: while the specific challenges may differ, the underlying need is the same. Everyone in the chain benefits from solutions that are simple, tested, and supported. Everyone values clarity, training, and collaboration. By recognising and respecting these perspectives, we can create a stronger, more connected approach to firestopping.



* Based on 169 external respondents across the UK supply chain. Research was conducted independently on behalf of British Gypsum.

Collaboration, Training, and Support

Perhaps the most consistent theme across our research is the call for greater collaboration and training. Professionals are not asking for lower standards - they are asking for the tools to achieve higher standards more consistently. This is a positive sign: it shows that the industry is motivated, engaged, and committed to doing the right thing, provided the right support is in place.

Training is at the heart of this. Many professionals highlight that while they are aware of regulations, they do not always feel confident in the practical detail. Installers may not always have access to the latest guidance, or may be under pressure to complete tasks quickly. Specifiers may not always have visibility of how their designs are delivered on-site. Distributors may be asked technical questions by customers that they do not feel equipped to answer. These are all opportunities for training to make a tangible difference.

Manufacturers can support in a variety of ways. Formal training programmes, delivered both online and in person, help professionals build confidence in new systems. Practical demonstrations, whether on-site or at training academies, allow installers to see how systems work in real-world conditions. CPD content supports architects and specifiers in staying up-to-date with key areas such as the changing regulatory landscape, liability, and other issues, with tailored materials that strengthens professional development.

Digital tools provide quick, accessible resources that professionals can use at their desks or on-site. The more flexible and varied this support is, the easier it is for professionals to engage with it in a way that suits their needs.

Collaboration is equally important. Early engagement between designers, contractors, and manufacturers can prevent issues before they arise. For example, by discussing potential firestopping details early in the design stage, project teams can avoid last-minute changes that risk compliance. By sharing digital models, teams can align on tested systems and ensure compatibility. By keeping communication open throughout the project lifecycle, everyone can be confident that they are working towards the same goal.

British Gypsum is committed to this kind of support. Our role is not only to provide tested firestopping solutions, but to stand alongside professionals at every stage of the project. That means offering specifiers robust test data and product assurance, giving contractors practical guidance and on-site support, and equipping distributors with clear product information. By providing these resources, we aim to make compliance not a challenge, but a natural part of the process.

British Gypsum's Build Better Academies have achieved **ASFP Training Recognition**, providing independent validation of our training facilities and reinforcing our commitment to developing industry competence and investing in both future tradespeople and our internal personnel.

The Saint-Gobain UK & Ireland Build Better Academy is now hosting two free CITB e-learning courses to support fire safety awareness across the construction industry. These two courses are designed to empower every member of the construction workforce with the skills and awareness needed to prevent and respond to fire risks.



Fire Awareness in Construction and the Built Environment

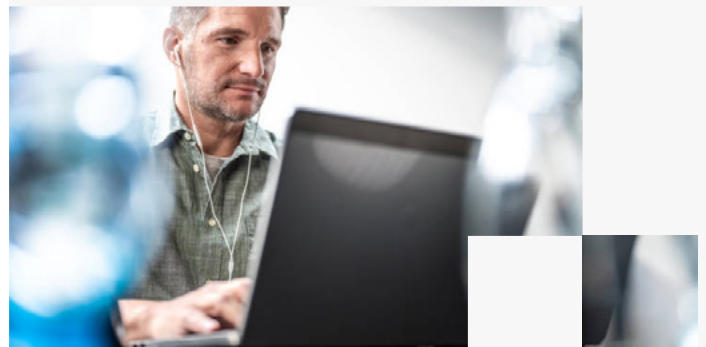
Overview:

A Level 1 awareness course covering how fires start and spread, common ignition sources, fire prevention and protection measures, and safe evacuation procedures.

Suitable for:

All site workers, staff, and subcontractors.

[View the module here](#) ➔



Fire Safety in Buildings

Overview:

A deeper dive into fire safety legislation, holistic fire prevention, compartmentation, escape routes, and quality workmanship. Developed in collaboration with Build UK and Working Group 2.

Suitable for:

Site managers, supervisors, designers, and anyone involved post-construction.

[View the module here](#) ➔

Looking Forward Together

The future of firestopping - and of construction more broadly - is one of greater collaboration, digitalisation, and shared accountability. The trends we see today will only strengthen in the years ahead. Digital tools like BIM will become more central, not only at the design stage but throughout a building's lifecycle. Training and accreditation will continue to grow in importance, ensuring that skills keep pace with expectations. Fully tested, system-based solutions will become the norm, responding to the call of 97% of construction professionals who say the market needs them. These systems will provide reassurance and reduce complexity. And above all, the recognition that safety is a shared responsibility will deepen.

This future is not something to be feared - it is something to be welcomed. It represents a shift towards a more resilient, transparent, and trusted industry. And it is one that we can all contribute to, no matter our role. By staying open to collaboration, by investing in training, and by choosing solutions that are tested and supported, we can move forward together with confidence.

British Gypsum is committed to being part of this journey. Our research shows that 93% of distributors report customers are asking for firestopping solutions that integrate with British Gypsum products - a clear signal that quality, tested products, alongside practical support from a single, trusted provider, can help teams achieve best practice firestopping compliantly, confidently, and effectively.

Our aim is not only to provide products, but to innovate in this area - developing and testing solutions that help us build safer buildings. Where standard test methodologies do not yet exist, we work to fill those gaps, contributing to industry practice, informing future test methods, and sharing learnings through detailed junction specifications.



Best Practice Guidance for Fire Rated Junctions

This guide was developed to address the gap left by Approved Document B, which does not prescribe specific test methods for the junctions between fire-resisting elements - such as partitions, walls, floors, and ceilings. It provides a benchmark for best practice - grounded in evidence, shaped by experience, and driven by a shared commitment to safety.

Read it here [→](#)



Best Practice Guidance for Openings Within Fire Rated Systems

This guidance has been prepared with the context of allowing any firestopping solution that has been successfully tested in an appropriate standard flexible supporting construction to be utilised within British Gypsum partitions and systems.

Read it here [→](#)

We also strive to listen, learn, and work alongside the industry. We draw on our extensive knowledge and experience in-house to continue to innovate and lead change for the better. We believe that by doing so, we can help build safer spaces, stronger partnerships, and a more sustainable future for all.

* Based on 169 external respondents across the UK supply chain. Research was conducted independently on behalf of British Gypsum.

Conclusion

Firestopping is not an isolated task - it is a thread that runs through the entire construction process. From design, to procurement, to installation, to long-term maintenance, it connects everyone involved in creating safe buildings. This Insight Report has shown that while challenges exist, the will to overcome them is strong. By treating firestopping as a shared responsibility, by valuing collaboration, and by supporting one another with training and tested solutions, we can deliver not just compliance, but confidence.

The journey ahead will not be without its difficulties. But by acting together, we can make sure that firestopping is no longer seen as a challenge, but as a cornerstone of safer, more resilient construction. This is not the responsibility of any one group. It is the responsibility of us all.

And together, it is one we can achieve.



About this Insight Report

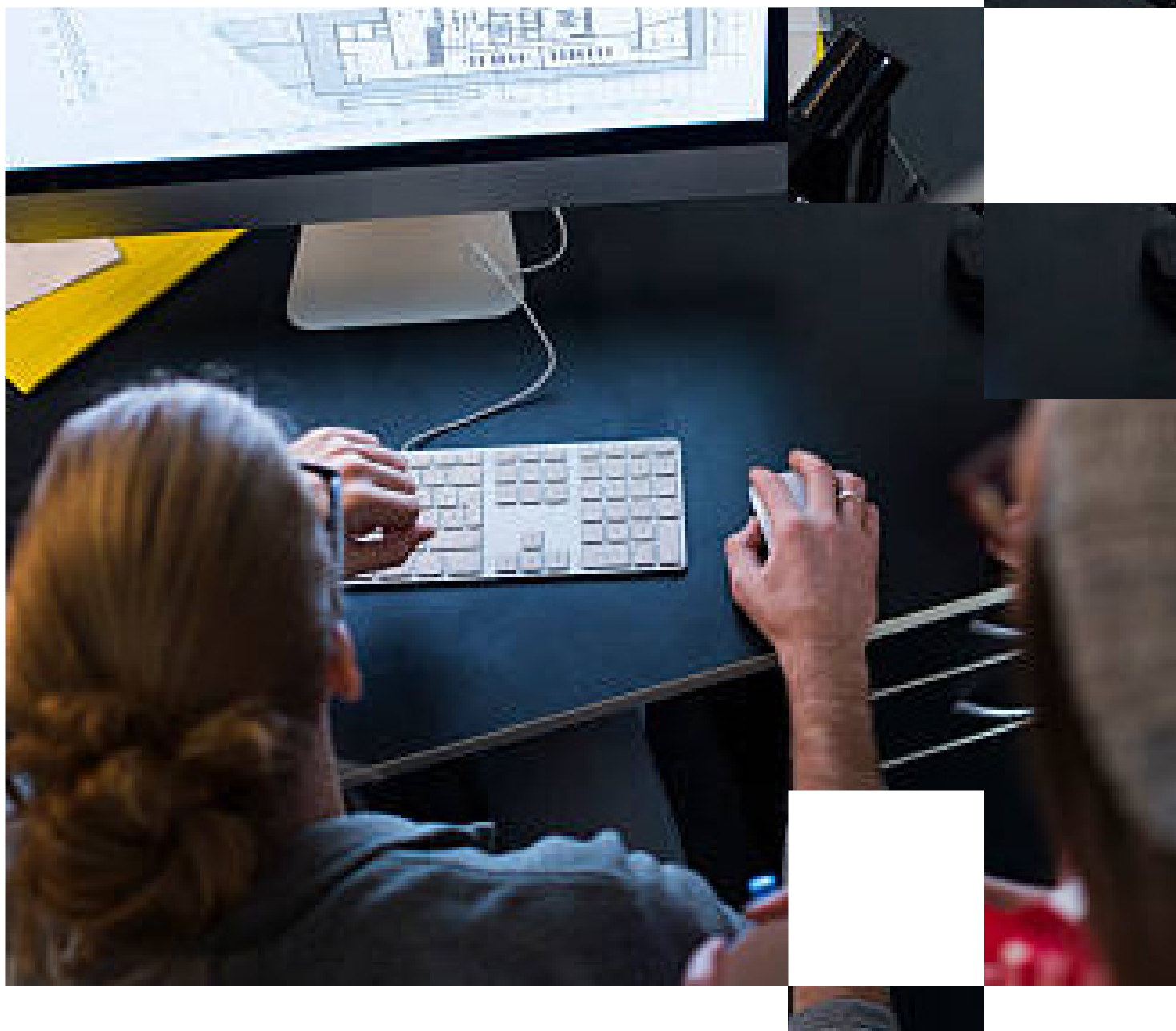
This Insight Report is based on research with architects, specifiers, contractors, and distributors across the UK. It brings together a wide range of perspectives to reflect the real-world challenges and opportunities faced by the industry. Its purpose is not to provide definitive answers, but to contribute to the ongoing conversation about how we can all build safer, stronger, and more resilient buildings for the future.

The research is based on feedback from 169 respondents across the UK supply chain, covering companies of all sizes, from small businesses to larger firms with over 250 employees.



About British Gypsum

British Gypsum, part of Saint-Gobain Interior Solutions, is a leading UK manufacturer of interior lining systems, including drylining partitions, wall linings, ceilings and plaster finishes. With a heritage dating back to 1917, we've been at the forefront of innovation in construction, helping to create better buildings where people and communities can flourish. As trusted partners to architects, contractors, and plastering professionals, we combine technical know-how, pioneering solutions, and a genuine care for people and the planet. Our UK manufacturing is supported by purpose-built Training Academies, a UKAS-accredited Building Test Centre, and a proud mining legacy spanning over 150 years. As part of Saint-Gobain Interior Solutions, alongside Isover, the insulation experts and specialists, our purpose is to make the world a better home for all, by creating high performance drylining and insulation solutions that take care of people and the planet.



Meet the Team

Introducing the sales team who are here to help you learn more about our Firestopping range and support you in finding the right solution for your project.



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