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Real estate touches upon every aspect of our lives, from the homes and offices we live and work in, through to the places we go for entertainment, and as a foundation for the pensions and investments on which so many people rely. Indeed, 70% of the planet’s wealth is tied up in real estate, which proves the extent to which the market underpins the global economy. Yet this also leaves the sector vulnerable to exploitation, and is a principal reason why RICS is leading the fight against criminal activity in the built environment.

Working with industry stakeholders and governments, in February RICS published the global professional statement, Countering bribery and corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing, to further tackle these more negative aspects of our industry. RICS professionals are a crucial line of defence against those who seek to use real estate as a vehicle for serious and organised crime. This important piece of work demonstrates the real leadership our profession provides the industry.

Looking ahead, we will be addressing responsible investment at next month’s 2019 World Built Environment Forum Summit in New York. The built environment is a great force for good, and RICS is committed to ensuring that this is the case now and for future generations.

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Cleaning up? / The UK government is going after money launderers and their ill-gotten gains. How is the property industry responding?

Time to stop putting people in boxes / A new breed of socially aware developers are championing a more human approach to housing the homeless

Fast out of the blocks / Can anyone keep up with Laura Collins MRICS, the RICS Matrics Young Surveyor of the Year?

The bottom line / Modern slavery practices are still endemic across the construction industry supply chain. Time for a complete culture change?
Childcare in the workplace / Guendalina Dondé on the ethics of AI / Chartered territory / Intergenerational living /
One of the big real estate trends this outgoing decade will become known for is the rise of the coworker. Cushman & Wakefield’s Coworking 2018 report found that the stock of space in London grew 270% between 2007 and 2017, and Dublin, Stockholm and Berlin are all cities to watch in terms of growth. With the way we work becoming more agile, it’s no surprise that freelancers, small businesses and, increasingly, larger organisations should be flocking to flexible workspaces that provide members with a place to work, and clients.

It is now also the norm for mothers to be in employment, and entrepreneurs have seen a gap in the market for parents who need flexible workspace and childcare combined. Such arrangements do not always save costs, but they do help with juggling pick-ups, drop-offs, and other commitments.

Examples abound — from MOMentum Coworking in Pennsylvania to juggleHUB in Berlin. London’s Cuckooz Nest was founded by friends Charlie Rosier and Fabienne O’Neill. Frustrated at the lack of affordable, flexible options when Rosier returned to work as her own boss, she dug deeper and learned that one in every seven freelancers is a working mum.

With backgrounds in real estate investment and events management respectively, the duo saw a business opportunity. They converted a former lighting showroom into a workspace and Ofsted-registered creche, and partnered with childcare agency Manny & Me in order to provide registered childminders. They gained both D1 and B1 usage after a lengthy planning process, and now offer separate entrances for the building’s two user groups (the ground floor is given over to children, while adults work in the basement). The service operates on a pay-as-you-go basis, with members buying a bundle of hours and using them when they want to, with as little as 24-hours’ notice.

As well as the logistical benefits of having somewhere free from distractions to work away from home, combining coworking with childcare also has emotional benefits. A BBC survey found that nearly half of women felt lonely during their maternity leave, while a study by the British Council for Offices showed that 70% of coworking members feel strongly that they are part of a community. In the case of Cuckooz Nest members, Rosier and O’Neill say that they have seen the difference that on-site childcare can have, especially when new mums and dads return to work. Users can bond as professionals as well as parents, collaborating on both fronts.

After their fledgling success, Rosier and O’Neill are looking to spread Cuckooz Nest’s wings, and last month launched a crowdfunding campaign to aid their expansion. They argue that things must go further than Goldman Sachs operating an on-site creche in London — as it has since 2003 — or WeWork running a single Montessori school in New York. Instead, they want on-site nurseries and subsidised childcare costs for employees to become the norm. Pledges of more than £2,000 to the crowdfunding campaign will be rewarded with free childcare in the new workspace facilities.

To this end, Cuckooz Nest is now in talks with landlords to operate the brand in commercial developments. Rosier and O’Neill say that this will make corporate tenants more likely to take on a particular office let. If they are proved right, then expect to see the concept grow and grow.

Helen Parton is a former editor of OnOffice magazine. We will be exploring the future of work at our WBEF Summit, register for your place today at rics.org/wbef
Companies need to know the impact that new technologies might have on their business.

Guendalina Dondè
Head of Research, Institute of Business Ethics

In March 2016, Microsoft introduced Tay, an AI chatbot, on to Twitter. Its aim was to improve the bot’s communications skills through interaction with the users of the social media platform. After only one day in a human community, Tay had mutated into a Hitler-loving, incest-promoting, “Bush did 9/11”-proclaiming liability.

In the intervening years, AI systems have become even more powerful. On the one hand, this opens up incredible opportunities to use technology to improve the way we live. Just think about the potential that AI can have in reducing pollution or improving diagnostics for preventable diseases.

On the other hand, the applications could be disastrous, if the ethical impacts of algorithms and AI decision-making are not carefully thought through. As Microsoft learned, because AI can learn from data gathered from humans, there is always a risk that some human biases are then reflected in a machine’s decision-making.

Artificial intelligence technologies are not ethical or unethical per se. The real issue is the manner in which businesses use them, which should never undermine human ethical values. An example can be found in the US criminal justice system, which is increasingly resorting to the use of AI to ease the burden of managing such a large case load. After investigating the criminal risk assessment system used in sentencing and parole hearings across the US, New York-based non-profit ProPublica argued that it was misrepresenting the recidivism risks of convicts, suggesting that there is a systematic racial bias in the risk estimation.

It is essential that companies know the risks, the impacts and side effects that new technologies might have on their business and stakeholders. To this end, we have identified the founding values that form the cornerstone for an ethical framework of ARTIFICIAL Intelligence in business: Accuracy, Respect of privacy, Transparency, Interpretability, Fairness, Integrity, Control, Impact, Accountability and Learning.

These values and principles are intended to help guide decision-making, which is key to promoting ethical behaviour. They could be applied to questions such as: do we understand how these systems work; are we in control of this technology; and have the risks of its usage been considered, before adopting a new AI technology can help companies minimise the ethical risks of AI and maximise its benefits.

We, as users and designers of AI, have the power to decide what the future will look like. We can’t blame the machines for the potentially unethical impact they might have on society. Business, in particular, has an important role to play. Tackling the ethical implications of AI’s use is a complex field and will require a multi-stakeholder approach. But there are some measures that individual organisations can adopt to minimise the risk of ethical lapses due to the improper use of AI. Introducing “ethics tests” for AI machines to measure how they respond to situations that present ethical dilemmas; or training people to use AI systems efficiently, effectively and ethically are two examples.

The choices that we make today will have significant consequences on the future of AI. The ethical values that shape our society don’t change because of technological developments, but their practical application might. Business, policymakers and the public alike have a responsibility to ensure that AI systems are used to serve the interests of humanity, and not the other way around.

Explore the risks and opportunities that technology brings to the profession at rics.org/surveyingtechnology
The biggest challenge in construction is...

As we’re all about trying to make things better this issue, where should we start? Skills are the top concern for RICS’ Twitter followers, and on p28 you can read how the labour shortage contributes to the sector’s modern slavery problem.

#RICSMODUS ON TWITTER

@Greenginger_uk
7 March
Always find #RICSMODUS a good read and interesting to see focus on digital twins and blockchain as @UKGBC are also exploring these this month

@SurveyorMursell
6 March
What’s the mood in your business over Brexit? 35% are preparing for the worst according to the recent article in #RICSMODUS. It’s business as usual here along with 21% of the poll.

@Alex_hrllp
14 February
Love the piece about social mobility in the latest @RICSnews Modus. Very poignant part about work experience leading to surveying also.

@Louattwood
6 February
An interesting edition of #modus on the importance of #publicspace design for people not cars @RICSnews

43% Skills shortage

9% Supply chain transparency

28% Paper-thin margins

20% Fear of innovation

3% Skill shortage

9% Supply chain transparency
As the world faces up to ageing populations, rising living costs for young people and a new loneliness “epidemic”, one Italian city is pioneering an approach to tackle all three, writes Debika Ray.

In 2018, the problem of loneliness rocketed up the global health agenda. The British government appointed its first Minister for Loneliness; Ipsos and the US health insurer Cigna identified a loneliness “epidemic” based on a survey of 20,000 American adults’ sense of social isolation; and the EU revealed that 32% of over-65s across its member states now live alone. At the same time, young people in cities and regions across the world find themselves struggling to afford their living costs. In England, for example, the Institute for Fiscal Studies reports that house prices have risen by 173% in two decades. Rents have gone up from an average of £140 to £200 per week over the same period, while average pay for 25- to 34-year-olds rose by only 10%.

Now, an initiative in Italy is aiming to tackle both these problems at the same time. Milan — one of the country’s most expensive cities — has 180,000 students, 72% of whom come from elsewhere. Meanwhile, 320,000 of the city’s residents are over the age of 65, and many have homes that are bigger than they need.

Prendi in Casa Uno Studente — roughly translated as “adopt a student” — matches up a “self-sufficient retired person with space at home” and a young person looking for a place to live. The student pays their host a contribution of €250–€280 every month for a safe and comfortable home and, in return for this subsidised rent, they help with housework and provide company. This companionship is not only positive for the host, but also, potentially, for the student. According to a 2018 study by the BBC, people aged 16–24 experience loneliness more often and more intensely than any other age group. A total of 40% of 16–24-year-olds surveyed said they felt lonely “often” or “very often”.

Since the scheme launched in 2004, it has made more than 650 matches. As a whole, Italy has the second-oldest population in the world after Japan, with 23% of its inhabitants aged over 65. But as other developed countries face up to their own ageing populations and skyrocketing rents, similar schemes are beginning to emerge elsewhere. In 2016, the UK-based flatshare website Spareroom revealed that the number of users on its site who were aged over 65 had risen by 600% in five years — suggesting ample opportunity for Milan-style matches on a more informal basis. As the organisers of Prendi in Casa Uno Studente say: “The project is based on a very simple idea: to bring two generations together for mutual help and constructive confrontation.”

Find out more about the role our profession can play in addressing the challenges associated with ageing populations at rics.org/newforold

INTERGENERATIONAL LIVING: OLD PEOPLE, NEW APPROACHES

LIVE-IN STUDENTS
Humanitas is a retirement community in the Netherlands where hundreds of older people live in apartments, rooms and care facilities, with on-site shops, services and activities. Living alongside them are six students, who commit to spending at least 30 hours a month engaging in activities such as helping out with meals in exchange for board and lodging. A core principle of the scheme is that the students must feel fulfilled and liberated, rather than seeing it as a purely transactional arrangement. Another is that each student must be a “good neighbour” and cause no inconvenience.

COMMUNITY CO-OPS
The first initiative by Airbnb’s in-house design studio, the Cedar House in Yoshino, Japan, is operated as a cooperative by the town’s elder residents. The building includes community space as well as Airbnb rental accommodation, and all income generated from paying guests stays in the local community. As Airbnb plans to move further into housebuilding, it remains to be seen how far this altruistic spirit extends across the company. In Japan itself, however, such initiatives point the way toward engaging with rapidly changing demographics that call for increasing care in the community.

BUILDING FOR THE AGES
Architects are increasingly conceiving new housing with intergenerational living in mind, such as Levitt Bernstein’s Buccleuch House in Hackney and MaccreanorLavington’s Block R5 in King’s Cross, while Mae’s Aylesbury Estate redevelopment in south London includes 121 flats for local seniors. The project also features a community centre described as a “21st-century almshouse” with private and social spaces. Also in the UK, the Kohab is a build-to-rent brand aiming to bring “old and young adults together under one roof to live in mutual support”.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM...

LA MIA CASA E LA TUA CASA

As the world faces up to ageing populations, rising living costs for young people and a new loneliness “epidemic”, one Italian city is pioneering an approach to tackle all three, writes Debika Ray.
If the UK government cracks down on money laundering, will other countries follow suit? And, if not, will it be the property industry or the criminals who are...

Cleaning Up?

Words by Adam Branson  Illustration by MMJ Studio
Back in July 2015, the UK government set out its stance on foreign criminals using the country’s property as a way to launder their ill-gotten gains. The prime minister at the time, David Cameron, committed to exposing the use of “anonymous shell companies” to buy property in the UK, adding that: “London is not a place to stash your dodgy cash.”

The following year, the same government announced that measures to combat money laundering would include a mandatory register of overseas ownership, and in July 2018 the draft Registration of Overseas Entities bill was duly published. Under the terms of the bill, offshore entities that own UK property will be required to identify their true owners on a publicly available register, or face unlimited fines and prison sentences of up to two years for “any member of the entity”.

So, just how robust are the plans as they stand? And, assuming the bill is enacted, where do they place the UK in terms of the anti-money laundering (AML) regimes to be found in other property hotspots?

**Industry support**

Certainly, there can be little doubt that something needs to be done. Four years ago, the National Crime Agency (NCA), often dubbed the British FBI, stated that overseas criminal gangs were using British property transactions to launder “billions of pounds in corrupt funds”.

More recently, in December last year, the NGO Transparency International published a report in which it analysed 237 corruption and money-laundering cases. It identified 1,201 companies from six of the UK’s 14 overseas territories that had featured in cases of grand corruption and associated high-end money laundering.

The UK property industry is largely supportive of the draft bill, not least because companies that are both registered and own property in the UK are already required to log details of beneficial owners on the Persons of Significant Control Register. “We’ve always been quite supportive of the government’s moves to tackle money laundering by introducing greater transparency,” says Rachel Kelly, senior policy officer at the British Property Federation. “We also think it’s right that the government levels the playing field between UK companies that own UK property and overseas ones.”

Marc Schneiderman, director at London high-end agent Arlington Residential, adds that the bill should also help damp down inflation at the top of the market in the UK capital. “Anything that encourages transparency and avoids over-inflation of values in the market is a good thing,” he says. “I think it will change the top end.”

The bill may also help agents to do their jobs more efficiently. Regulation 18 of the Money Laundering Regulations 2017 requires that estate agents have to conduct know your customer (KYC) checks on people they are doing business with, and file a suspicious activities report (SAR) to the NCA if they have any concerns. “If there is any doubt about who they might be or where the money has come from, we will take the appropriate action,” says Schneiderman. “And if that means walking away from a transaction, we will walk away.”

He adds that equipping oneself to conduct KYC checks may be time-consuming, but it is neither difficult nor expensive — and he has very little sympathy for the argument that smaller agents don’t have the resources to comply with the regulations. “If you’re not equipped to do the checks, you need to be doing something else,” he says. “If we can’t identify who we’re doing business with and they won’t be forthcoming, then we don’t want to do business with them.”

The register, Schneiderman adds, would avoid the need to interrogate an entity’s origins and its beneficial owners, as the

"*IF WE CAN’T IDENTIFY WHO WE’RE DOING BUSINESS WITH, WE DON’T WANT TO DO BUSINESS WITH THEM*"

MARC SCHNEIDERMAN
ARLINGTON RESIDENTIAL

**HOW MONEY LAUNDERING WORKS**

Following the trail from Uzbekistan to Gibraltar, via the British Virgin Islands

The purpose of laundering money is to conceal the fact that it has been accumulated via corrupt or illegal means. The obscurity available to companies registered in offshore locations is helpful because beneficial owners are anonymised and are therefore free to invest in assets without a great deal of scrutiny. Transferring funds between multiple offshore entities can further muddy the waters, until illegitimately acquired money can be transformed into apparently legitimate assets.

For instance, in October 2018, the UK’s Serious Fraud Office joined US and Dutch law enforcement agencies in investigating Gulnara Karimova, eldest daughter of the former president of Uzbekistan. Court cases revealed that Karimova had received £606m in shares and payments from mobile phone companies in exchange for business access to the former Soviet state.

According to Transparency International, financial documents show that most of these payments were sent from two firms registered in the British Virgin Islands and received by a company registered in Gibraltar. This latter company then acted as the gateway to a complex network of shell companies, including more BVI-incorporated entities. This allowed Karimova and her associates to purchase high-end property and goods around the world without the ill-gotten source of their funds being apparent to legitimate vendors.
WHAT WILL THE NEIGHBOURS SAY?

In 2017, Transparency International took a sample of 14 typical high-end London residential developments and analysed Land Registry data to understand who was buying them. Its findings show what proportion of the total 2,066 units are owned by overseas investors, and what proportion of those come from territories classified as having a high corruption risk according to the NGO’s Corruption Perceptions Index.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Overseas Investors</th>
<th>Corruption Risk Jurisdictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Tower Bridge</td>
<td>76.05%</td>
<td>41.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 City Road Tower 1 and 2</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>14.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southbank Place Unit 1A</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
<td>53.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore Wharf</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>44.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circus West, Unit 1</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
<td>39.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battersea Power Station</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City North Island Estate</td>
<td>77.78%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan Loft Gardens, One Nine Elms</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merano Residences</td>
<td>50.86%</td>
<td>25.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Gardens Elephant Park</td>
<td>92.59%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Stage, Shoreditch</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Fifty One Southwark Bridge Road</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster Quarter</td>
<td>87.37%</td>
<td>39.13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Own beneficiaries gave details of place of residence.

SOURCE: TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL
information would be freely available. He also points out that recent tax changes make the use of company structures to buy property far less attractive, and therefore such practices are more likely to do with maintaining anonymity.

However, for all this positivity, there are some concerns about the bill as it stands. Kelly is worried about investors getting caught out – not because they have done something wrong but out of sheer ignorance. Given that sanctions include criminal prosecution, she believes this could damage the UK’s reputation as a fair and transparent place to invest. “The UK is incredibly good at attracting overseas investment,” she says. “In terms of commercial property, we have about £140bn invested from overseas, which is roughly a third of all investment. We want to make sure that investment keeps coming in, and that any new rules are as fair and transparent as possible, and don’t accidentally penalise people.”

Rose-Anna Higgins, senior associate at international law firm Burges Salmon, says the danger is particularly acute given that owners will have only 18 months to register themselves. “The first some of those people are going to hear about the rules is when they come to sell the property,” she says. “It’s a question of how they get contacted. There will be contact details on the Land Registry, but if a property hasn’t transacted for years, those details could be well out of date.”

Finally, there is an issue around the fact that the proposed register is to be held by Companies House, which has little ability as a registrar to interrogate the information it receives. “Enforcement against people who file misleading information is an issue,” says Ben Cowdock, senior research officer at Transparency International. “Currently, this is not being done at any scale by Companies House for UK-registered companies.”

The limitations of Companies House are the subject of a separate government review, and it may well see its powers beefed up – but that is unlikely to happen in parallel with the Registration of Overseas Entities bill’s progression through parliament. In the meantime, Cowdock says that other work is being carried out to ensure the registrar does have the statutory powers to carry out checks. “This could possibly be done by [combining] data sets they have on owners and officers with existing datasets with PEPs (politically exposed persons) databases,” he ventures.

Assuming that such issues are overcome and the bill is enacted, the UK would
probably have the toughest AML regime in the world when it comes to property. International standards are overseen by intergovernmental body the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which is related to the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). Thijs Stoffer, founder of Stoffer Consulting in Switzerland, has represented the property industry on the FATF for a number of years and says that it is working well. “What the FATF has been doing is putting out guidance for [real estate] agents and making recommendations to governments,” he explains. “Governments are supposed to agree these recommendations and put them in place, before talking to the private sector to explain how things will change.”

In reality, however, responses to the FATF’s recommendations vary from country to country. “In EU countries, there are EU directives, and they are gold-plated on top of the FATF recommendations,” says Stoffer. “Other countries aren’t so highly regulated. In central and eastern Europe, and in some African and South American countries, they are not so strong in this field. However, one could say that most ‘Western’ jurisdictions have adopted some sort of regulation.”

Theory vs practice
What is clear is that the establishment of a register of overseas owners of property is still far from being the norm, even in long-established property markets. For instance, a 2017 Transparency International report, Doors wide open: corruption and real estate in four key markets, looked at the steps being taken in four territories: Australia, Canada, the US and the UK. The report acknowledged that the UK is in the midst of establishing a register, but it was otherwise damning about the international situation: “There are few requirements and checks on foreign companies and individuals wishing to purchase property,” it said. “In all four countries, foreign companies do not need to provide information on their real owners to any sort of company registry in order to purchase property or to the land registry upon registration. Australia is the only country that has any checks on foreign investment, but these are not designed to prevent money laundering.”

Cowdock responds: “The establishment of the register would place the UK at the top in terms of corporate transparency around the world. So far, there are only a few countries that have registers, and in most places, they aren’t publicly available. But, although the UK will be a leader, any country remains vulnerable to illicit flows if its regulations aren’t implemented or adhered to properly.”

Speaking off the record, one international expert agrees that the rules on paper can differ wildly from the impact on the ground. “I recently asked people in one part of the world who they reported to if they had suspicions about someone or something,” the expert says. “They looked at me blankly, because there doesn’t appear to be anyone they can report to.”

It also has to be asked why registers of overseas ownership are not being taken up more widely around the world. According to Stoffer, one of the main reasons is that policing the information is incredibly difficult. Governments, he says, are wary of placing requirements on professionals that may prove impossible to fulfil, and which would therefore add regulatory burdens without actually stemming the flow of illicit cash. “Say there is a company buying a nice property in Kensington, and that company has four shareholders” says Stoffer. “One is in Saudi Arabia, one is in Nigeria, one is in the UK and the other is in the US. When the professionals acting on the transaction do their due diligence and call these four countries to figure out who the owners of the company actually are, they find out that each shareholder is another company, which in turn is owned by three more companies, and so on and so on.”

Peter Bolton King FRICS, global director of professionalism and ethics at RICS, agrees that tracking down genuine beneficial owners can be fiendishly difficult. “This caused a real problem in Canada,” he says. “Real estate agents found themselves in an impossible situation trying to work out the beneficial ownership based on all sorts of weird offshore companies.”

What’s more, some territories have valid reasons for not wanting to make registers of overseas ownership public, says Nimesh Shah, partner at London-based accountant Blick Rothenberg. “You are putting people on the radar who own valuable real estate,” he says. “I have clients in countries where you have to be careful about how much wealth you are seen to have, because there are kidnapping threats all the time.”

So, while the UK’s plans look set to make it a world leader in transparency, it seems doubtful whether many other countries will follow its example. Rightly or wrongly, for the most part, offshore will continue to mean a long way out of sight.
TIME TO STOP PUTTING PEOPLE IN BOXES

Homelessness is an issue that isn’t solved by merely putting a roof over someone’s head. Stuart Watson reports on some more enlightened approaches
More than a decade has passed since the UN’s last survey of global homelessness. In 2005, it estimated that there were 100 million homeless people worldwide. Now, in the wake of the global financial crisis and increased mass migration, this will most likely have increased.

In the developing world, it is perhaps unsurprising that many families and individuals face housing insecurity. But homelessness has few boundaries, and rough sleeping is now increasingly visible in some of the developed world’s wealthiest cities, too.

It is an issue that goes to the heart of what built environment professionals do. While the causes may be social and economic, the lack of four walls and a roof for everyone feels like something the property and construction sectors should be trying to resolve — as some in the industry are determined to do. Recent years have seen designs for a plethora of inexpensive temporary housing solutions, including homes made from repurposed shipping containers and easy-to-erect tent-based structures.

Perhaps the most widely adopted new approach has been the one pioneered by the “tiny house” movement, which advocates living simply in small homes. This idea has been appropriated as a way to provide low-cost accommodation for people in housing need, and settlements of small wooden cabins have now appeared in several US states. They have proved especially popular on the west coast, where rough sleeping has surged in recent years.
These shelters may be better than nothing, but the use of tiny houses and other cheap, temporary solutions has been criticised by some homelessness campaigners. “Any type of built environment that is intended to assist people with histories of homelessness, or who are currently experiencing it, should accord a level of dignity and respect that we would expect under a normal human rights convention,” argues Barbara Poppe, a homelessness consultant and former executive director of the US Interagency Council on Homelessness. “It should be non-stigmatising, and have access to running water and sanitation, heat and light.

“Once communities start treating people who are homeless as ‘the other’, then they come up with substandard responses, because they believe that homeless people should be grateful for it, or that this is the best they can do,” says Poppe. “Some of the tiny homes villages I have visited in the US are surrounded by a chain-link fence on a gravel surface, with no running water and no electrical hook-up. They are quite stigmatising because anyone who walks by can see that these people are set aside, and sort of quarantined.”

Tiny chances

Building shelters that are only one step up from a cardboard box and leaving homeless people to moulder in them is clearly not a sustainable plan. However, some pioneers are using aspects of the tiny house approach to create schemes that tap into support networks to produce better long-term outcomes.

Edinburgh-based Social Bite started life as a sandwich shop. Its owners had a vague notion of using its profits for good causes, and it evolved into a homelessness-focused charity. After raising money through a series of “sleep in the park” events, it used the funds to found the Social Bite Village on disused land in the city’s Granton district. Now housing 20 people who were previously homeless, the village is composed of small, prefabricated, two-bedroom “nest houses”, built around a central hub that provides support services.

“It is a cycle-breaking intervention,” says Social Bite corporate engagement manager Andrew Bailie. “Temporary accommodation in hostels and bed and breakfasts is only meant to be for a couple of days, but some people get trapped in it for months and, inevitably, get further and further away from society. We identify people who want to live in the village, who, with 12 to 18 months of supported good-quality housing, will be able to get back on their feet.”

Alistair Harris has been living in one of the Social Bite homes for three months. A 24-year-old from Edinburgh who became homeless after a family breakdown, he has recently started work at a hotel in the city. “The company I now work for contacted the village and I managed to get a part-time job there,” he says. “There are fantastic opportunities thanks to the amazing people and staff in the village.”

Construction of the village was supported by local surveying and construction companies, which provided their services for free. “Homelessness is a massive issue and everyone is becoming more aware of it,” says Mike Armstrong FRICS, managing director at Pottie Wilson, which provided quantity surveying assistance. “You don’t have to go too far into town to see it for yourself.”

In Seattle, BLOCK Architects and non-profit organisation Facing Homelessness have developed another variation on this theme. The BLOCK Project encourages local homeowners to host a small, environmentally friendly “block house” in their back yard, to exploit under-utilised space in low-density housing districts. “We have two of the wealthiest people in the world — Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates — living in Seattle,” says BLOCK Architects co-founder, Jenn LaFreniere, “but we also have one of the worst homeless crises in the world, with over 12,000 homeless people in the county.” The project
also seeks to break down the divisions between homeless and homed communities, creating an enduring support network for the inhabitant of each block house. “The closer we come [to one another], the more we feel,” says LaFreniere, “and the more we feel, the more we act.”

One of the largest tiny house projects is located in Austin, Texas, where property developer Alan Graham has founded the Community First! Village. This 27 acre (11ha) site is made up of mobile homes and tiny houses accommodating more than 200 people, around 80% of whom were formerly homeless. Graham says there is a waiting list for a further 24 acres (9.7ha) set to open this winter, and argues that small living spaces encourage people to socialise and engage in community activity. “Our model is relational,” he says. “It says the characteristics of home have nothing to do with shelter or a structure. It has everything to do with our relationships with each other.”

Other innovative projects also build on ideas of personal development. The UK Community Self-Build Agency (CSBA) has so far undertaken five projects in which armed forces veterans who are in – or at risk of – housing need, help to build their own flats, learning valuable construction skills in the process. Former soldier Ken Hames is now chief operating officer at CSBA, and says that the process is as important as the end result. “You have a year to 18 months during a build to give somebody care, support and mentoring to get them back into employment,” he explains. “That is key for independent living. A lot of soldiers are used to being told what to do. We help build up their initiative and get them used to working in a different sort of team.”

Permanent marker
For people who have been homeless for a long time, and who may have physical or mental health conditions and/or substance abuse problems, an even greater level of support is necessary. In some US cities, the permanent supportive housing (PSH) model has met with great success, providing ongoing on-site assistance. “When done well, PSH really transforms people’s lives,” says Poppe.

In New York, Breaking Ground has been creating PSH schemes since 1990. It now operates 4,000 units, with another 1,000 in the pipeline. A non-profit organisation, it started out by converting an empty hotel on Times Square, and has progressed to building new schemes from scratch. Each PSH apartment block houses a mix of formerly homeless people and low-income workers who are in danger of falling into housing need, along with the support services needed to help them live stable, independent lives.

Despite strong arguments for their effectiveness, proposals to establish new PSH blocks are often met with opposition. “We meet with everybody in the community, but it doesn’t allay all their fears,” admits Breaking Ground’s president and CEO, Brenda Rosen. “The best way to demonstrate that we will be an asset to a community is to invite people into our buildings. We have a building in Lower Manhattan that opened in 1999, and to this day there are people in that neighbourhood who don’t have any idea that 250 formerly homeless people live in it. Our goal is to construct beautiful buildings that can’t be distinguished from any other in your neighbourhood.”

Those working to alleviate homelessness frequently stress that every homeless individual is a person just the same as any other – they simply lack a permanent home. The most effective built environment solutions to homelessness are always likely to be those that not only provide shelter, but which also manage to embody that basic human understanding.

Our Pledge 150 campaign will deliver 150 bed spaces to young people in need across the UK. To donate visit rics.org/pledge150

Housing First
How Finland faced up to homelessness

Homelessness is on the rise in all European countries – except one. Finland has bucked the trend with a strategy that serves an example of what can be achieved through a coordinated approach. At the heart of the Finnish method is the principle of “housing first”, which sees homeless people provided with a permanent, unconditional home before being encouraged to seek help with other things that are affecting their wellbeing, such as substance abuse and mental health conditions. Advocates for the policy claim that homelessness in Finland has fallen by about two-thirds as a direct result.

One of the drivers of this model has been Finnish housing association the Y-Foundation, which stresses long-term local and national cooperation. Its CEO, Juha Kaakinen, says that the scheme relies on three essential physical components: a stock of rental flats bought on the private market – Y-Foundation currently manages 5,500 of these; a supply of high-quality public housing; and the conversion of most short-term hostel accommodation into a mix of independent-living apartments and permanent supportive housing.

The repurposing of Finland’s hostels has been especially important, argues Kaakinen. “Temporary accommodation is not a solution to homelessness,” he says. “People living in hostels are still homeless, and [that kind of temporary provision] leads to more people sleeping on the street, because they don’t want to stay in those places.”

He continues: “What is needed from the built environment sector is not something exceptional. It is good-quality, reasonably affordable social housing stock. Last year in England, there were just 6,400 new social homes built. That is less even than Finland, which has a population 10 times smaller. With that kind of approach it will be a huge challenge to solve homelessness.”
The medieval city of Oxford was walled, only accessible by four main gates. Each gate led the people who travelled through them to Carfax crossroads and the bustling centre, a meeting point to trade, socialise and rest after a difficult journey.

The modern Oxford of today is still a destination for people, for education, business and vacation. In place of the original gates and wall is an open city, welcoming visitors from across the world just as it has done for centuries.

Named after the original West Gate, the Westgate Shopping Centre provides a new destination for these visitors. The large open-roofed terrace gives the opportunity to view the ancient city and buildings that have stood for centuries.

Open to the elements, the terrace benefits from ACO's stainless steel drainage systems. Complementing the building's lines, the sleek channels effortlessly convey the water away as the rain falls. For the access routes at ground level, ACO's discreet MultiDrain slot drainage is used, blending seamlessly with the paved floor.

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This is Laura Collins.
Laura Collins MRICS has crammed more into seven brief years as a chartered surveyor than she could ever have dreamed. Not least because she had absolutely no idea which career direction to take when she finished school. “But one day,” she explains, “my mother was on a flight when she got into conversation with a recruitment agent specialising in quantity surveying, who suggested I look into the profession.” It was a chance encounter that would change her life. “Because of that advice, I entered surveying as an apprentice when I was 18. I became chartered five years later.”

Since then, Collins’ career has flown along at lightning speed, resulting in her being named RICS Matrics Young Surveyor of the Year for 2018. This award recognises not only a young professional’s success in their role and sector, but also their unwavering commitment to inspire the next generation and improve the wider industry and profession.

By the age of 27, Collins had become the youngest person ever to be promoted to associate director at the construction company Mace. In 2017, she joined Rider Levett Bucknall (RLB), where she remains as an associate mechanical and electrical (M&E) quantity surveyor. Her recent successes include helping to deliver the landmark Salesforce Tower in London, and her reputation has led to global clients asking to work with her specifically.

“I guess it’s because they know I love getting involved in complex projects,” she says. “For example, I’m currently lead consultant on a major office project in Amsterdam for an Australian client, whose chief financial officer is based in Hong Kong. So most days I’m liaising with multiple people across four time zones. It’s tough, but I really enjoy it. I’m not content to sit in the office making costs plans all day — I like getting out into the world and into the nitty gritty of M&E quantity surveying work. I find it fascinating to see how other countries and cultures approach construction, and to expand my knowledge and experience.”

When it came to the RICS Matrics Young Surveyor of the Year Awards, the judges were impressed by Collins’ commitment to attracting and retaining diverse talent in the industry; her work as a mentor, encouraging colleagues to progress their careers; her influential role on RLB’s Futures Board; and her work with the Prince’s Trust to help introduce a wider range of disadvantaged people to the sector.

In her capacity as a member of the RLB Futures Board, she attended last year’s RICS Construction Conference, providing suggestions on how the profession can increase diversity and raise the number of women in the industry. She is passionate about helping to shape the next generation of surveyors, and works to promote ways to make the future of quantity surveying more innovative and efficient.

“Last January, I founded an M&E academy within RLB,” says Collins, “and we now have six apprentices, all school leavers, working with the team. In June, we hope to partner with other firms across...”
Uwais Paderwala joined Gardiner & Theobald as an apprentice in 2011 and became part of its first chartership programme in 2014. After gaining a first-class degree and passing his APC (Assessment of Professional Competence), he became RICS’ youngest-ever qualified chartered surveyor on record. His level of responsibility grew significantly over the course of his apprenticeship, throughout which his professionalism and passion to broaden his knowledge of the industry were noted by his team and the clients he worked with.

Although Paderwala is still in his early 20s, senior members of Gardiner & Theobald have confidence in him to lead client meetings and deal with the daily running of projects. One client recently remarked: “Working with Uwais is a joy. His detailed knowledge and commitment has been invaluable, and his level of communication and teamwork has added to the success of the job.”

Paderwala is now keen to share his experience of apprenticeship with the next generation of surveyors. He often gives presentations and offers advice to younger members at the firm, and has also championed the apprenticeship programme at industry events.

Since the start of his career, Ashley Cooper has wanted to mentor his fellow employees and impart advice and experience to the next generation. This desire kicked up a gear when he founded his own business, Edward Cooper Young (ECY), in 2008. Since then, the company has grown from being a one-man band to employing 41 people – and at some point, Cooper has mentored every single one of them via his ECY Talent programme. The bespoke initiative helps the rising stars of the surveying industry develop a high level of business acumen and gain an in-depth understanding of the business process, side by side with their professional qualifications.

Cooper recently mentored a member of his team to help set up a dedicated care-home team at the firm. Grown from nothing, it has since achieved enormous success in the sector, delivering 20 care-home projects at any one time, and contributing more than £500,000 towards annual turnover — all in a very short period of time. The individuals mentored by Cooper agree that they cannot think of a more positive and inspirational role model for the surveying industry.
Making Tax Digital is HMRC’s move to digitise tax. As of April 2019, businesses with a turnover above £85k will have to submit VAT returns through the HMRC gateway using commercial accounting software. 89% of UK business will change the way they process tax. Using Decorus and its real-time integration with Sage 50 ensures your business will be.

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An addiction to cheap agency labour and lowest-cost tendering is hampering the construction industry’s ability to tackle modern slavery. Do we need a complete change of culture to make progress?

WORDS BY EMMA CRATES
ILLUSTRATION BY MARIO WAGNER

Depending on who you ask, there could be 13,000 or 136,000 people trapped in modern slavery in the UK. The first figure is an estimate from the National Crime Agency, while the second comes from the Global Slavery Index. Neither figure can be confirmed because slavery is such a hidden problem. But there can be little doubt that the reality is much worse than most people would have expected.

We now know that labour exploitation is found not only in informal outfits (nail bars, car washes and cannabis farms for example), but also in the supply chains of many large businesses. Trafficking humans can be more profitable than drugs or guns, and where there are weaknesses in the system, criminals will find ways to exploit them — often by means of agency-supplied labour.

According to Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union, a 2015 report from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, construction ranks second only to the sex industry as the sector most prone to exploitation in the EU. In the UK, where the construction sector relies most heavily on a self-employed workforce, and where 99% of businesses are small and medium-sized enterprises, the problem is only just beginning to be understood.

The self-employment model gives contractors flexibility during downturns, but it makes workers more vulnerable to exploitation. Many self-employed workers are at the mercy of unscrupulous labour agencies that underpay or make unfair deductions, and when poor practice is the norm, criminality can creep in.

In such a fragmented sector, any attempt at reform is a challenge. Four years after the UK government passed the Modern Slavery Act, Helen Carter, sector manager at training partnership the Supply Chain Sustainability School, still routinely talks to small companies that are unaware of the new law, or how they should be responding to it. She is also critical of the sector’s biggest players. “We haven’t
FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

The Walk Free Foundation’s 2018 Global Slavery Index assigns ratings for the strength of each national government’s stance against modern slavery. Rich nations predictably lead the charge – but some trail badly…

GDP (PPP*) PER CAPITA 2017  GOVT RESPONSE RATING

SOURCE: WALKFREE FOUNDATION, 2018; WORLD BANK, 2017  *PURCHASING POWER PARITY
seen enough leadership from major contractors at board level,” she says. “We need to see more meaningful statements and actions.”

But contractors argue that reform should happen further up the chain, given that client procurement can define the culture of an entire project. Martin Pitt FRICS, group commercial director at the construction company Sir Robert McAlpine, is calling for public and private sector bodies not to “confuse value for money with lowest-cost tendering”, which unfairly rewards contractors whose bids are too low to cover the genuine risks they are taking on.

“People talk about fair payment, which is important, but we really should by now be talking about sustainable margins,” Pitt explains. “Carillion topped the contract league tables prior to its demise, but at no juncture does it appear there were checks and balances to ask whether the margins in submitted bids were sustainable.”

Once the negative culture has been set, it cascades through the supply chain. Buyers can face conflicting business goals, with the controlling board asking them to act sustainably while they are also being incentivised to find the best and cheapest deal. As a result, socially responsible suppliers can be priced out of the bidding.

“Main contractors are so keen to save on their margins that they will be looking to make savings in every part of that tender,” says Chris Harrop, group marketing and sustainability director at stone supplier Marshalls (see p32). He argues that this strips away the “time and resources for proper due diligence”.

This may also be felt at site level, where hard-pressed managers might look away from employment irregularities, or buy materials from unvetted suppliers. Such behaviour could be incentivised by a desire to avoid financial penalties or to retain performance bonuses, especially if a project is running late.

Pitt is disappointed that too few primary contractors insist upon Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards as an entry requirement for their sites, while those that do have not always invested in the electronic turnstiles that could detect fake cards. Given that the Construction Industry Training Board estimates that 5% of CSCS cards in circulation are fraudulent, this basic check would be, in Pitt’s words, “an easy win”, alerting companies to potential exploitation as well as other risks.

Chain reaction

But pockets of good practice are emerging, as contractors navigate this difficult new area. McAlpine’s sustainable procurement manager, Alice Hands, says that the company is doing a “deep dive” to discover the various ways that suppliers bring labour on to its projects. “This is giving us a greater understanding of the mechanism, where the money is, and any traps within it that criminals can exploit,” she says. “But it has to be a collaborative process, because we don’t have a contractual relationship with those suppliers.”

Ian Allard, senior sustainability manager at Mace, would like to see the sector adopt a set of common standards for bringing labour on to site, arguing that current approaches are too variable. “A lot of organisations have processes and procedures,” he says. “Everyone thinks theirs is good. But where’s the standard?” He adds that, for main contractors, tracking labour has become more complicated with the introduction of general data protection regulation (GDPR).

“A lot of the time, we have to rely more on the supply chain, because GDPR has made it quite difficult for us to hold information about people on our sites,” he says.

Yet Allard is noticing a growing readiness among its suppliers to engage. Like many primary contractors, Mace has rolled out education programmes for its supply chain, and put up multilingual posters about spotting the signs of slavery. It is also encouraging staff and suppliers to download the Unseen app, which links to the Modern Slavery Helpline. The non-governmental organisation Hope for Justice has also been carrying out worker engagement surgeries to inform contractors about their rights. “Sometimes it can be difficult talking to people about waste, energy or water,” says Allard. “But when we bring up modern slavery, they start to listen. It can be quite shocking, and no one wants to think they play any part in it. But you can see them in training sessions, putting two and two together.”

One of the biggest challenges when tackling modern slavery is that businesses are afraid of admitting to problems, in case of commercial and reputational repercussions. But dealing with these issues in secret only drives the problem elsewhere, allowing criminals to avoid prosecution and move on to softer targets. Allard says that he is offering reassurance to suppliers — especially those in high-risk areas around the world — that this is not the Mace approach.

“We want to work with suppliers to find out more information, and to make suggestions about what they need to do to improve.”
The anti-slavery journey of stone supplier Marshalls’ began in 2005, when then marketing manager Chris Harrop visited suppliers in Rajasthan, India. He was shocked to discover adults and children as young as six in forced labour, and called in the sustainability consultant Elaine Mitchel–Hill – now Marshalls’ business and human rights lead – to review operations.

Since then, the company has overhauled its operational and commercial model. It has collapsed its supply chain to work with just a small number of trusted organisations, put in place safeguards and education programmes, and it is working with local non-governmental organisations to tackle the poverty that is often an underlying cause of exploitation. It has sponsored various activities in Rajasthan, including investing in schools, supporting health and welfare programmes in remote rural areas and providing a seed fund for health insurance.

Marshalls has also adapted its human rights strategy to work across all of its other main sourcing regions in Turkey, China and Vietnam. The company launched an ethical risk index in 2017, which details how each of its products is sourced, giving information on risk factors in the source countries, as well as data from independent audits. The ratings can then be seen beside the products on Marshalls’ website.

“The risk index has helped us to open up a conversation with influencers and decision-makers who have not yet taken these issues on board,” says Mitchel–Hill. “We’re not only opening up a conversation, but also offering a solution.”

Marshalls continues to refine its UK operations, appointing anti-slavery champions across strategic parts of the business and focusing on high-risk areas. Last year, it teamed up with anti-slavery NGO Hope for Justice to run a programme for businesses that have been certified to install Marshalls products on patios and driveways. The installers were trained to spot signs of slavery in the communities in which they worked, and Mitchel–Hill says the response from them has been enthusiastic.

“They understood not only that slavery was wrong, but that it was also commercially damaging to them, as rogue businesses could undercut them. Intelligence continues to come in quite frequently that we are passing to our anti-slavery partner and law enforcement,” she adds.

This year, Marshalls has been rolling out training for its logistics team, including temporary drivers as well as permanent staff. The Modern Slavery Helpline number has been painted on the side of the trucks. “We feel there is some leverage there, as the fleet covers the length and breadth of the UK,” Mitchel–Hill says.
“People from the industry are giving us good-quality information that we can act on.”

Sam Ireland
Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority

Unless there is something very wrong, it’s better to work with people who want to improve, rather than dismiss them outright.”

Skanska, meanwhile, is using its procurement processes to build trust. It is developing longer-term relationships with its top 250 suppliers on a three- to five-year basis, more akin to the automotive sector than the volatile construction market. The company is also committed to paying its suppliers within 30 days of the month of invoice — something that is still unusual in an industry where payment can take 120 days or more.

Most innovatively, Skanska is focusing on a tendering strategy in which suppliers are scored on their behaviours and their ability to collaborate. This approach was piloted with Costain and Balfour Beatty on the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme, and the major road project became the first in the world to be awarded an ISO 44001 certificate on collaborative business relationship management. A spokesperson for Highways England said that the behaviours encouraged by the A14 programme’s commercial model showed “a level of maturity that we would encourage across our supply chain and the business”.

Dale Turner, Skanska’s director of procurement and supply chain, is optimistic that the approach will also facilitate more open conversations about anything from quality and health and safety, to human rights concerns. “Two-way conversation is encouraged,” he says.

The Welsh government is also using procurement power to raise standards of commercial behaviour. Its code of practice for ethical employment, launched in 2017, bans practices that could lead to mistreatment of workers, forces clients to question abnormally low prices and encourages payment of the living wage.

Transport for Wales (TfW) is embedding the code via contracts into each tier of its 15-year rail franchise with KeolisAmey JV. It has appointed consultant Bob Meakes as supply chain champion, to ensure that companies are acting in the spirit of the code. He says that his role is partly educational, but that he will also be reporting any serious concerns to the TfW board. “It would be foolish for companies to try to cheat the system,” says Meakes, “because they would score so poorly the next time they bid for a contract.”

At sector level, some businesses are also beginning to open up, albeit cautiously. In late 2017, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) launched a construction protocol, encouraging members to collaborate, share intelligence and discuss best practice. To date, 78 of its members have signed up, and Sam Ireland, the GLAA’s head of business change, says that “people from the industry are giving us good-quality information that we can act on.”

Since the GLAA’s powers were widened to cover construction last April, the authority has been involved with 21 cases in the sector, identifying 117 workers as potential victims. Areas of investigation have included London, Buckinghamshire, Warwickshire, Essex, the West Midlands, Nottingham and Cardiff. But Ireland warns: “Just because we haven’t mentioned other areas, that doesn’t mean there is no activity there. It just hasn’t been spotted yet.”

While this engagement is encouraging, Harrop warns that the gap is widening between proactive players and those that lag behind. “The good will get even better, but the poor performers will continue to do nothing. The market will continue to polarise,” he says.

So what will bring about more sustainable change? Marshalls’ business and human rights lead, Elaine Mitchel-Hill, is not alone in calling for public procurement to fall within the realm of the Modern Slavery Act. “The biggest lever is for government to move on its own processes and procedures. That would have a huge impact.” Increased penalties for company directors would also make a difference, she adds. “That would really sharpen the teeth of the Act.”

Emma Crates is author of Construction and the Modern Slavery Act

What more can our profession do to advance responsible business? Read our full report at rics.org/exploringresponsiblebusiness

April 2019 / Modus / 33
EXPERIENCE

LET ME INTRODUCE ...

Precision farming

More farmers are making use of aerial maps, 3D models and soil scans to gather detailed information about the land they farm. Davina Fillingham MRICS explains how the technology is changing agriculture.

From dealing with short-term variability in the weather to differences in the soil quality, precision farming technology is helping farmers tackle some of their biggest management challenges.

At a basic level, one of the most common — and well-established — examples of precision technology on farms is GPS. The navigation system is used to measure land and pinpoint specific aspects on the ground, such as drainage, hedgerows and watercourses. The same technology can guide tractor operators or control steering, allowing for greater accuracy, which saves fuel and reduces the risks of overlaps in planting seeds or spraying chemicals.

Now, with the addition of correction signals, 3D elements can also be built into the measurements, allowing land managers to add information such as gradients, sheltered areas and exposed areas, which are prone to flooding or frost damage.

Differences in soil quality are one of the biggest reasons for variability in crop performance, and getting a detailed picture of the soil is one of the principal benefits that precision farming technology provides. Via sensors attached to tractors, soil can be analysed in real time, creating soil mapping data that can tell a farmer about soil types and zones within a particular field. What’s more, the technology is becoming so sophisticated that it’s now possible to analyse the specific chemicals within the soil, allowing farmers to manage in-field variability more precisely than ever.

From an agricultural perspective, the use of this technology is only going to become more important, particularly given the new environmental and subsidy schemes that will replace the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy post-Brexit. Farmers already have to use accurate land data when making subsidy claims or entering into environmental schemes; but with the government moving towards an environmental-based subsidy system, they will be required to provide even more data on their activities.

As most farmers now have access to some form of GPS, and with many more upgrading to tractors that have GPS as standard, the next step for producers is to build up the levels of information — and make sure they are using it. Farmers may have yield monitors to understand what they are collecting in real time during harvest, or they might employ someone to map soils on their farm, but too often that data sits in the filing cabinet. By layering the information, producers will be better able to understand the potential of their crops and land, helping them to get the best from their farm.

Sensory field

Recent advances in technology have brought an improvement in the quality of data that sensors collect, as real-time information can be harvested and used in conjunction with the internet of things (IoT). In farming that might mean monitoring temperatures inside a grain store, or the moisture content of soil to help determine whether a field needs irrigating. IoT can also improve machinery management — to provide alerts to people in the farm office if a tractor is running low on oil in the field, for example. It’s about linking all of the elements into a central hub from where they can be managed.

As with any new technology, some of these tools are expensive, but as uptake increases prices will drop and their use will become far more commonplace. There is funding available for farmers who can demonstrate environmental and production efficiencies, which is helping bring the technology to more businesses.

A more recent trend in precision farming is the increased use of drones, particularly in conjunction with light detection and ranging (LiDAR) technology to build up detailed 3D images of the land it is measuring. LiDAR has proved particularly helpful for forestry professionals, who use it to measure the biomass of timber, assess the potential yield of woodland, map water flows and monitor soil erosion. It can also be used in remote areas to assess crop health, nitrogen requirements, water stress and identify any health issues in crops, or in livestock production to monitor pasture. Plus, when integrated with historic weather data, the 3D maps can enable farmers to make informed decisions about how different parts of a farm might be managed.

Looking ahead, all farmers are likely to adopt precision farming methods in some form: small farms might only make use of GPS, while larger operations will use a range of solutions to maximise efficiency and improve the quality of their produce. Regardless of the systems in which farmers invest, the technology will have to go hand-in-hand with traditional farming skills to ensure the decisions being based on data are the correct ones.

Davina Fillingham MRICS is partner and head of agribusiness at Stephenson & Son in York.
We don’t want the best talent to go into law or banking, we need them to come and shape the world we live in.

FRED MILLS
CO-FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, THE B1M

In 2012, Fred Mills co-founded The B1M, a YouTube channel focused on sharing “the best of construction”, with the aim of helping the industry raise its game and attract new talent. It is now the world’s largest and most subscribed-to video channel for construction, with more than seven million views per month.

What gave you the idea for The B1M?
My original career path was in design management, starting at Willmott Dixon, and then later at Osborne. I was at a barbecue and someone asked: “What do you do, Fred?” When I said I worked in construction, they replied: “You’re quite broad shouldered, you must be good at laying bricks.” It struck me that, if that’s the way the world sees the industry, how are we going to attract the best new talent? We need to change perceptions. Construction underpins how every other business operates on this planet. For example, in the context of climate change, cement manufacture accounts for 8% of global CO₂ emissions. If we addressed that, we could make a huge difference. We don’t want the best talent to go into law or banking, we need them to come and shape the world we live in.

What does a typical week look like on The B1M?
Typically, we’ll produce content both in the UK and internationally, whether in California, Nevada or Australia. I also have a lot of meetings with commercial partners and do a lot of industry speaking, again both in the UK and globally. It’s like a 100mph train.

Where do you get your ideas from?
People message us saying “do this”, which is great. We have an editorial team who always have their ear to the ground, and we’ve built relationships, so are in with people before stories come out. We’re also privileged as we get to speak to lots of different people in the industry, whereas some organisations will only talk to people that they are working with, or in their immediate sphere.

What is the most successful video you’ve made?
The one we did on Norway’s $47bn coastal highway achieved 2.5 million views in six days, and was mentioned by the Norwegian foreign minister in parliament. The videos with over a million views — the world’s most remote buildings, hyperloop explained, New York’s Billionaire’s Row — are those that capture the imagination.

Your work needs industry nous and connections, but also creativity and media savvy. How do you gather such a team?
It’s hard. The stuff we do with technology is one thing, but getting the right people to make it work is crucial. Since going full-time on The B1M by myself, we’ve brought in seven others doing specific roles. We’ve got a really good team now. Before that we had our fair share of churn, but you have to make tough decisions and move on. That’s the most difficult part I’ve found of running a business, aside from the accounting and the rest of it. Letting people go is the worst.

Is this a classic case of right place, right time?
We live in an age where you can broadcast about anything — but people want more substantive, useful information and social value. There is a huge opportunity to use today’s media to share the message about what the industry really is. It’s robots, drones, AR, hyperloop, smart cities, creating infrastructure that transforms lives. It’s so much more than men in white vans laying bricks in the rain.

theb1m.com
MEMBER REWARDS

Benefits Plus is the member rewards programme from RICS, with a range of exciting special offers, discounts and other incentives for RICS professionals. How much could you save? For the full line-up of benefits, visit rics.org/benefits

SAVE UP TO 32% ON A NEW CAR WITH TYSONCOOPER

RICS members can access great discounts on buying, financing or leasing a new vehicle through TysonCooper — whether it’s a company or commercial vehicle, or a personal car, there are significant cost savings to be made.

Personal car or cash allowance?
Save time and money with TysonCooper MyDrive, which also removes the hassle of your next new car purchase, streamlining the ordering process and delivering the vehicle to your door for maximum convenience. Plus, if there’s a part-exchange involved, you can benefit from a key-to-key handover.

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For details of the latest business offers, visit tysoncooper-businessdrive.com. Alternatively, email rics@tysoncooper.com, or call +44 (0)1473 873000

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For more information, visit hiscox.co.uk/rics
The RICS and MacDonald & Co Rewards and Attitudes Survey for 2019 finds the gender pay gap narrowing, and the premium on chartered status widening.

**PAY IN THE PROFESSION**

The gender pay gap in the built environment is 20%, just above the UK average of 18%. Women earn on average £44,737 with £3,587 in bonuses, compared with £53,061 and £7,825 for men.

**BENEFITS OF RICS MEMBERSHIP**

The recognition of international standards as a benefit of chartered status is notable, given that the movement for global adoption — spearheaded by RICS — is still a relatively young one.

**FACTORS WHEN CONSIDERING A NEW ROLE**

After salary, location is now the most important employment factor for our respondents, up from sixth place last year.

---

**£48,000**

Median salary of a UK property professional, down 4.87% on 2018*.

64% of respondents received a pay rise, down 1% on last year.

**250%**

Size of bonus gap between men and women aged 56–65 — the widest in the profession. At its narrowest (ages 23–26), the gap is still 25%.

**£13,600**

Premium to salary that an RICS-registered surveyor commands. That’s 38% more than someone without a professional qualification.

**£32,500**

Median value of long-term incentive packages received by FRICS surveyors, falling to £12,000 for those with MRICS status.

46% of respondents don’t believe their office has a great workplace culture.

39% of built environment professionals don’t believe that they are working in a great office space.

For further analysis from this year’s survey, go to rics.org/salarysurvey

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*RBASED ON AVERAGE SALARY. MEDIAN REPLACES AVERAGE FOR 2019 METHODOLOGY.
“Invest in your AssocRICS surveyors and they’ll soon be firing on all cylinders for your firm”

JOE MILLER
SDL SURVEYING

Support your junior staff on their journey from AssocRICS to full MRICS status and you’ll be rewarded with a driven, talented and loyal workforce, says SDL Surveying’s head of operations, Joe Miller.

Today, AssocRICS surveyors are becoming increasingly valuable to organisations, particularly because the competencies around the role are changing rapidly. In some instances, AssocRICS members are able to take on a full schedule of fee-earning work alongside studying for their APC to become a fully accredited RICS professional. And although many firms do support AssocRICS staff well, when fee earning becomes king, it is easy to end up neglecting their comprehensive development. At SDL Surveying, we’ve identified five key ways to help AssocRICS surveyors maximise their potential.

1. Treat individuals as more than just a number
Of course, many AssocRICS surveyors hope to earn as much as possible, but they don’t want to be seen as just a number in an organisation. It’s vital to find out what they want to achieve and support them in realising it. While some AssocRICS staff will want to do as much fee-earning work as possible, others will prefer to focus on learning and development so they are able to attain full MRICS status as soon as they can. By considering their individual needs, you can show them that your organisation is about more than just dovetailing people into a rigid business model.

2. Offer tailored mentoring
People work at different paces, and it can be tough for large businesses to provide tailored support to every individual in the company. However, individual mentoring pays off. Make sure AssocRICS employees have daily access to a network of support staff who really understand the APC process, as this will help to prepare them for any eventuality during the assessment.

3. Encourage the use of social networking apps
Social networks provide a great source of support to junior members of staff, who can often feel isolated in their day-to-day role. Rather than spending hours searching for the answer to a problem encountered in the field, creating social networking groups among surveying peers — on WhatsApp, for instance — afford AssocRICS staff the opportunity to refer to their more experienced colleagues quickly and easily.

4. Create a great place to work
Consider creating an attractive work environment that will encourage your AssocRICS employees to enjoy a long relationship with your firm, both before and after they become fully chartered. For example, we’ve had great feedback from our junior members after setting up tailored health and wellbeing plans, and offering subsidised healthy breakfasts, lunches and gym memberships.

5. Fully invest in their future
Investing heavily in individuals will in turn instil greater loyalty in them towards your business. Obviously, this means taking an initial funding hit while your AssocRICS employees are being trained and supported. But soon enough, your newly qualified surveyors will be firing on all cylinders for your firm — and also less likely to depart for pastures new. Consequently, your initial investment could well be outweighed by what you save in recruitment costs later on.

Find out how you could progress your surveying career with SDL Surveying. Visit sdlsurveying.co.uk/careers
BE PART OF THE CELEBRATIONS AS THE RICS AWARDS RETURN FOR 2019

Regarded as the premier property and construction awards in the country, the RICS Awards 2019 showcase the most inspirational initiatives and developments in land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. More than 400 projects have been submitted and judged across eight categories. Join us to celebrate the most innovative projects, and the successes of RICS professionals and their impact on local communities. View the shortlist and book your place at rics.org/awards.

JOIN US AT THE WORLD BUILT ENVIRONMENT FORUM SUMMIT

The RICS World Built Environment Forum reconvenes in New York on 13-14 May to debate “the future of investment in real assets”. Key topics include how we harness technology to mobilise the private capital needed to meet the growing demand for new infrastructure, new real estate and the renewal of existing assets. Headline speakers include: author Parag Khanna; former US senator Jeff Flake; Brookings Institution senior fellow Jennifer S Vey; and entrepreneur, author and 2020 Democratic presidential hopeful Andrew Yang. Book your place at rics.org/wbef.

RICS DATA AND TECH NETWORK LAUNCHES TECH PARTNER SCHEME

Construction and whole-life costs, valuations and measurement of land and property — these are all critical elements in the future digitalisation of the built environment. RICS is committed to supporting its members and the wider market as the sector is transformed. As part of this commitment, we have developed a suite of data standards to help ensure the quality and consistency of data when used in digital applications. To support the adoption of the data standards, we have introduced the RICS Data and Tech Network — which includes the Technology Affiliate Programme — and the recently launched Tech Partner scheme. The Tech Partner scheme seeks to formally accredit software solution vendors’ implementation of RICS Data Standards. The combination of RICS professionals working to RICS standards, coupled with compliant software, will provide the marketplace with data that is both consistent and reliable. Find out more at rics.org/techpartner.

ANTI-MONEY-LAUNDERING RULES MANDATORY FROM SEPTEMBER

Following an extensive global consultation period, RICS has published the professional statement Countering bribery and corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing. The statement sets out the obligations for RICS professionals and regulated firms to minimise their exposure to money laundering, bribery and corruption risks, and how to guard against these financial crimes in their day-to-day business operations. The professional statement comes into effect on 1 September and compliance is mandatory for all RICS members and regulated firms. For more information, go to rics.org/aml.

DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS WITH A NEW RANGE OF ON-DEMAND COURSES

RICS has recently launched a range of new certificate courses for those entering the profession or looking for cross-sector career progression. Available on demand, they are a comprehensive way to develop technical skills and knowledge in line with the RICS competency framework in areas such as quantity surveying, project management and commercial real estate. You’ll also earn CPD. To view all certificate courses, visit rics.org/certificates.

FIND OUT HOW OUR PAST IS INFORMING OUR FUTURE

More than 13,000 of you voted in our Pride in the Profession campaign, yielding 100 inspiring stories and 10 category winners as we celebrated RICS’ 150th anniversary. Now, we look to the future. What influence can surveyors bring to bear on the issues facing society? From developing truly connected, intelligent cities using the latest sustainable building methods, and from new skills and pioneering technologies to the rapidly expanding commercial value of data, explore the challenges, opportunities and possibilities for what lies ahead in the future of surveying: rics.org/futureprofession.
OBITUARIES

Please email obituary notifications to contactrics@rics.org or call +44 (0)247 686 8555

EASTERN
Helen West (APC candidate) 1991-2019, Eynesbury

EAST MIDLANDS
Gordon Waddell Espie MRICS 1968-2019, Derby

LONDON
Tadeusz Kosmider FRICS 1929-2019, London

NORTH EAST
George Peter Hutchinson FRICS 1926-2019, Northumberland

NORTH WEST
James Ambrose FRICS 1926-2019, Isle of Man
Charles Leonard Chappell FRICS 1920-2019, Wirral

SOUTH EAST
Anthony Gwitt Cotsworth FRICS 1940-2019, Slough
Peter Reynolds FRICS 1953-2019, Surrey
Roy Stringer AssocRICS 1937-2019, Kent
Nicholas George Mensforth Eyles FRICS 1947-2019, Guildford
Peter Robert Garrett MRICS 1928-2018, Leatherhead
Barbara Anne Sturges FRICS, unknown-2019, Middlesex

SOUTH WEST
Charles Newton AssocRICS 1944-2019, Cheltenham
Brian Mason MRICS 1933-2019, Cornwall
Dennis George Minas MRICS 1930-2019, Bridport

WEST MIDLANDS
James Christopher Hart FRICS 1947-2018, Warwick
Paul Jermy Cooper-Dykes MRICS 1960-2018, Shropshire

YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
Bernard Tom Henry Johnson FRICS 1930-2018, Scarborough

WALES
Reginald Ernest Phillips FRICS 1930-2019, Newport

EUROPE
Christopher J Conner MRICS 1963-2018, Warsaw

If you are facing hardship after the loss of a family member, or considering leaving a legacy, please contact LionHeart, the charity for RICS members and their families. Call +44 (0)247 686 6696, email info@lionheart.org.uk or visit lionheart.org.uk

TRAINING & EVENTS

For details of conferences, training sessions and CPD seminars near you, go to rics.org/events

RICS Africa Summit
29-30 May, Maslow Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa
The leading event for the built environment in sub-Saharan Africa brings together decision-makers from the region’s most influential organisations. This year’s theme, “Investing with Impact – Collaboration and Innovation”, will focus on how collaborative partnerships and impactful investment is shaping the future of sub-Saharan Africa. Key topics for discussion will include inward investment, geopolitics and cross-border collaboration, and investment trends in cities. renewable energy and transport infrastructure.
CPD: 6 hours  R2,700–R2,995 (£144–£160) rics.org/summitafrica

RICS Building Surveying Conference
2 May, London
Key sessions include: an update on fire safety post-Grenfell; building regulations and enforcement update; and examining M&E defects for building surveyors.
CPD: 5.5 hours  £240 rics.org/bsconference

RICS Construction Conference
23 May, London
Key topics include: understanding current market conditions; the social value of public works; off-site construction; and how to attract the best new talent.
CPD: 6 hours  £265 rics.org/constructionconference

RICS Digital Built Environment Conference
5 June, London
Demonstrating the benefits of new technologies in practical terms; delivering case studies from across the lifecycle of a built asset.
CPD: 5.5 hours  £265 rics.org/digitalconference

RICS Integrated Property Services Conference
1 July, London
A national conference bringing together visionary leaders of FM to discuss approaches to building the global reputation of the profession.
CPD: 6 hours  £260 rics.org/propertyservices

UNITED KINGDOM

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You should be MRICS or similar with over 10 years pqe. The successful candidate will have a solid background in all aspects of pre and post contract Quantity Surveying and ideally will have latterly developed an expertise in Project Management / Contract Administration/ Employers Agent roles. You should therefore be fully conversant with the operation of Standard Forms of Building Contract and have an excellent track record of operating in Client facing roles. In summary an experienced “all-rounder” is required, who is able to work to tight deadlines whilst delivering a highly professional service to our clients.

SENIOR QUANTITY SURVEYOR / PROJECT MANAGER (REF QS192)

Salary - Up to £65k per annum plus package depending on experience.

Applicants should be MRICS and be able to deliver all aspects of pre and post contract services with minimal supervision. Ideally previous experience will include the preparation of detailed cost plans and sound knowledge of all aspects of post contract commercial management. In summary a hard working “fee earner” with a good employment history and excellent “all round” quantity surveying skills.

BUILDING SURVEYOR (REF BS191)

Salary – Up to £65k per annum plus package depending on experience.

Applicants should be MRICS and possess a good knowledge and experience of all aspects of Building Surveying. A project focussed Building Surveyor is required who can demonstrate a track record of administering and delivering schemes from inception to completion.

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Ever since George Osborne surprised many by reforming stamp duty land tax in his 2014 autumn Budget, many leading figures in the property industry have been warning of dire consequences — particularly in London and south-east England. Four years on, is it time their concerns were heeded?

From an individual’s point of view, the level of stamp duty imposed on the purchase of a home costing more than £700,000 is now prohibitive. These days, that figure would barely cover the cost of a perfectly ordinary family home in London.

What all this means is that people are choosing not to move. That has implications for Treasury coffers, but it also has an impact on the development market. Developers won’t build if they don’t feel confident of being able to sell homes. Given that most affordable housing is either built directly by developers or funded through contributions, any reduction in development activity is bad for everyone.

So, what to do? At the less radical end of the spectrum, the government could simply adjust stamp duty bands so that the higher rates kicked in at a higher price point. At around £5m, the tax would genuinely target the wealthy, rather than ordinary families who happen to live in areas with high prices.

If the government was unwilling to abolish stamp duty for all, it could remove it for older people looking to downsize from homes that are too large and increasingly unaffordable for them in terms of maintenance. This would allow older people to move cheaply, potentially releasing capital to fund their retirement, and would free up more stock for young families.

Alternatively, the government could introduce some form of support for those moving up the housing ladder, such as allowing purchasers to pay off stamp duty over a number of years, rather than demanding a lump sum. This would create an initial hit to Treasury income, but in time would balance out. More radically, the system could be turned on its head and a new tax levied on sellers rather than buyers. This would create a disincentive to sell, but it would also have the advantage that sellers tend to be in a better position financially to shoulder an additional tax burden.

Whether the government chooses limited reform or a comprehensive restructuring of property tax, it is clear that something has to be done. Privately, at least, many politicians know this to be the case — they’ve just been too wrapped up in Brexit to be able to do anything about it.

Ashley Osborne is head of residential at Colliers International in London.

“Should the government remove stamp duty on certain properties? More at rics.org/stampduty”
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