

Code of Conduct: Guidance

Open session

Board meeting:

22 July 2026

Agenda item:

9

Action:

- For noting ☐
- For discussion ☐
- For decision ☒

Purpose

To seek Board approval to publish five supporting guidance notes for the Architects Code of Conduct and Practice, following a six-week public consultation and revisions to the draft documents.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

1. notes the consultation analysis report at Annexe A;
2. approves publication of the five supporting guidance notes at Annexes B–F, subject to final editorial amendments being delegated to the Chair.

Annexes

Annexe A: Consultation analysis report

Annexe B: Building Safety

Annexe C: Sustainability

Annexe D: Leadership

Annexe E: Mentoring

Annexe F: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Author/Key Contact

Simon Howard, Director of Strategy (simonh@arb.org.uk)

1. Open Session

2. Background and Key points

Code of Conduct and Practice

- 2.1. Section 13 of the Architects Act 1997 requires ARB to issue a Code setting out the standards of professional conduct and practice expected of registered architects. The current Architects Code of Conduct and Practice came into force in September 2025.
- 2.2. The new Code is a principle-based document based on six mandatory standards and supported by additional guidance. As part of the consultation on the Code we proposed several professional standards topics that would make up that guidance.
- 2.3. Supporting guidance does not create new standalone obligations. It explains how ARB considers the standards may apply in particular professional contexts. It is intended to support sound professional judgement rather than prescribe a single course of action.
- 2.4. Compliance with the guidance is not mandatory. However, it may be relevant when considering whether an architect has met the standards expected by the Code. A departure from guidance will not, in itself, establish a breach of the Code; the relevant question will remain whether the architect exercised appropriate professional judgement in the circumstances.
- 2.5. ARB has already published two tranches of supporting guidance. This third tranche addresses five further areas selected because of their importance to public protection, professional competence, workplace culture and public confidence in architects.

3. Consultation

- 3.1. ARB consulted on the five draft guidance notes between 2 April and 14 May 2026. We received 44 responses, including 18 from organisations. Thirty-two respondents were registered architects.
- 3.2. Overall, respondents supported the principle of issuing guidance in each area. Agreement or strong agreement ranged from 50% for building safety to 61% for mentoring. However, the consultation also identified material concerns about proportionality, legal precision, the practical limits of an architect's control, and the risk of guidance becoming excessively detailed or prescriptive.
- 3.3. The consultation sample was relatively small and cannot be treated as representative of the profession. Nevertheless, the qualitative feedback was detailed and from expert stakeholders, and has been useful in strengthening the final documents.

4. Proposed changes

- 4.1. The principal themes raised through the consultation, and the resulting changes proposed to the draft guidance, are set out below.

Building Safety

- 4.2. Respondents emphasised the need for the guidance to be legally accurate, proportionate and clear about the respective responsibilities of architects and other dutyholders. In particular, feedback highlighted the need to distinguish between statutory duties, contractual responsibilities and the different Principal Designer roles.
- 4.3. The revised guidance clarifies that an architect's responsibilities will depend on their role, appointment, competence and degree of control or influence. It also strengthens references to obtaining and acting on specialist advice, sharing safety-critical information and recording advice or concerns where appropriate. The guidance has been revised make clearer that it is not intended to duplicate legislation or technical guidance.

Sustainability

- 4.4. Respondents supported the importance of sustainability but stressed that architects do not control all project decisions or outcomes. They also highlighted the need to

take account of client priorities, cost, the availability of specialist expertise and the differing nature of architects' appointments.

- 4.5. The revised guidance therefore places greater emphasis on proportionate professional judgement, the limits of an architect's role and the need to provide clear advice on options, risks and trade-offs. It makes clearer that architects should take an active approach to environmental responsibility within the areas they control, rather than being held responsible for achieving outcomes determined by others

Leadership

- 4.6. Consultation feedback supported the inclusion of leadership guidance but asked for stronger recognition that leadership is exercised at different career stages and in practices of different sizes. Respondents also highlighted workload, psychological safety, resourcing pressures and the impact of client demands on staff and professional standards.
- 4.7. The revised guidance better reflects these issues, including through examples of responding to unsafe or inappropriate changes, managing professional concerns, supporting colleagues and challenging unrealistic demands. It makes clear that leadership is not confined to senior job titles, while recognising the particular responsibilities of those with managerial or supervisory authority.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 4.8. Respondents welcomed guidance in this area but sought greater practical clarity about inclusive workplace culture, inclusive design and the boundary between legitimate professional debate and disrespectful behaviour.
- 4.9. The revised guidance strengthens material on fair participation, allocation of work, responding to discriminatory or exclusionary conduct, and engaging appropriately with building users and communities. It also makes clearer that respectful challenge and professional disagreement are legitimate, but must not become discriminatory, humiliating, threatening or designed to silence others.

Mentoring

- 4.10. Feedback emphasised the importance of distinguishing mentoring from supervision, management and formal assessment. Respondents also highlighted the need for clear professional boundaries, appropriate handling of conflicts of interest and recognition that not all mentoring relationships need to be formal.

- 4.11. The revised guidance clarifies the purpose and limits of mentoring, strengthens expectations around professional boundaries and competence, and makes clear that mentors should support independent professional judgement rather than create dependence or exercise inappropriate influence over progression or assessment decisions.

External resources

- 4.12. Respondents also suggested a wide range of external resources and additional scenarios. A limited number of scenarios have been included where they assist understanding of how the Code may apply in practice. We propose to remove extensive lists of third-party resources from all the guidance documents, and instead create a central resource hub on the ARB website which will be easier to access and more simple to maintain.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1. Finalisation, publication and communications can be delivered within existing staff resources and approved communications budgets.
- 5.2. The guidance will be published digitally. No significant additional ongoing costs are anticipated, beyond routine maintenance and periodic review.

6. Risk Implications

- 6.1. The principal risk is that guidance is perceived as over-prescriptive, creating disproportionate burden or implying that architects are responsible for matters outside their role, competence or control.
- 6.2. This risk has been mitigated through revisions that emphasise proportionality, professional judgement, scope of appointment, competence, available authority and the need for specialist advice where appropriate.
- 6.3. There is some reputational risk in publishing guidance on matters where views in the profession are contested, particularly sustainability and workplace culture. However, these are areas closely linked to public protection, competence and confidence in the profession. The greater risk would be leaving architects without clear regulatory support in areas where they have requested guidance.

7. Communications and implementation

- 7.1. The guidance will be published on ARB's website and promoted through direct communications to architects, professional bodies, education providers, employers and relevant sector organisations
- 7.2. Communications will emphasise that the guidance is practical support for applying the Code, not a new set of separate rules or technical standards. The guidance will also be incorporated into relevant ARB learning, engagement and communications activity, including CPD messaging where appropriate.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 8.1. The EDI guidance is intended to support more respectful, inclusive and professionally safe workplaces and built environments.
- 8.2. The accompanying guidance also has positive EDI implications. The leadership and mentoring guidance addresses workplace culture, access to development and the fair treatment of colleagues. The building safety and sustainability guidance recognises the importance of proportionate professional judgement, rather than assuming that all architects work in identical practice settings or have equal access to specialist resources.
- 8.3. Consultation feedback highlighted the need to make the guidance relevant to architects working in a range of roles, practice sizes and locations. This has informed the revisions.

9. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- 1. notes the consultation analysis report at Annexe A; and
- 2. approves publication of the five supporting guidance notes at Annexes B–F, subject to final editorial amendments being delegated to the Chair.

Consultation on the third tranche of guidance notes for the Architects Code of Conduct and Practice – Analysis Report

The consultation

1. On 2 April 2026, we launched a public consultation on five draft guidance documents to support the new Code of Conduct and Practice (the Code). This was our third tranche¹ of guidance documents and the topics were:
 - Building Safety;
 - Environmental Sustainability;
 - Leadership;
 - Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion; and
 - Mentoring.
2. The consultation was open for six weeks between 2 April and 14 May 2026. We received 44 responses, of which 18 (41%) were submitted on behalf of organisations
3. Respondents first answered standard gateway questions, which included demographic questions to help us understand who is responding and also important questions about how we can use the data they choose to share. After answering these introductory questions, respondents were invited to answer 19 questions across the different guidance areas:
 - For each guidance area, we shared the draft guidance and then respondents could tell us the extent to which they agree with its content. They could then use an open text question to tell us anything they would add or change to the guidance.
 - For the guidance on building safety and sustainability, we also asked if there are any additional resources that we should include at the end of the guidance document.
 - For the guidance on leadership, EDI and mentoring, we again asked about additional resources but also whether there are any examples of scenarios that would be useful to include. We had already included scenarios in the guidance on building safety and sustainability.
 - At the end, respondents could tell us anything else they wanted to share about the consultation.
4. As part of promoting the consultation, we contacted organisations and individuals with specific areas of expertise. We did not require respondents to comment on

¹ Previous tranches were consulted on, finalised and published in 2025: <https://arb.org.uk/architect-information/architects-code-standards-of-conduct-and-practice/>

each guidance topic and so respondents may have responded to only their particular area of expertise. This may have led to more 'neither agree nor disagree' responses in this consultation.

5. The consultation was designed to gather views and drafting feedback rather than provide statistically representative evidence of opinion across the profession. Findings should therefore be interpreted as indicative of the views of respondents.

Summary

We received 44 responses and most (32, 73%) were architects. The registered architects who responded came from a range of practice sizes and had a variety of years of experience, but notably we received zero responses from architects who had qualified between 0-5 years ago.

We received overall agreement with all five areas of our guidance documents. This ranged from 50% to 61% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. While overall disagreement across the five areas ranged from 11% to 23% (with respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing).

We received qualitative feedback from respondents on how we could improve the guidance documents. This included specific wording changes and ideas for areas to be expanded on or added to strengthen the guidance documents.

The general feedback we received from respondents was positive and that these guidance documents should exist, however, some found that some guidance documents were too detailed and would be too onerous on architects to follow.

While we received the least amount of agreement on our guidance on building safety, some respondents used their qualitative feedback to tell us they agreed this needed to be a piece of guidance but disagreed with how we drafted it.

While we acknowledge some respondents questioned the need for each guidance document, it is still our view that each is an important area in which we should proceed with issuing guidance. As we do so, we will improve the guidance using the feedback and drafting suggestions we have received.

As part of the consultation, we also asked respondents for example scenarios that they thought might be helpful for us to include within the guidance documents, as well as suggested resources that we could include as further information. We received a large number of suggestions for each, which we will consider these closely as we finalise and then publish the guidance.

Analysis of responses

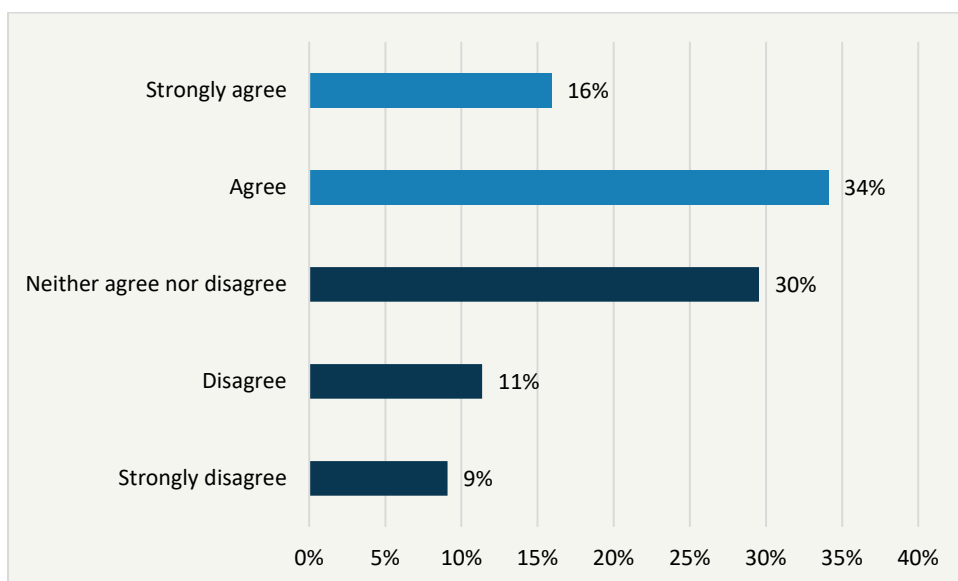
Building safety

Quantitative results

To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on building safety?

6. Most respondents agreed with the content of the guidance. Twenty-two respondents (50%) agreed (15, 34%) or strongly agreed (7, 16%), while another 13 respondents (30%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Nine respondents (20%) disagreed (5, 11%) or strongly disagreed (4, 9%).

Figure 1: To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on building safety?



Qualitative results

Is there anything you would change or add to the guidance on building safety?

7. Thirty-two respondents (73%) provided further information in the open text question about building safety. Many of these were suggestions to improve the wording of specific sections. Other key themes were:
- general disagreement on why this guidance was needed
 - disagreement with the accuracy of how the 'golden thread' requirement was presented within the guidance;
 - how to strengthen the document further to match legal requirements and CDM, including the role of Principal Designer and different legislation used across the four countries within the UK;

- ways in which the guidance could align to other initiatives, like the Get it Right (GIR)² initiative
- referencing how the building safety guidance relates to other ARB guidance documents, such as raising concerns and whistleblowing;
- how architects should differentiate between statutory duties and contractual responsibilities;
- acknowledging that specialist knowledge is sometimes required to ensure the best safety design;
- how architects can have little control over contract negotiations and project constraints with some clients;
- how architects can improve their knowledge on building and fire safety;
- that evidence of compliance needs to be obvious;
- that some sections are too onerous and too idealistic compared to actual practice;
- further details are needed on different types of occupiers of buildings and how this may affect building safety planning; and
- making sure the guidance doesn't conflate responsibilities compared to other building professions.

Are there any other additional resources that we should include within this section?

8. Fourteen respondents (32%) provided examples of additional resources for our guidance on building safety. The examples they suggested included:
 - various government websites relating to building and fire regulations;
 - key fire documents commonly used in practice;
 - sector specific safety resources (such as the NHS); and
 - fire legislation being easily accessible for review in one place (specifically the legislation itself rather than paraphrased webpages).

² The [Get It Right Initiative](#) is a group of leading UK construction industry experts to improve the productivity, quality, and sustainability and safety in the construction sector.

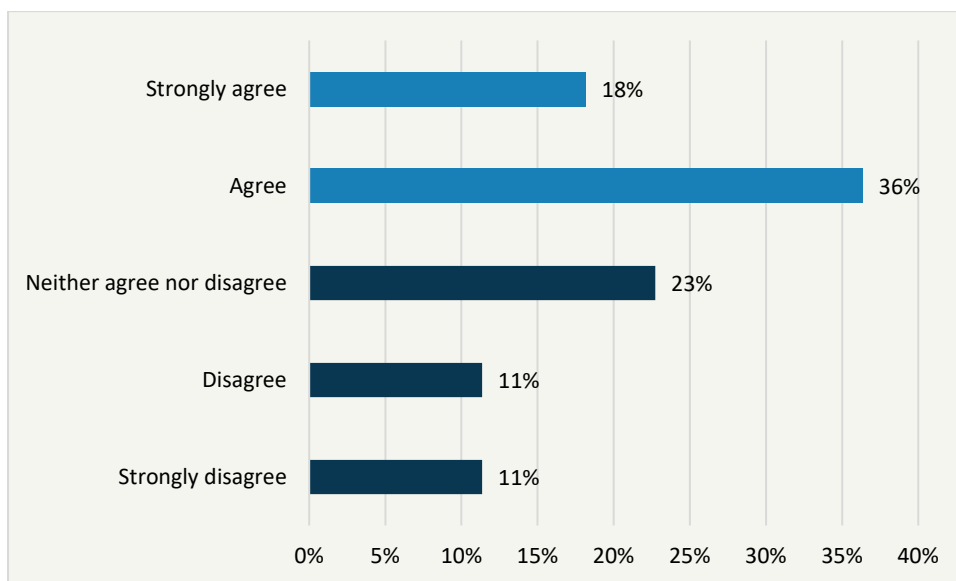
Sustainability

Quantitative results

To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on sustainability?

9. Most respondents also agreed with this guidance. Twenty-four respondents (55%) agreed (16, 36%) or strongly agreed (8, 18%), while ten respondents (23%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Ten respondents (23%) disagreed (5, 11%), or strongly disagreed (5, 11%).

Figure 2: To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on sustainability?



Qualitative results

Is there anything you would change or add to the guidance on sustainability?

10. Twenty-eight respondents (64%) provided further information in the open text question about sustainability. The key themes were:
- general disagreement that this guidance was needed;
 - the relationship between the guidance and relevant legislation (including variety across the UK) and climate change initiatives;
 - that architects cannot be solely responsible for achieving net zero targets;
 - some sustainability initiatives require specialists that are not accessible for some practices;
 - how sustainability should be weighed against costs, practicalities, and client priorities;
 - that the guidance should emphasise that sustainability is part of ARB's CPD scheme;

- more details being needed in the early planning stages of projects; and
- requesting additional information on retrofitting and regenerative design.

Are there any other additional resources that we should include within this section?

11. Eleven respondents (25%) provided examples of additional resources for our guidance on sustainability. Examples they shared included:
- suggested webpages with information on sustainability and climate change;
 - specific standards for sustainability such as BRE and BREEAM, WELL, SKA;
 - ARB producing a matrix of what should be considered at different stages of a project;
 - ARB's advice on how to manage clients who resist sustainability options;
 - suggesting ideas on how to approach sustainability in retrofitting buildings; and
 - ARB providing specific guidance on whole-life carbon assessment proportionate to the scale of the project.

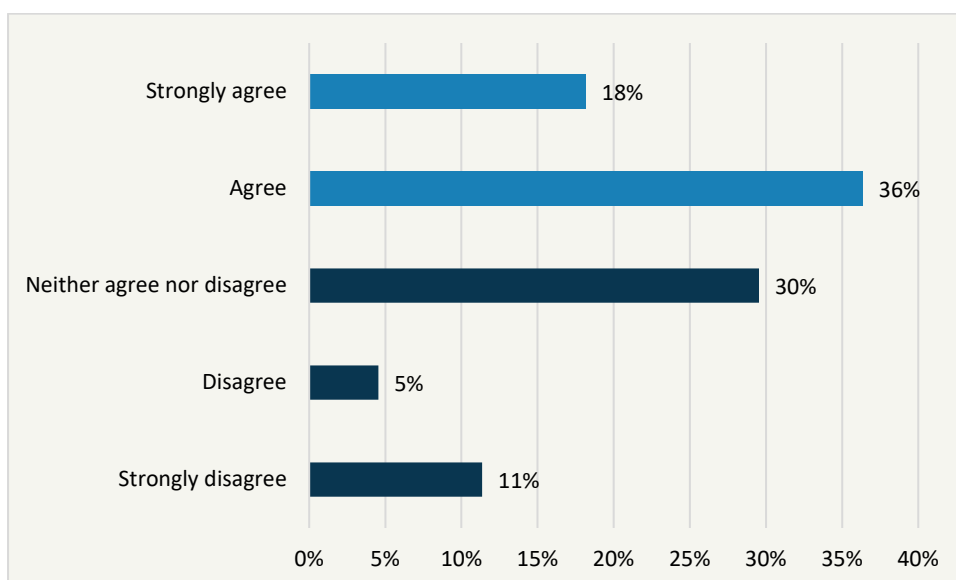
Leadership

Quantitative results

To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on leadership?

12. Twenty-four respondents (55%) agreed (16, 36%) or strongly agreed (8, 18%) with this statement, while 13 respondents (30%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Seven respondents (16%) disagreed (2, 5%) or strongly disagreed (5, 11%).

Figure 3: To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on leadership?



Qualitative results

Is there anything you would change or add to the guidance on leadership?

13. Twenty-five respondents (57%) provided suggestions in the open text question about leadership. These key themes were:

- general disagreement that this guidance was needed;
- how bad leadership impacts other areas of business (such as low retention rate, higher costs, burnout, mistakes);
- operational struggles of leadership and ensuring everyone feels heard;
- how leadership differs on the scale of the practice;
- that there should be more emphasis on psychological safety;
- adding the importance of getting additional training for leadership development;
- recognising that while leaders cannot directly change the way clients act, they can put things in place to protect their staff;
- how leaders can act effectively under pressure;
- acknowledgement that leadership is not always based or dependent on seniority.

Are there any examples of scenarios that would be useful for us to include in the guidance?

14. Seventeen respondents (39%) provided examples of scenarios for our guidance on leadership. These covered a range of different scenarios that respondents thought could be helpful to include within the guidance, including:
- an example of how leadership can set high positive workplace expectations to maintain a healthy work-life balance;
 - how to juggle workloads with limited resources and staff;
 - a junior team member unsure how to raise a potential risk to management due to a hostile working environment;
 - positively helping junior staff problem solve complex everyday issues;
 - how to appropriately help struggling workers with internal and external stressors;
 - how to act when under resourcing a project leads to negative consequences on junior staff;
 - how leadership can support their staff by pushing back on negative working environments from clients;
 - how to stop favouritism and the same coworkers getting favourable work opportunities;
 - how to use annual staff surveys to gain an overview of how leadership and culture is perceived in the workplace; and
 - how to find a balance emerging AI practices with recognising the value of staff.

Are there any other additional resources that we should include within this section?

15. Thirteen respondents (30%) provided ideas for additional resources that could be included within our guidance for leadership. They included:

- specific books, published articles, and websites;
- ARB outlining differences between leadership behaviours and acceptable employee critique;
- ARB creating guidance on line management and people management capability; and
- resources on psychological safety and wellbeing.

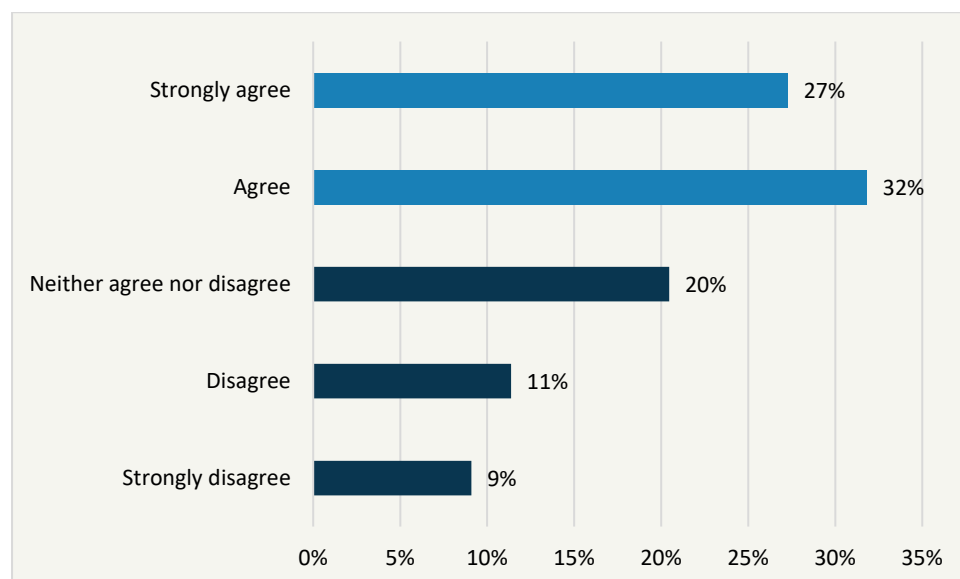
Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Quantitative Results

To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on EDI?

16. Twenty-six respondents (59%) agreed (14, 32%) or strongly agreed (12, 27%) with this statement, while nine respondents (20%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Nine respondents (20%) disagreed (5, 11%) or strongly disagreed (4, 9%).

Figure 4: To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on EDI?



Qualitative results

Is there anything you would change or add to the guidance on EDI?

17. Thirty respondents (68%) provided further information in the open text question about EDI. The key themes were:

- general disagreement on why this guidance was needed;

- the relationship between the EDI guidance and relevant legislation (such as data protection);
- the guidance could better recognise power imbalances that could impact people in different ways and could contribute in their ability to speak out against negative workplace culture;
- the differences between disrespectful behaviour and legitimate professional critique;
- more information on the importance of inclusive design in architecture;
- guidance on when someone should speak out against negative behaviour;
- noting that EDI is a shared responsibility for everyone in the workplace, not just leaders and those who might be more affected by it;
- more focus being needed on informal, everyday behaviours; and
- the guidance should have a stronger emphasis on the need for gender equality.

Are there any examples of scenarios that would be useful for us to include in the guidance?

18. Eighteen respondents (41%) provided examples of scenarios for our guidance on EDI. These covered a range of different scenarios that respondents thought could be helpful to include within the guidance. This included scenarios such as:

- examples of unfair allocation of work opportunities to different staff members;
- examples of colleagues being dismissed or treated unfairly in the office, along with how to approach these situations;
- how to treat colleagues who come back from extended leave (including maternity or illness);
- the importance of flexible/ hybrid working and the need for some staff needing special equipment;
- using a scenario to explain unconscious bias;
- a scenario for how to approach someone who may not be aware of their behaviour and is not doing it out of malicious intent;
- how to deal with inappropriate behaviour from clients;
- how to approach design proposals being limited by timings, costs, and resources and not allowing adaptability for accessibility;
- how to help diverse staff who may be struggling to progress faster than their colleagues;

- including examples of high-profile legal cases of acts of discrimination; and
- how to go through the proper processes to lay a formal complaint and whistleblowing help.

Are there any other additional resources that we should include within this section?

19. Eleven respondents (25%) provided ideas for additional resources that could be included within our EDI guidance. The examples of additional resources provided by respondents included:

- specific recommended reading materials on diversity in the built environment;
- resources from Black Women in Architecture; and
- other specific webpage links to a variety of resources for diversity within the built environment workplace.

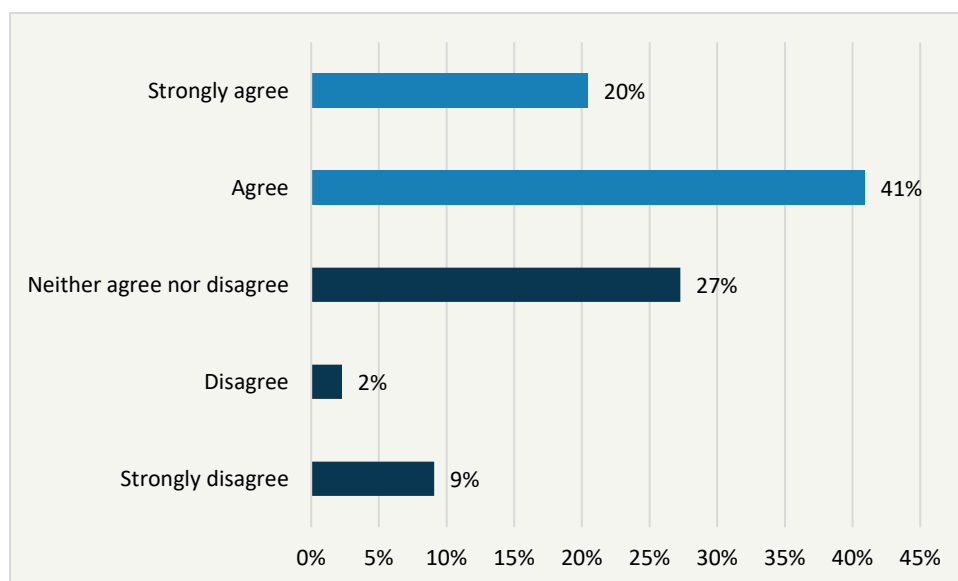
Mentoring

Quantitative results

To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on mentoring?

20. Twenty-seven respondents (61%) agreed (18, 41%) or strongly agreed (9, 20%) with this statement, while 12 respondents (27%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Five respondents (11%) disagreed (1, 2%) or strongly disagreed (4, 9%).

Figure 5: To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on mentoring?



Qualitative results

Is there anything you would change or add to the guidance on mentoring?

21. Twenty-two respondents (50%) provided further information in the open text question about mentoring. The key themes were:
- general disagreement on why this guidance was needed;
 - how we could clarify certain aspects of the guidance document to strengthen it;
 - the differences between formal and informal mentoring relationships, and how they differ from managerial relationships;
 - the need to outline the responsibilities of what mentoring should and should not be (and how it differs from sponsorship), including its voluntary nature;
 - how negative workplace culture can affect multiple working relationships (including mentor/ mentee) and how the success of mentoring is directly impacted by the workplace culture;
 - how mentoring may look different in different practice sizes or settings;

- that mentoring is not just for new trainees entering the workplace but also the development of architects at the start or middle of their career ; and
- ending the relationship between a mentor/ mentee.

Are there any examples of scenarios that would be useful for us to include in the guidance?

22. Ten respondents (23%) provided examples of scenarios for our guidance on mentoring. These included:
- what a mentor can do if a mentee has issues with workplace culture/ bullying;
 - how a mentor can deal with situations outside of their control with their mentee;
 - how a mentor could help manage the transition between being a trainee to becoming an architect; and
 - how to help a mentee get more substantive experiences in the workplace.

Are there any other additional resources that we should include within this section?

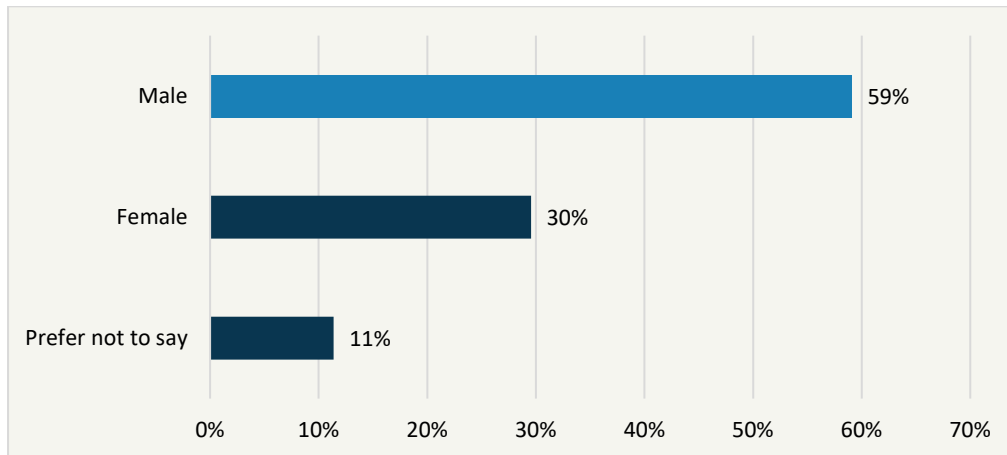
23. Nine respondents (20%) provided ideas for additional resources that could be included within our guidance for mentoring. Many respondents wanted us to create additional resources for mentoring, and these ideas included:
- the differences between a formal/ informal mentor relationship;
 - helping mentees navigate different types of professional relationships;
 - how to be an effective mentor through reputable sources for mentoring, including the differences between mentoring and managing; and
 - any regulatory/ legislative differences across the four countries within the UK.

Annex A: Demographic information

Gender

24. Twenty-six respondents were male (59%), while thirteen respondents were female (30%). Five respondents (11%) preferred not to say.

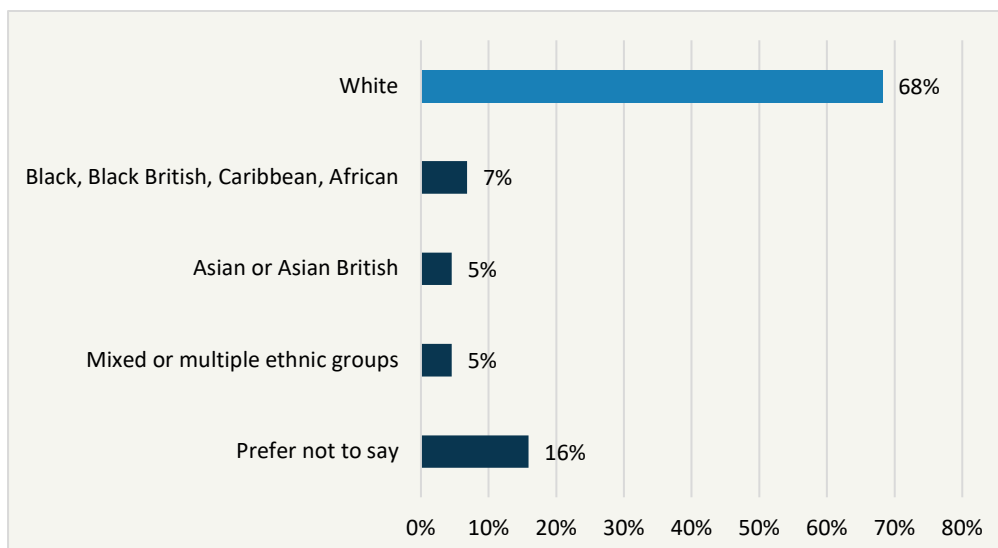
Figure 6: Respondents organised by gender (% of responses)



Ethnicity

25. Thirty respondents (68%) were White, three respondents (7%) were Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African, two respondent (5%) were Asian or Asian British, another two respondents (5%) were mixed or multiple ethnic groups. Seven respondents (16%) preferred not to say.

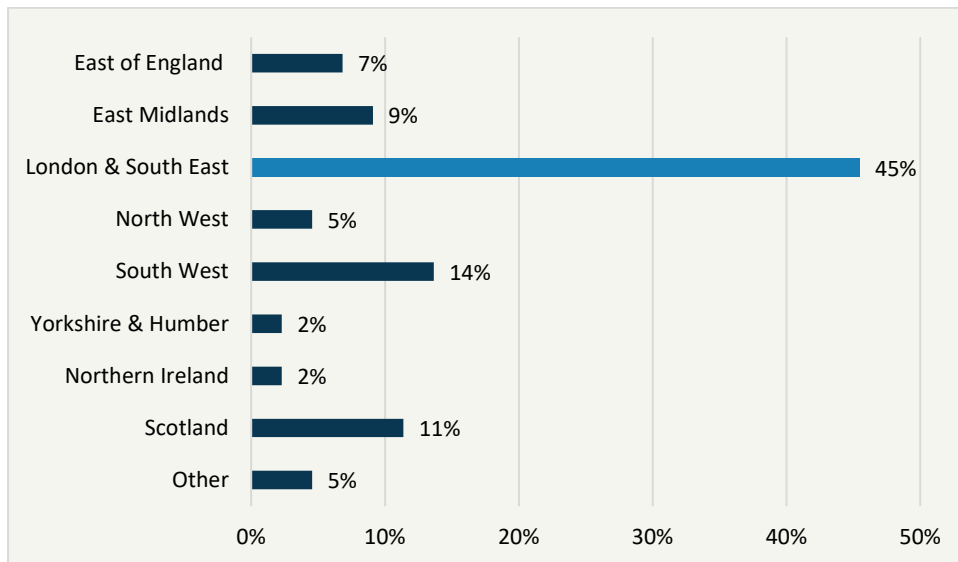
Figure 7: Respondents organised by ethnicity (% of responses)



Place of residence

26. We received responses from across the UK. The most common region was from twenty respondents (45%) who said they were residing in London & South East.

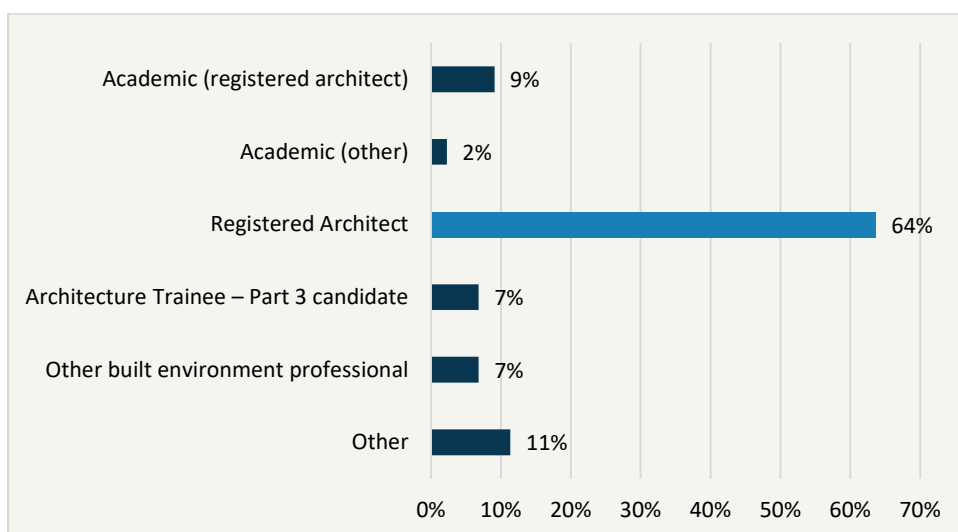
Figure 8: Respondents organised by place of residence (% of responses)



Role

27. Most respondents were registered architects (32, 73%), with four of these respondents also being academics (9%). Five respondents (11%) classified their role as 'other', three respondents each (7%) were architecture trainee Part 3 candidates and from other built environment professions. One respondent (2%) identified themselves as an academic (other).

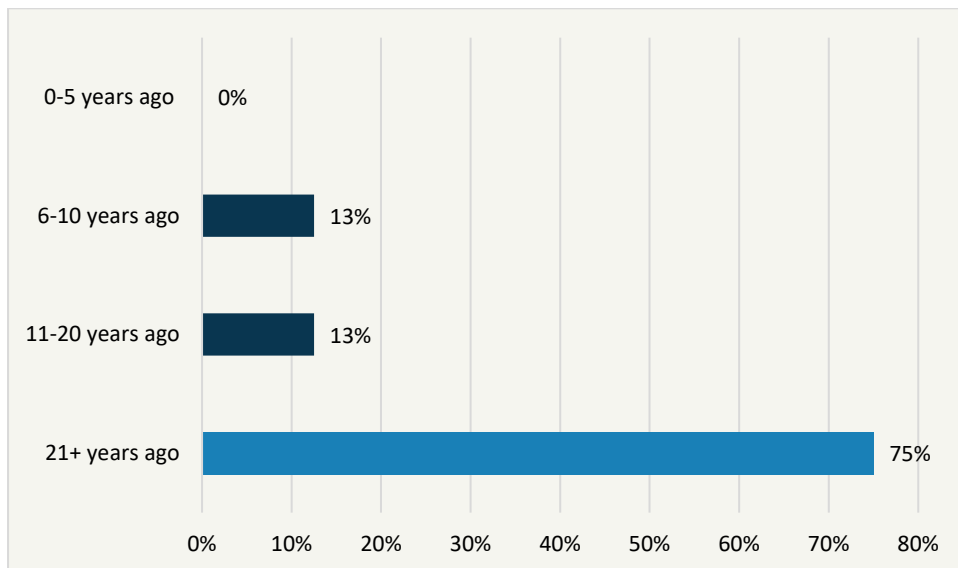
Figure 9: Respondents organised by role (% of responses)



Time since qualified (registered architects)

28. We looked at the architect respondents in more detail. Of the 32 who were registered architects, most (24, 75%) qualified 21+ years ago, and five respondents each (13%) qualified 6-10 years ago and 11-20 years ago. None of these respondents qualified under five years ago.

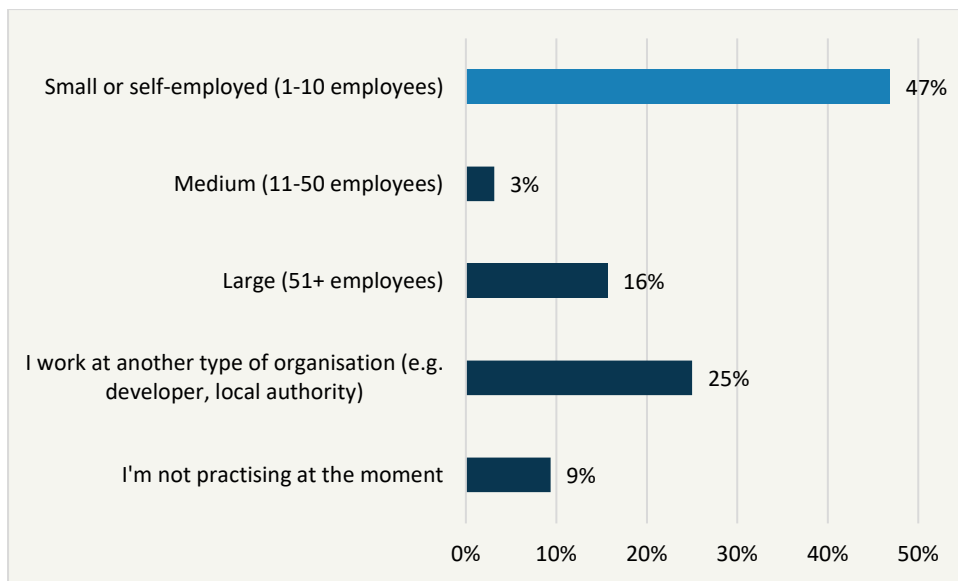
Figure 10: Registered architects organised by time since qualified (% of architect responses)



Type/ size of practice (registered architects)

29. Architects who responded were employed at a range of practice sizes. Fifteen respondents (47%) were from small practices or self-employed (1-10 employees) and another five respondents (16%) were from large-sized practices (51+ employees). One respondent (3%) worked at a medium-sized practice (11-50 employees). Eight respondents (25%) worked at another type of organisation and three (9%) were not currently practising.

Figure 11: Registered architects organised by type/size of practice (% of architect responses)



Additional feedback

Is there anything further you would like to tell us in relation to this consultation?

30. There were 28 additional points (64%) of feedback that individual respondents raised. These respondents raised a variety of different topics in this section which included:
- general agreement and disagreement with the changes and reforms ARB is undertaking;
 - a need for ARB to do public advocacy on what architects do to inform the wider public on an architect's role;
 - individual issues with the Code not currently protecting architects in specific cases;
 - the emphasis that some areas of the guidance documents rely on the priorities of clients and architects cannot always go against this;
 - the current issues and struggles within the architecture sector as a whole;
 - difficulty in understanding how these guidance documents can be operational in practice; and
 - suggesting some additional sources to review that do not necessarily fit within any of the guidance document subject areas.

Annex B: List of respondents

There were 22 respondents who gave permission for their responses to be published in full, with a further 19 asking for their responses to be published anonymously.

There were 18 responses made on behalf of organisations, with 13 agreeing to be published in full and five anonymously.

The individuals and organisations who gave permission for their response to be published in full are listed below.

- Alan Chandler
- Alaukika Tiwari
- Alliance for Sustainable Building Products
- Ben Pulford ARCHITECT Ltd
- Collective Works
- David Pryce
- EPR Architects Limited
- Haris Subasinghe
- Italian Limited Liability Company
- Jane Simpson
- Jeannette Veldkamp
- Michael Cassidy
- Neil Stacey
- People+Practice
- Pyrology Limited
- Renga Design Ltd
- Royal Society of Ulster Architects
- Steve Eastland
- The Cultural Architect
- The Get It Right Initiative
- The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS)
- The Wren Insurance Association Limited

Annex C: Consultation data

The full consultation data is below. Some questions were optional, and we have included the numbers of respondents who chose not to answer each question. In the main report, respondents who did not answer were not included for the analysis for each section.

Table B1: Consultation respondents by Stakeholder category		
Option	Total	Percent
Academic (registered architect)	4	9.1%
Academic (other)	1	2.3%
Registered Architect	28	63.6%
Architectural assistant, designer or consultant (not Part 3 qualified)	0	0.0%
Architectural technologist	0	0.0%
Architecture Trainee – undergraduate (studying Part 1)	0	0.0%
Architecture Trainee – graduate (studying Part 2)	0	0.0%
Architecture Trainee – Part 3 candidate	3	6.8%
Elected political representative e.g. councillor or MP	0	0.0%
Member of the public	0	0.0%
Other built environment professional	3	6.8%
Other	5	11.4%
Not Answered	0	0.0%

Table B2: Consultation respondents by Gender		
Option	Total	Percent
Male	26	59.1%
Female	13	29.5%
Non-Binary	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	5	11.4%
Other	0	0.0%
Not Answered	0	0.0%

Table B3: Consultation respondents by Ethnicity		
Option	Total	Percent
Asian or Asian British	2	4.5%
Black, Black British, Caribbean, African	3	6.8%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2	4.5%
White	30	68.2%
Other ethnic group	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	7	15.9%
Not Answered	0	0.0%

Table B4: Geographic spread of respondents		
Option	Total	
East of England	3	6.8%
East Midlands	4	9.1%
London & South East	20	45.5%
North East	0	0.0%
North West	2	4.5%
South West	6	13.6%
West Midlands	0	0.0%
Yorkshire & Humber	1	2.3%
Northern Ireland	1	2.3%
Scotland	5	11.4%
Wales	0	0.0%
Republic of Ireland	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	0	0.0%
Other	2	4.5%
Not Answered	0	0.0%

Table B5: Health		
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	5	11.4%
No	32	72.7%
Prefer not to say	7	15.9%
Not Answered	0	0.0%

Table B6: Registered architects (including academics) - when qualified		
Option	Total	Percent
0-5 years ago	0	0.0%
6-10 years ago	4	9.1%
11-20 years ago	4	9.1%
21+ years ago	24	54.5%
Not Answered	12	27.3%

Table B7: Registered architects (including academics) - size of practice		
Option	Total	Percent
Small or self-employed (1-10 employees)	15	34.1%
Medium (11-50 employees)	1	2.3%
Large (51+ employees)	5	11.4%
I'm not practising at the moment	3	6.8%

I work at another type of organisation (e.g. developer, local authority)	8	18.2%
Not Answered	12	27.3%

Table B8: To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on building safety?

Option	Total	Percent
5: Strongly agree	7	15.9%
4: Agree	15	34.1%
3: Neither agree nor disagree	13	29.5%
2: Disagree	5	11.4%
1: Strongly disagree	4	9.1%
Not Answered	0	0.0%

Table B9: To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on sustainability?

Option	Total	Percent
5: Strongly agree	8	18.2%
4: Agree	16	36.4%
3: Neither agree nor disagree	10	22.7%
2: Disagree	5	11.4%
1: Strongly disagree	5	11.4%
Not Answered	0	0.0%

Table B10: To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on leadership?

Option	Total	Percent
5: Strongly agree	8	18.2%
4: Agree	16	36.4%
3: Neither agree nor disagree	13	29.5%
2: Disagree	2	4.5%
1: Strongly disagree	5	11.4%
Not Answered	0	0.0%

Table B11: To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on EDI?

Option	Total	Percent
5: Strongly agree	12	27.3%
4: Agree	14	31.8%
3: Neither agree nor disagree	9	20.5%
2: Disagree	5	11.4%
1: Strongly disagree	4	9.1%
Not Answered	0	0.0%

Table B12: To what extent do you agree with the content of the guidance on mentoring?		
Option	Total	Percent
5: Strongly agree	9	20.5%
4: Agree	18	40.9%
3: Neither agree nor disagree	12	27.3%
2: Disagree	1	2.3%
1: Strongly disagree	4	9.2%
Not Answered	0	0.0%

Building Safety

Supporting guidance for the Architects Code of Conduct and Practice

Publication date: X/X/2026

Status: Draft

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Architects Registration Board has developed this guidance to support architects in meeting their obligations under the Architects Code of Conduct and Practice (the Code), particularly Standard 2 (Public interest).
- 1.2. Standard 2 requires architects to act in the public interest, including by protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of those who use, construct, maintain and are otherwise affected by buildings.
- 1.3. Architects influence and make decisions that have a direct impact on building safety. The nature and extent of an architect's professional responsibilities will depend on their role, competence, appointment and level of control or influence. However, architects should not use contractual arrangements or informal delegation as a reason to ignore safety risks connected to their work.
- 1.4. This guidance outlines practical ways in which architects can meet their obligations in relation to building safety. It focuses on professional judgement, ethical behaviour and compliance with legal duties, rather than technical instruction.
- 1.5. While compliance with this guidance is not mandatory, it may be taken into account when considering whether an architect has met the standards expected under the Code. Any architect who departs from it should be prepared to explain their reasons, having exercised appropriate professional judgement.
- 1.6. In this guidance, "must" is used where there is a legal or regulatory requirement. "Should" describes conduct that ARB would normally expect of architects in meeting

their obligations under the Code. "May" is used where the appropriate course of action will depend on the circumstances or where a particular outcome is not inevitable.

- 1.7. This guidance should be read alongside ARB's competence guidelines relating to fire and life safety design. While the competence guidelines describe the knowledge, skills and experience architects should maintain, this guidance focuses on how architects are expected to exercise professional judgement and ethical responsibility in relation to building safety.

2. Why building safety matters

- 2.1. Building safety is fundamental to the public's trust in architects. Safety in this context includes fire safety, structural stability, and the long-term health and wellbeing of those who live in, use, maintain or construct buildings. Failures in safety can lead to serious injury or loss of life and cause lasting harm to individuals, communities and the reputation of the profession.
- 2.2. As an architect you should place the safety of building users above commercial pressure, client preference or contractual constraints.
- 2.3. Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements is an essential part of professional practice. However, architects should continue to exercise independent professional judgement where significant foreseeable safety risks remain.

3. Design responsibility and professional judgement

- 3.1. You should design with safety in mind from the outset of a project, rather than treating it as a late-stage compliance exercise. You should do this regardless of your seniority, but it is particularly important that you do this if you have responsibility for others and their work.
- 3.2. You should understand the safety implications of your design decisions and how they may affect those who construct, occupy, maintain or alter the building.
- 3.3. Work within the limits of your competence. Where safety-critical issues fall outside your expertise, you should seek appropriate specialist advice and coordinate effectively with others. Receiving specialist advice does not remove your responsibility to understand its relevance to your design decisions and to act on it appropriately.
- 3.4. You should share safety-critical information clearly, accurately and promptly with clients, consultants, contractors and others who may require it.

- 3.5. You should also consider how safety information is handed over at the end of a project and whether building users, facilities managers or future designers have sufficient understanding of key risks, design intents and maintenance needs.

4. Legal duties and regulatory context

- 4.1. You should understand the legal framework relevant to your work, including building regulations, fire safety legislation and health and safety law.
- 4.2. Legal duties may apply to architects in different capacities, including as designers, Principal Designers under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, or Principal Designers for building regulations purposes. These are distinct roles with different legal bases, purposes and responsibilities. This guidance is not a substitute for the legislation or for legal advice.
- 4.3. Where you undertake design work, you should understand the legal duties that apply to that work and take reasonable steps to comply with them. You should also understand how your work interacts with the work of others, and share relevant information clearly and promptly where this is needed to support safe and compliant design, construction, occupation or maintenance.
- 4.4. Where you accept appointment as Principal Designer under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, you should understand and comply with the duties attached to that role. These include duties relating to the planning, management, monitoring and coordination of health and safety during the pre-construction phase.
- 4.5. Where you are appointed as Principal Designer for building regulations purposes under the Building Safety Act 2022, you should understand and comply with the duties attached to that role. These include duties relating to the planning, management and monitoring of design work during the design phase, and taking reasonable steps to ensure that designers comply with their duties.
- 4.6. You should not accept a designer or Principal Designer role unless you have the competence, time, information, authority and resources needed to discharge that role properly. Accepting an appointment in name only, without genuine ability to influence relevant design or coordination decisions, is unlikely to be consistent with your obligations under the Code.
- 4.7. Circumstances may change during a project. If you no longer have the competence, authority, information, time or resources necessary to discharge your role effectively, you should raise those concerns promptly and take reasonable steps to resolve them.

Where this is not possible, you should consider whether it remains appropriate to continue in the role.

- 4.8. Legal duties differ across the UK. Architects should ensure they understand the legal and regulatory requirements that apply in the jurisdiction in which they are working.

5. Fire safety

- 5.1. Fire safety is a critical element of building safety and a fundamental consideration in architectural design.
- 5.2. You should ensure that fire safety is considered early and throughout the design process in relation to your own work and the decisions within your responsibility. Where fire safety issues fall outside your competence, you should seek appropriate specialist advice and take reasonable steps to ensure that advice is properly considered and reflected in your design decisions.
- 5.3. You should consider fire safety early and throughout the design process in relation to your own work and the decisions within your responsibility. Where fire safety issues fall outside your competence, you should seek appropriate specialist advice and take reasonable steps to ensure that advice is properly considered and reflected in your design decisions.
- 5.4. Proceeding with design work while uncertain about fire safety implications may place building users at risk and may be inconsistent with your professional obligations. You should communicate relevant concerns, assumptions and specialist advice clearly to clients, consultants, contractors and others who may need that information.

6. Challenging unsafe practice

- 6.1. There may be circumstances where you encounter decisions or instructions that would compromise building safety or the safety of those involved in construction.
- 6.2. In such situations you should raise concerns clearly and promptly, escalate issues where necessary, and refuse to support unsafe outcomes. This may include escalating concerns within an organisation, formally advising the client of risks, or—where necessary—raising concerns with appropriate authorities.
- 6.3. Where client priorities conflict with safety considerations, you should explain the risks clearly and advocate for safer alternatives. Document your advice and decision-making to ensure there is a clear record of professional judgement.

- 6.4. Where you become aware of a serious and credible risk to health or safety, you should take reasonable steps to ensure that the concern is addressed. The appropriate response will depend on the circumstances, but may include raising the concern within the project team your organisation, advising the client in writing, seeking legal or professional advice, escalating the issue through appropriate channels, or considering whether it remains appropriate to continue in your role. Simply ignoring the issue is unlikely to be consistent with your obligations under the Code.
- 6.5. Fostering a culture where safety concerns can be raised without fear of reprisal is part of your responsibility. You should encourage openness within your team or practice about safety-critical decisions.

7. Keeping records

- 7.1. You should keep records proportionate to your role, the nature of the project and the level of risk. These records should be sufficient to show how relevant building safety issues were identified, considered, communicated and addressed.
- 7.2. Records may include, where appropriate, design decisions, assumptions, risk considerations, advice given to clients or others, specialist advice sought or received, reasons for accepting or rejecting advice, decisions about design changes, and information shared at handover.
- 7.3. Where you are asked to support a decision that may affect building safety, you should make clear the basis of your advice and any limitations on it. If you do not have the competence, information or authority needed to advise on a matter, you should say so clearly and record any recommendation to seek specialist advice.

8. Maintaining competence

- 8.1. Building safety expectations, regulation and best practice continue to evolve. You should keep your knowledge and skills up to date through appropriate continuing professional development, including in relation to fire and life safety. This includes maintaining the level of competence appropriate to your role, as set out in ARB's competence guidance.
- 8.2. You should reflect honestly and regularly on whether you are competent for the work you undertake, particularly where safety-critical responsibilities are involved. Where you are not competent to undertake work, you should decline it, obtain appropriate supervision or specialist advice, or take other reasonable steps to ensure the work is carried out competently.

Environmental Sustainability

Supporting guidance for the Architects Code of Conduct and Practice

Publication date: X/X/2026

Status: Draft

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Architects have an essential role in responding to the climate and biodiversity crises. Buildings are responsible for a large share of global emissions and place significant pressure on natural resources, ecosystems and communities. In the UK, the built environment sector is central to meeting national net zero commitments and to creating places that are resilient, healthy and socially fair.
- 1.2. The Architects Registration Board has developed this guidance to support architects in meeting their obligations under the Architects Code of Conduct (the Code).
- 1.3. Standard 2 of the Architects Code requires architects to act in the public interest. That includes taking responsibility for the environmental implications of their work and using their professional judgement to help deliver sustainable outcomes. This guidance explains the behaviours that demonstrate compliance with those duties.
- 1.4. While compliance with this guidance is not mandatory, it may be taken into account when considering whether an architect has met the standards expected under the Code. Any architect who departs from it should be prepared to explain their reasons, having exercised appropriate professional judgement.

2. Your duties under the Code

Standard 2.1 – Use your best endeavours to conserve and enhance the quality of the environment

- 2.1. This means taking a proactive, not passive approach to sustainable design, advising clients on ways to reduce environmental harm and achieve net zero, even when final decisions rest with others.
- 2.2. “Best endeavours” means doing everything that is practically possible to help deliver environmentally responsible design, unless prevented by legal, safety, or client-imposed constraints. You do not have to deliver a zero-carbon or regenerative project, but you should be able to demonstrate that you tried — using your expertise, influence, and the opportunities available to you.
- 2.3. The extent of what is reasonable will vary depending on your role and stage of involvement. If you are appointed as lead designer or contract administrator, you may have greater agency to drive sustainable outcomes across the team. If your role is limited - such as a planning-only commission - you should still identify opportunities and constraints, make proportionate recommendations, and document any sustainability-related risks or missed opportunities in writing. In every case, you should embed environmental responsibility in the work you do control.

Standard 3.1 – Maintain appropriate skills and knowledge

- 2.4. This means you should maintain your knowledge of current sustainability practice, technical standards and developments in policy and technology.

3. Key behaviours

3.1. Stay informed and keep your knowledge current

Architects should understand the environmental impacts of buildings and the places they shape. You should:

- Understand the sources of carbon emissions and environmental degradation generated by the built environment
- Keep up to date with relevant climate policies building regulations, and recognised standards (such as the RIBA Climate Challenge, the Low Energy Transformation Initiative, and PAS 2080). This includes the relevant legislation for your country
- Use appropriate tools and specialist input to assess likely environmental performance of projects and compare with relevant benchmark data

- Be aware of local risks such as overheating, flooding, water scarcity and biodiversity loss
- Be able to propose effective means of achieving net zero carbon emissions, reductions in pollution and protecting biodiversity Consider recognised climate projections and foreseeable environmental risks when developing design advice

3.2. Give clear, honest advice

You should:

- Explain the environmental implications of design choices
- Present options that improve outcomes across carbon, biodiversity, water, health and social value
- Be frank about the limitations of a design and identify how it could be strengthened

Example:

A client prefers gas boilers for a small housing scheme. You explain how heat pumps cut emissions and running costs, and highlight the risk of costly future retrofit or non-compliance with future standards.

3.3. Advocate for better outcomes

Even when others are not prioritising sustainability, you should:

- Champion environmentally responsible design principles from the earliest stages
- Recommend lower-impact materials, systems and processes
- Promote outcomes aligned with net zero, resilience, and ecological health
- Recommend resilient design strategies that anticipate long-term environmental risks, such as overheating or water scarcity
- Share knowledge and experience of delivering sustainable solutions, especially with new generations of practitioners

Example:

For a school refurbishment, you propose a retrofit strategy and show how it improves comfort, reduces energy use, and aligns with public-sector decarbonisation programmes.

3.4. Collaborate and influence

Architects are rarely the sole decision-makers, but they can shape outcomes. You should work constructively and collaboratively with clients, engineers, contractors and others to raise standards. In rare cases, if a client insists on environmentally harmful decisions and will not consider alternatives, you should consider what further steps are

appropriate. This may include recording your advice, seeking professional or legal advice, limiting the scope of your involvement, or reconsidering whether it remains appropriate to continue with the appointment.

Example:

A developer removes shading devices during value engineering. You explain that this risks breaching the Building Regulations on overheating and may conflict with planning consent tied to the building's external appearance. You recommend lower-cost alternatives that maintain compliance and reduce solar gain.

4. Design strategies

- 4.1. You should understand and apply established sustainable design strategies where they are feasible and within the scope of your appointment. You should recognise the need to balance sustainability with other regulatory requirements such as fire safety, overheating mitigation, acoustics, and structural robustness.

Retrofit first

Prioritise retaining and improving buildings over demolition and new build.

Example:

A disused office-to-residential project retains the concrete frame and upgrades the envelope, cutting embodied carbon significantly.

Fabric first

Improve the performance of the building envelope before relying on technology.

Example:

A housing scheme uses careful junction design to avoid thermal bridging and incorporates heat-recovery ventilation to maintain air quality and reduce heat loss.

Passive design and daylighting

Use location orientation, form, materials and natural systems to reduce energy demand.

Example:

Reading rooms in a library face north for daylight without glare, and high-level natural ventilation reduces the need for mechanical cooling.

Efficient systems and renewables

Minimise energy demand and propose low-carbon systems and renewable technologies where practical.

Example:

A leisure centre uses heat pumps and photovoltaic (PV) panels, reducing grid reliance and aligning with local net zero plans.

Whole-life carbon

Evaluate and report on assessed carbon emissions across construction, operation, maintenance and end-of-life. You should also be aware of emerging tools like digital material passports that allow future reuse and support circular economy goals. Where feasible, include data on materials and products to help future building users make sustainable choices.

Example:

A life-cycle assessment compares cross-laminated timber and steel structural options and informs a lower-carbon choice.

Land use and nature-based solutions

Design with sensitivity to land use, topography, soil and ecosystems. Work with natural features rather than against them, and promote nature-based solutions that provide co-benefits, such as flood control, cooling, and mental wellbeing.

Example:

On a housing site prone to surface flooding, you integrate swales, rain gardens and permeable paving to manage water and enhance biodiversity, reducing the need for piped infrastructure.

Water and biodiversity

Reduce water use and enhance ecological value.

Example:

A retail park refurbishment incorporates green roofs and bioswales to manage runoff and create a biodiverse habitat.

Pollution and waste

Design to minimise construction and operational pollution and eliminate avoidable waste. Consider material durability, recyclability and toxicity, and specify low-emission products wherever possible. Collaborate with the supply chain to ensure waste reduction during construction and advocate for responsible disposal and recycling.

Example:

For a commercial office refurbishment, you specify modular ceiling tiles made from recycled content, and ensure that old materials are sorted and diverted from landfill through a take-back scheme with the supplier.

Circular economy

Designing for disassembly or future reuse should be considered at the earliest stages, especially for interiors and fit-outs. Look for opportunities to use reused or recycled materials and document them for future adaptation.

Example:

A modular office scheme uses bolted frames and recyclable insulation panels to support future disassembly or relocation.

5. Summary

Although architects are not responsible for every environment outcome on a project, passive compliance is not enough: active engagement with climate and environmental responsibility is now a basic expectation of professional practice. Architects should consider the environmental implications of their work, give clear and proportionate advice, and use their knowledge, influence and professional judgement to support better environmental outcomes where this is within their role and scope of appointment.

Leadership

Supporting guidance for the Architects Code of Conduct and Practice

Publication date: X/X/2026

Status: Draft

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Architects Registration Board (ARB) has developed this guidance to support architects in meeting their professional obligations under the Code, particularly Standard 3 (Competence), Standard 4 (Professional practice), and Standard 6 (Respect).
- 1.2. Standard 3 requires architects to be competent, work within the limits of that competence and encourage the professional development of those they supervise.
- 1.3. Standard 4 requires architects to carry out their work effectively, exercising skill and diligence. This includes properly planning, monitoring and managing their projects with sufficient resources and capacity.
- 1.4. Standard 6 requires architects to treat everyone with respect and to contribute to a positive and inclusive working environment where unfair discrimination is not tolerated.
- 1.5. This guidance explains how architects can demonstrate effective leadership in practice. It highlights behaviours that support professional competence, responsible project delivery and respectful working environments. While the examples focus on architectural practice, the principles are relevant to architects working in any setting.
- 1.6. Effective leadership is fundamental to achieving these standards, as architects in leadership roles set the tone for their teams and those they work with, while influencing the culture and performance of their workplace.
- 1.7. While principals and directors have responsibility to provide direction and uphold professional standards, there are different levels of leadership and it is a task not only for those in senior roles. Leadership in professional practice does not depend on job

title. Architects may demonstrate leadership at different stages of their career by influencing decisions, supporting colleagues, and raising concerns where professional standards may be at risk.

- 1.8. This guidance outlines practical ways in which architects can exercise positive leadership in practice. Compliance with this guidance is not mandatory, but any architect who departs from it should be prepared to explain their reasons, having used their professional judgement.

2. Leadership as a professional competence

- 2.1. Effective leadership in an architectural practice sets the tone for everything that follows. Good leadership fosters an ethical, motivated and high-performing team, and improves the culture and quality of the practice. Poor leadership or poorly managed hierarchies can create a harmful culture in which people will struggle to thrive and quality deteriorates. Ultimately, effective leadership enhances staff well-being, improves project outcomes and drives overall business success.

Architectural practice often operates in a commercially demanding environment. Practices may face tight programmes, small margins, fluctuating workloads and difficult staffing decisions. Leadership in this context can involve balancing competing pressures, including client expectations, business sustainability, staff wellbeing and professional responsibilities. Effective leadership does not remove these challenges, but it helps ensure that decisions are taken thoughtfully and responsibly.

- 2.2. Leadership in professional practice also involves exercising judgement when difficult or uncomfortable decisions arise. This may include addressing conflict within teams, challenging unrealistic client demands, or declining work where there are serious concerns about safety, legality or professional standards. In these situations, leadership and professionalism are closely connected: architects who demonstrate leadership help ensure that professional obligations and the public interest remain central to decision-making.

Example:

During construction, a contractor proposes a lower-cost alternative to an agreed product or detail. The architect identifies that the proposed change may affect the building's safety strategy and convenes an appropriate technical review, seeking specialist advice where necessary. They explain the risks and available options to the client, record their advice clearly, and do not endorse the change until they are satisfied that it is safe and compliant.

3. Develop leadership as a professional skill

3.1. Leadership is a distinct professional skill that requires conscious development over the course of an architect's career. While leadership is often associated with seniority, this does not always have to be the case, nor does seniority of experience necessarily make someone an effective leader. Strong leadership can help prepare someone to manage people, set a healthy culture, resolve conflict, delegate effectively, or guide a team through uncertainty. While 'nice' leadership is not always good leadership, you should always remain fair and respectful when leading others.

3.2. You should therefore approach leadership as an ongoing competency which requires regular development:

- Develop your skills on topics such as people management, communication, conflict resolution and inclusive leadership
- Identify colleagues or external figures who lead well and analyse what they do differently
- Seek opportunities to learn from others, including peers, mentors or professional networks
- Reflect on what is working in your leadership and what is not. Welcome and act upon feedback from your team and peers
- Look to understand how you can improve on your leadership skills from assessing how you may have dealt with challenges or decisions in the past. This continues to build upon your leadership skills and improves your decision-making

4. Lead by example and uphold professional values

4.1. Lead with integrity and values that encourage those you work with to follow suit.

Always act with honesty and fairness, setting an example that inspires your colleagues to follow suit. Engage your team in defining the core values of the practice and ensure those values guide everyday decisions. By setting an example and upholding professional standards yourself, you build trust and set a strong ethical tone from the top.

5. Be visible and approachable

- 5.1. Be accessible to your team. Good leaders are present and approachable. Make time for informal interactions with staff at all levels – for instance, chatting over lunch or coffee – to break down hierarchies and show you are available. Being visible in the day-to-day life of the practice helps build rapport and trust.
- 5.2. Promote open communication. Encourage your team to raise questions or concerns early, and respond supportively when they do. Make it clear that no one will be punished for admitting a mistake or reporting a problem — this helps prevent a culture of fear.

6. Creating an inclusive and respectful workplace

- 6.1. Set the tone from the top. Champion an inclusive, respectful culture through your own actions. Make it clear that discrimination, harassment and bullying have no place in your practice, and that everyone must be treated with respect. Leaders who demonstrate respectful and professional behaviour set expectations for everyone in the workplace.

7. Be consistent

- 7.1. Consider your working practices (flexible working policies, office hours, project allocation, promotion criteria) to ensure they do not create unintended barriers for colleagues in the profession or your workplace.
- 7.2. Embrace diversity and fairness. Strive to make your workplace welcoming to people of all backgrounds. Implement fair recruitment practices and ensure everyone has equal opportunities to grow: consider whether pay, promotion and development opportunities are fair and transparent.
- 7.3. Leaders have a responsibility to take concerns about behaviour seriously and to respond appropriately when issues are raised. Concerns may relate to bullying, discrimination, harassment, unethical conduct, safety risks, or behaviour that falls short of professional standards.

Example:

During a site visit, a client makes sexist remarks about a member of the project team. The architect challenges the behaviour calmly and makes clear that it is unacceptable. They check privately what support the colleague wants, keep an appropriate record of the incident, and consider whether further action is required under the practice's policies or the terms of the working relationship.

- 7.4. When concerns are brought to your attention, you should listen carefully, consider the information objectively and take reasonable steps to understand what has happened. Ignoring concerns or dismissing them without proper consideration can allow harmful behaviour to continue and may undermine trust within the workplace.
- 7.5. Those who raise concerns in good faith should be treated fairly and should not be disadvantaged for doing so. By addressing issues openly and constructively, leaders help maintain a respectful working environment and demonstrate a commitment to the professional values set out in the Code.

8. Supporting and developing others

- 8.1. Mentor and train others. A key part of leadership is helping others to grow. Good mentoring and training does not always need to be formal. Make time to mentor junior staff by reviewing their work, providing constructive feedback and guiding them through new challenges. By investing in your junior colleagues' development, you build a more competent and confident team.

Example:

A senior architect notices that a colleague's technical information has become inconsistent and that deadlines are regularly being missed. They arrange a supportive one-to-one discussion, clarify expectations, agree practical support and increase appropriate checking of the work. They also review whether workload, supervision or resourcing needs to change so that quality and wellbeing are protected.

-
- 8.2. Effective leaders delegate work in a way that supports learning while ensuring that tasks are carried out competently. When delegating work, you should ensure that those carrying out tasks have the appropriate supervision, support and resources to do so safely and effectively.
- 8.3. Establish structured onboarding and progression. New employees will join your practice at different stages of their career and with different levels of experience. For some it might be their first time in a workplace. Welcome new employees with a proper induction that introduces them to the workplace's standards and culture. Induction should also introduce new employees to the practice's expectations around professional behaviour and workplace culture. Ensure that you set clear expectations around professional conduct, and outline transparent paths for career progression and ongoing training. When people see that leadership is invested in their development from the outset, they remain engaged and motivated to excel.

9. Develop future leaders

- 9.1. Watch for team members who show initiative and reliability, and give them chances to take on leadership tasks (such as leading a small project or supervising an intern) in a supported way. These experiences will help develop the next generation of leaders.

10. Managing work and resources responsibly

- 10.1. Excessive workloads increase the risk of errors, compromised design decisions and poor professional judgement. Leaders should therefore plan work realistically and monitor workloads to reduce these risks.
- 10.2. Manage projects with an eye on your team's workload and well-being. Model a healthy work-life balance yourself that sets the approach for others to follow —for example by limiting out-of-hours communication.
- 10.3. When scoping new work, ensure the plan and fee allow enough staff and time to do the job effectively. By planning realistically and staffing projects appropriately, you reduce the risk of burnout and mistakes caused by fatigue.
- 10.4. Set clear expectations with clients and plan for change. Where you can, use written agreements to define the scope, timeline and procedures for changes so that your team is protected from unrealistic demands. Agree in advance how to handle any project changes (for example, through a change control process or additional fees) to avoid last-minute pressure on you and your team. By anticipating changes and establishing clear boundaries, you can adapt to evolving needs without compromising your team's well-being.

Example:

A client asks for a significant package of work to be completed within a timescale that would require sustained excessive hours from the project team. The architect explains the risks this creates for quality, safety and staff wellbeing, and seeks agreement on changes to scope, programme or resources. Where the deadline cannot change, they prioritise work appropriately and make sure the client understands any resulting limitations or risks. They advocated on the behalf of their employees to their external clients.

- 10.5. Ensure accountability, not blame. If you are in a senior leadership role, make sure project roles and decision-making responsibilities are clearly defined, but also ensure that you and other senior architects ultimately take responsibility for overall outcomes. Leaders should create a culture where junior staff should not be left carrying blame for issues beyond their control. If problems occur, focus on solving them rather than finding

a scapegoat. By supporting your team and accepting responsibility, you build trust and loyalty.

11. Reflecting and improving leadership

- 11.1. Seek feedback on your leadership. Periodically ask your team for input on your leadership and the workplace culture. Be open to constructive critique and use it to improve your approach. Create an environment where your colleagues feel safe to give open feedback and let them know what changes you will make as a result of their feedback, to show you take their views seriously.
- 11.2. Review and adapt your workplace's culture. Regularly assess whether your workplace culture aligns with your values and the Code's Standards. If you notice unhealthy or outdated attitudes (for example, expecting new recruits to tolerate unreasonable workloads as you may have done), take action to change them. Regularly assess whether your workplace's culture (for example 'presenteeism', or expectations to work late) may be disadvantaging particular groups.
- 11.3. Lead by example in driving change. Embrace the role of leadership and its power to make positive changes that will benefit you and others. Effective leaders proactively champion improvements that benefit the wider public and profession – whether it's improving equality and diversity in the team, adopting more sustainable design practices, or raising safety standards. By taking the lead on these broader issues, you demonstrate the profession's core values in action and inspire others to do the same.
- 11.4. Reflection on leadership practice can form part of your continuing professional development.
- 11.5. You should aim to have resources easily available if your staff feel they have been discriminated against in the workplace. You can share the ARB Guidance on Raising Concerns and Whistleblowing¹.

12. Summary

- 12.1. Effective leadership supports not only the success of individual practices, but also the reputation and standards of the profession as a whole. Architects who demonstrate responsible leadership help ensure that architectural services are delivered competently, ethically and in the public interest.

¹ [Architects Code: Standards of Conduct and Practice](#)

Mentoring

Supporting guidance for the Architects Code of Conduct and Practice

Publication date: X/X/2026

Status: Draft

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Architects Registration Board has developed this guidance to support architects in meeting their obligations under the Architects Code of Conduct (the Code) when acting as a mentor.
- 1.2. The Code requires architects to maintain competence, act with integrity, and treat others with respect. Where architects act as mentors, these obligations shape how they support the development of others.
- 1.3. This guidance explains what architects should do to comply with the Code when acting as a mentor.
- 1.4. While compliance with this guidance is not mandatory, it may be taken into account when considering whether an architect has met the standards expected under the Code. Any architect who departs from it should be prepared to explain their reasons, having exercised appropriate professional judgement.

2. What is mentoring and why it matters

- 2.1. Mentoring is a professional relationship in which a more experienced practitioner supports the development, confidence and professional judgement of a less experienced person. It usually involves sharing experience, offering constructive challenge, and encouraging reflection to help the mentee develop their own understanding and capability. In architecture this could be a pre-registration trainee or an early career architect.

- 2.2. Mentoring is distinct from supervision, management or formal assessment roles, although these may overlap, especially in smaller practices. The purpose of mentoring is not to direct or control decisions, but to support the development of independent professional judgement.
- 2.3. Mentoring supports the development of competence, professional judgement, and confidence across the profession. It involves making a commitment towards someone else's development, often at a crucial time in their education and training, and it can be personally and professionally rewarding to support others in this way. Architects may mentor students, trainees, early-career architects, or peers taking on new responsibilities.
- 2.4. Acting as a mentor is a professional activity, and the Code applies whether a mentoring relationship is formal or informal. Your responsibilities are likely to be greater where the guidance you offer as part of a mentoring relationship has the potential to influence a person's competence or professional decisions.
- 2.5. Understand the value in informal mentoring relationships and that this may suit some mentor and mentee relationships better than a more rigid and formal mentoring relationship.
- 2.6. The quality of mentoring can influence how professional judgement is formed and applied in practice, and therefore how decisions affecting the built environment are made. It can also help shape and improve workplace culture if strong, positive, and influential mentoring relationships then reflect back into a workplace.
- 2.7. Effective mentoring contributes to public confidence in the profession by supporting the development of competent practitioners.

3. Mentoring relationships

- 3.1. Mentoring relationships rely on trust and carry an inherent imbalance of experience and influence. You may also receive personal information disclosed to you by your mentee. You should manage this responsibly.
- 3.2. Effective mentoring depends on clear communication, trust and appropriate professional relationships. You should:
- maintain professional boundaries in and out of the workplace
 - be aware of the power imbalance and influence you may have over those who you mentor

- ensure your mentee can seek an alternative point of view outside of your own; and
 - while the mentee should value your advice, avoid developing a relationship in which they are dependent on you
- 3.3. It is beneficial to match mentors up with mentees appropriately. You may wish to consider, age, gender, and experience when matching up mentors to mentees to try to ensure a cohesive mentorship. While learning is the focal point of a mentorship, matching personalities allows for a cohesive mentorship and may create longevity.
- 3.4. Be clear about your role at the start of your mentoring relationship and set out mutual expectations. This can include explaining the limits of your experience, distinguishing between your opinion and instruction. You should also be clear when in situations where a variety of approaches could be considered, you should avoid presenting your preferred approach as the only acceptable one.

Example:

A mentee shares a recently learned sustainability approach that is unfamiliar to their mentor but may be relevant to a current project. The mentor listens openly, considers the evidence and discusses how the approach could be tested or developed with the wider team. Effective mentoring recognises that experience and learning can flow in both directions.

- 3.5. Any conflicts of interest should be recognised and managed, and the mentoring relationship should never be used in a way that could exploit or disadvantage the mentee. You should avoid relationships or behaviours that could compromise objectivity, independence, or professional boundaries. Examples of inappropriate behaviours include having romantic relationships, creating a co-dependency and exploiting your mentee by giving them your excess work.
- 3.6. Mentoring should support the development of independent professional judgement and not create reliance on the mentor's direction.
- 3.7. Mentoring should be voluntary for both parties and while both should commit to it, there may be circumstances where the relationship may need to end. As the mentor you should do your best to support the mentee to help transition them to another mentor or an alternative arrangement.

4. Competence

- 4.1. Mentoring is a professional skill which should be developed and maintained through reflection, learning and feedback.

- 4.2. Mentoring plays a direct role in developing professional competence. You should ensure your guidance supports safe, ethical and effective practice and aligns with the Code.
- 4.3. Architects at any stage of their career can be effective mentors but it is a significant responsibility and should be undertaken only if you are competent and able to commit to the role.
- 4.4. Mentor only in areas where you have appropriate knowledge and experience, recognise when matters fall outside your competence, and direct the mentee to others where appropriate. Mentoring should encourage reflection, judgement, and learning over time - not simply the completion of immediate tasks. Good mentoring can be holistic and cover much more than technical work.

5. Accountability

- 5.1. Mentoring can influence decisions about competence, progression and professional practice. Architects are responsible for the guidance they provide. This is particularly important where mentoring relates to learning, training or readiness for practice.
- 5.2. Provide honest and constructive feedback, support safe and competent practice, and avoid placing individuals in situations beyond their capability without appropriate support. You should recognise the imbalance of experience and authority that can exist and manage this responsibly. You should acknowledge when you are no longer the right person to provide guidance and step back where appropriate.

Example:

A recently qualified architect is preparing for their first client presentation and is anxious about responding to difficult questions. Their mentor rehearses the presentation with them, gives focused feedback and discusses practical ways to respond when they do not know an answer immediately. During the meeting, the mentee leads where possible, with the mentor providing support only where necessary, followed by a short debrief to help them learn afterwards.

- 5.3. If you become aware of behaviours, environments, or practices that risk harm, exploitation, or unsafe learning, you should take appropriate action. This may include stepping back from the role, seeking advice, or raising concerns through appropriate channels¹.
- 5.4. Where mentoring forms part of a structured arrangement, such as part of a trainee's period of professional practical experience, commit appropriate time and attention to it,

¹ [Raising Concerns and Whistleblowing guidance](#)

and engage constructively with processes linked to the trainees' education and training. You should be responsive to others who are also involved in supporting the mentee's progress, such as their learning provider.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Supporting guidance for the Architects Code of Conduct and Practice

Publication date: X/X/2026

Status: Draft

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This guidance supports architects in meeting their obligations under Standard 6 (Respect) of the Architects Code. It outlines how to foster inclusive working environments and design for diverse communities. Everyone has a right to be treated with dignity, and to work and live in environments that support their safety, belonging and wellbeing.
- 1.2. Respect is a core professional value. It applies to how architects treat clients, colleagues, collaborators and communities. It also applies to how they design the built environment. Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in professional life helps build trust, improves outcomes and strengthens the culture of the profession.
- 1.3. While compliance with this guidance is not mandatory, it may be taken into account when considering whether an architect has met the standards expected under the Code. Any architect who departs from it should be prepared to explain their reasons, having exercised appropriate professional judgement.

2. Why EDI matters

- 2.1. Architects shape the world around us. A profession that includes people from all backgrounds is better equipped to design safe, inclusive spaces. Inclusive teams can be more creative, effective and resilient. Inclusive workplaces can be more likely to retain

talent and promote wellbeing. Inclusive projects are more responsive to the needs of the public. Having diverse talent could also attract more clients and architects who see your practice as visionary and forward thinking.

- 2.2. Evidence from our Workplace Culture report shows that many people in architecture still experience discrimination, exclusion or inequality. Our 2024 Workplace Culture¹ report found that architects suffer from higher levels of discrimination and sexual misconduct than in many other professions. As an architect, you share a responsibility to change this, not just through updating EDI policies but through your everyday behaviour and action
- 2.3. You must also meet your legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. This includes avoiding discrimination based on protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. If you hold a position of responsibility – particularly one with influence over workplace policies or recruitment – you should ensure your organisation’s policies and hiring practices meet these obligations.

3. Respect and inclusiveness

- 3.1. Respect is more than politeness. It means treating others with fairness, dignity and care, regardless of role, background or difference.
- 3.2. There is an important role for debate and discussion but demonstrating respect in practice means listening without interrupting, giving others credit for their contributions, and treating everyone with professionalism, regardless of background or role. It also means using inclusive language, avoiding stereotypes, and making sure everyone feels heard and safe to speak.
- 3.3. You should be mindful of how your words and actions affect others – both in the office and on site – and be prepared to challenge disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour when you see it.

4. Inclusive workplace culture

- 4.1. An inclusive culture is one where everyone feels safe, supported and able to contribute. Creating this culture is a shared responsibility not just for those in leadership roles or those from underrepresented backgrounds.

¹ [Workplace Culture - Architects Registration Board](#)

- 4.2. In practice, fostering inclusion means being aware of who is given space to speak, how work is allocated, and whether some voices are being sidelined. Inclusion also means being open to feedback, recognising different ways of working, and not expecting underrepresented colleagues to shoulder the burden of culture change. Practices should aim for a culture where every employee feels able to contribute to and encourage positive changes within the workplace.

Example:

During coordination meetings, a junior colleague is repeatedly interrupted and their contributions are dismissed without proper consideration. The meeting chair intervenes, ensures that the colleague has the opportunity to contribute, and later checks whether this reflects a wider pattern. They set clear expectations for respectful participation and, where necessary, address the matter through the practice's appropriate reporting or management processes.

- 4.3. Rigid long-hours cultures, unclear promotion processes, or informal cliques can all contribute to exclusion. Practices should regularly review whether these dynamics exist – and take action to address them.

5. Designing inclusive spaces

- 5.1. Inclusive design is a core part of an architect's responsibility. It requires consideration of how different people can experience a space – not just in function, but in comfort, dignity and ease of use. This often means engaging with the people who will use or be affected by it.
- 5.2. Where appropriate, you should meaningfully engage with building users, local communities, and groups representing access needs, particularly in the early stages of design.
- 5.3. Examples of inclusive features might include:
- Step-free access and wide doorways
 - Clear wayfinding and braille signage
 - Sensory-friendly spaces with adjustable lighting and noise
 - Gender-neutral toilets or multi-faith rooms
- 5.4. Inclusive design is not about meeting minimum standards. It is about embedding an approach to designing for dignity, usability and equity. Everyone should feel welcomed into a designed space and as an architect you should help facilitate this. Inclusive design

allows for participation and interaction from people across society and aims to remove barriers that can create separation and discrimination. As an architect you should advocate for inclusive design with your clients where possible.

Example:

While designing alterations to a listed building, an architect identifies opportunities to improve access for disabled people. They discuss a range of proportionate options with the client and, where appropriate, seek advice from access and conservation specialists. They explain the benefits, constraints and likely approvals required, rather than treating heritage significance and accessibility as automatically competing objectives.

6. Leadership responsibilities

6.1. Architects in leadership roles set the tone for the profession. They have a particular responsibility to foster a culture of respect.

If you are in a leadership role you should:

- Allocate work and opportunities fairly
- Encourage flexible working and discourage 'presenteeism'
- Resource projects appropriately to avoid excessive overwork
- Put clear policies in place for raising and addressing concerns
- Support the development of junior staff from all backgrounds

6.2. Leadership also includes recruitment and progression. You should ensure hiring practices are fair, inclusive and designed to attract a wide pool of talent.

6.3. Candidates must never be discriminated against on the basis of any protected characteristics.

6.4. You should aim to have resources easily available if your staff feel they have been discriminated against in the workplace. You can share the ARB Guidance on Raising Concerns and Whistleblowing².

² [Architects Code: Standards of Conduct and Practice](#)