

# Building Safety in Brief

## The Golden Thread during design and construction



### Background

Following the Grenfell fire in 2017, the [“Hackitt Report”](#) into the tragedy identified the need for a **“Golden Thread”** of information for higher risk residential buildings:

- being a digital record “from initial design intent through to construction and including any changes that occur throughout occupation”
- to be “used by the dutyholders to demonstrate to the regulator the safety of the building throughout its life cycle”.

The Building Safety Act 2022 (**BSA**) reflects this, referring to the need to keep “information”.

A key consultation on [implementing the new building control regime](#) ran in 2022 (**Consultation**), setting out proposals for the Golden Thread for higher-risk buildings (**HRBs**) during the design and construction phases. The **Consultation Response** was published in August 2023. The Building (Higher-Risk Buildings Procedures) (England) Regulations 2023 (**HRB Procedures Regulations**) subsequently came into force on 1 October 2023 containing some limited provisions about the Golden Thread.

This factsheet summarises key some information and legislation about the Golden Thread during the design and construction phase of a project. This factsheet applies to England only.

### What's an HRB?

You can find out more about what an HRB is in our factsheet [here](#).

### BRAC and the Golden Thread

The Building Regulations Advisory Committee (**BRAC**), working with government and other stakeholders, published its [Golden Thread Report](#) in July 2021. In it, BRAC defined the Golden Thread, and identified 10 Principles.

### What's the golden thread?

BRAC's summary definition: “The Golden Thread is both the information that allows you to understand a building and the steps needed to keep both the building and people safe, now and in the future” (For their full definition, see para 3.3 of their [Report](#))

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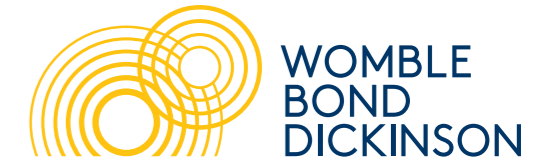
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### BRAC's 10 Golden Thread Principles

- 1 Accurate and Trusted** – must be accurate and trusted so that relevant people use it
- 2 Residents feeling secure in their homes** – providing residents the assurance that their building is being managed safely
- 3 Culture change** – requires increased competence and capability, different working practices, updated processes and a focus on information management and control
- 4 Single source of truth** – brings all information together in a single place
- 5 Secure** – must be secure, with sufficient protocols in place to protect personal information and control access to maintain security of the building or residents
- 6 Accountable** – will record changes, when these changes were made, and by whom
- 7 Understandable/consistent** – uses standard methods, processes and consistent terminology
- 8 Simple to access** – must be accessible so that people can easily find the right information at the right time
- 9 Longevity/durability and shareability of information** – formatted in a way that can be easily handed over and maintained over the entire lifetime of a building
- 10 Relevant/proportionate** – must be reviewed periodically to ensure that the information comprising it remains relevant and useful.

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### The Consultation and the 10 Principles

Building on the BRAC Report, the Consultation said it “sets out more details on our proposals on **how we intend to turn these principles into regulations**” including:

- requiring the Golden Thread to be digital i.e. information and data is stored electronically and can be transferred electronically
- aligning the approach with the broad requirements of the International Standard ISO 19650 series and the guidance contained in the UK BIM Framework
- requiring that an information management process is in place, setting out the steps enabling those who need to provide, access, and modify information to do so
- the Client setting out a transfer plan on how information will be transferred throughout the building lifecycle
- regulating that the Client has to do “as much as is reasonably practicable to ensure the Golden Thread is secure”
- requiring that the language and information in the Golden Thread is consistent for the project and building
- the Client ensuring there is a record in the Golden Thread of who inputs information, when information is updated, and responsibilities for approving changes.

### The Consultation Response and HRB Procedure Regulations

The Consultation Response indicated that the government’s proposals on the Golden Thread outlined in the Consultation (see above), were approved by the respondents to the Consultation.

Regulation 31 of the HRB Procedures Regulations 2023 (**Regulation 31**) has provided some legislative requirements about the Golden Thread and what to include in it, such as:

- electronic facilities for holding / updating the Golden Thread information
- procedures for access to maintain the Golden Thread
- before construction starts, the Golden Thread to include the fire statement, plus plans and documents from Gateway 2 approval
- controlled changes, and
- mandatory occurrence reports to the BSR.

However, we now await more detailed regulations and guidance.

### What should be in the Golden Thread

There is no comprehensive checklist of what information/ documents should or should not be included in the Golden Thread, and it is anticipated that this will vary on a building by building basis.

What we do know is that the information needs to be:

- relevant
- evidence of compliance with building regulations.

On that basis, this could include:

- planning permissions
- applications made to the BSR (including at Gateways 2 and 3), including supporting documents – remember that handing over the Golden Thread to the relevant person at the end of construction is necessary to achieve Gateway 3 certification
- information specifically referred to in Regulation 31

- other relevant information, such as other relevant certificates relating to the works, fire safety information, plans (revised as necessary), and information about construction products.

But the focus is on quality over quantity. Further detail is awaited.

For more on the Gateways, see our [factsheet on the new building safety regime for HRBs](#).

### What next?

The industry is waiting for further regulations and for the guidance promised by the government.

In the meantime, now that the 1 October date has passed following which much of the BSA is now implemented, those involved with HRBs (including where working on or intending to work on HRBs in the near future) must start

gathering what they will need for their Golden Thread, consider what information they have, decide how best to store that information, and establish what further information they consider would be relevant for the Golden Thread on each HRB bearing in mind that this may differ per building or project. Start gathering and storing this information now.

### Remember

Maintenance of the Golden Thread is an ongoing obligation for the entire life-cycle of the building. It is crucial to the proper design, construction and maintenance of HRBs. The government consulted also on the [new safety regime for occupied HRBs](#), including on the Golden Thread in the occupation phase (outside the scope of this factsheet), and provided its [consultation response in August 2023](#).

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