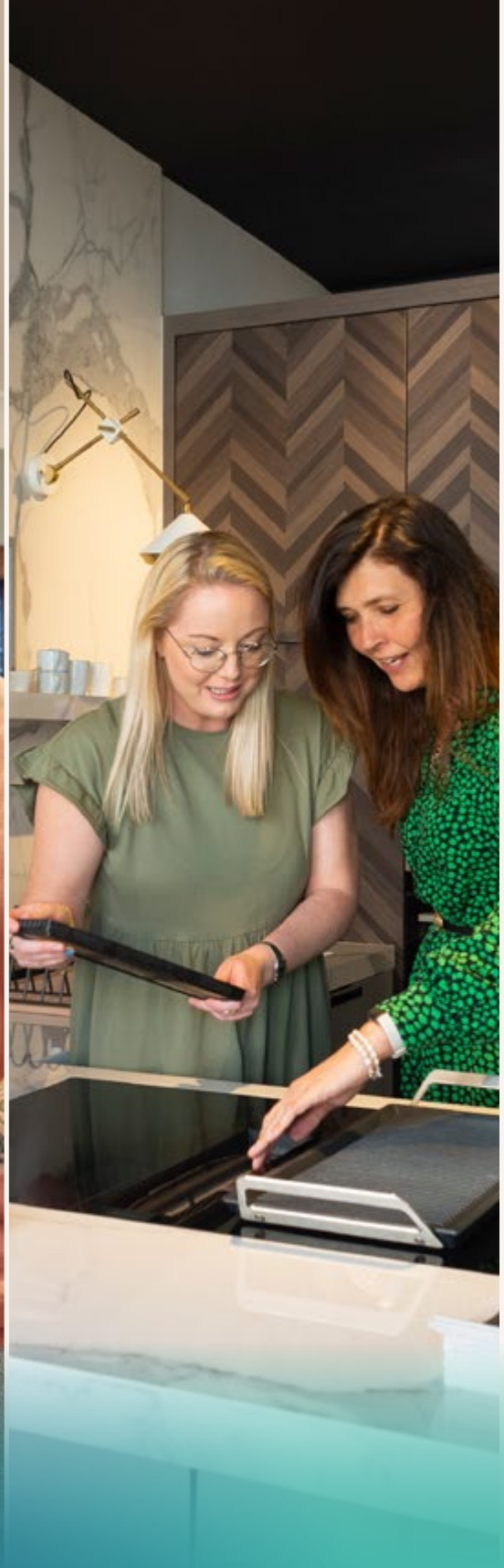




Vision 2030: **BIFIS Manifesto**

A blueprint for sustainable excellence and growth in our industry

Prepared by Damian Walters, Chief Executive Officer, published March 2026



Executive Statement

As we celebrate the arrival of Spring 2026, we simultaneously mark the 20th anniversary of the British Institute of Fitted Interiors Specialists. I am humbled and honoured to introduce our Vision 2030 Manifesto - a blueprint forged from two decades of shared ambition, resilience, and progress.

This moment offers us a unique opportunity to not only celebrate our remarkable journey, but to renew our collective commitment to a future defined by sustainable excellence and growth.

BIFIS began in 2006 as a modest group, united by the simple belief that the fitted interiors sector deserved an organisation that truly championed its interests. In those early days, resources were sparse, and our ambitions often outstripped our means. Yet, it was the unwavering dedication of our founders, and every individual who has joined us since that transformed BIFIS from a fledgling initiative into the leading industry voice for fitted interiors professionals across the United Kingdom. From the very first meetings in makeshift offices, through the gradual expansion of our reach and influence, we have witnessed the sector evolve and flourish.

Throughout this time, our organisation has grown significantly, and today, BIFIS is a network that spans thousands of stakeholders, encompassing manufacturers, retailers, designers, installers, educators, and policy advocates. Our reach extends to every corner of the UK, and our vision now resonates far beyond national borders, as global partnerships and collaborations become increasingly integral to our mission. This growth, however, has never caused us to lose sight of our humble origins. We remain rooted in the principle that progress is best achieved when driven by inclusivity, integrity, and genuine collaboration.



“The fitted interiors sector is a driving force in the UK economy, shaping homes, workplaces, and communities nationwide. As we face an era of unprecedented change and opportunity, BIFIS stands ready to champion our stakeholders and empower the industry with the support and leadership needed to thrive beyond 2030.”

Damian Walters,
Chief Executive Officer

Our journey has not been without its challenges. The past two decades have brought with them cycles of economic uncertainty, periods of rapid expansion, followed by recessions that tested our resolve. Most recently, the pandemic upended every facet of our industry, separating teams, disrupting supply chains, and creating an environment of profound uncertainty for the industry and those consumers already within the buying journey.

The industry has experienced not only economic instability but seismic changes in political leadership, both domestically and abroad, each shift bringing new priorities and regulations that demanded agility and foresight from our stakeholders.

“**My call to action for industry leaders, professionals, and stakeholders is clear: we must remain strong, united, and proactive in addressing this challenge.**”

Sustainability is no longer a choice, it is a necessity, shaping the way we design, manufacture, and install interiors. BIFIS has responded by championing responsible practices, investing in education, and advocating for standards that prioritise the wellbeing of our planet and our communities.

Through every challenge, the fitted interiors sector has demonstrated remarkable resilience. Our stakeholders have proven time and again that adversity can be a catalyst for growth, innovation, and unity. Whether facing economic downturns, health crises, or shifts in policy, our industry has risen to meet each test with ingenuity and determination. This spirit of perseverance has become the hallmark of BIFIS, reflected in the achievements of our network and the respect we command within the broader construction and design communities.

Yet, as we look to the future, we must confront a challenge that is both significant and irreversible: the chronic shortage of skilled labour. Demographic changes, evolving career preferences, and the acceleration of automation have all contributed to a shrinking workforce, one that threatens not only our ability to deliver excellence, but the very sustainability of our

sector. The pandemic intensified these shortages, and whilst some recovery has occurred, the underlying trends persist. It is a reality we cannot ignore. The success of our industry depends on our continued ability to attract, train, and retain talent at every level, from apprentice to executive.

My call to action for industry leaders, professionals, and stakeholders is clear: we must remain strong, united, and proactive in addressing this challenge. Collaboration is essential. We must work together to champion education, invest in retraining, and advocate for policies that support workforce development. Let us leverage our collective expertise, share resources, and foster environments that encourage lifelong learning and innovation. Only by doing so will we secure the future of our sector and ensure that BIFIS continues to be a beacon of excellence for generations to come.

Our purpose is simple to articulate, but far more complex to deliver and more so, reliant on the entire sector to have the foresight to look beyond short-term challenges into a future that is reliant on the availability of skilled labour on the front line: BIFIS – Driving positive change and improving installation standards in the fitted interiors sector.

Central to our Vision 2030 are the interconnected pillars of skills, standards, compliance, and sustainability - each underpinned by tangible actions and a resolute focus on measurable impact. We have set solid foundations which will pave the way for our five year vision, including our work on Apprenticeships, the formation of a Strategic Advisory Board, the introduction of AiM (Accredited Installations Methods) and the expansion of our conference and awards programme.

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, I invite each of you to reflect on how far we have come, and to join us in shaping the path ahead. The challenges are real, and the solutions will require commitment, openness, and adaptability. But our history has shown that, together, we are more than capable of overcoming adversity and seizing new opportunities.


DAMIEN WALTERS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The BIFIS Strategic Framework





01: SKILLS

Empowering industry through lifelong learning

BIFIS recognises education as the cornerstone of industry advancement. To this end, our skills strategy is divided into three interrelated strands, each with bespoke initiatives:

- Apprenticeships for industry newcomers.
- Continuing Professional Development for the time served workforce.
- Retraining for those with transferable skills to support the bridging of the immediate skills gap challenges.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships play a vital role in addressing the chronic shortage of skilled labour facing the fitted interiors sector. By providing structured pathways for entry and hands-on experience, apprenticeships help bridge the gap between emerging talent and industry needs. They not only ensure that essential skills are passed down to the next generation but also foster a culture of growth and sustainability that is critical for the long-term resilience of our workforce and the sector.

Current position:

With over a decade of collaborative development, we can be collectively proud that we have created a fit-for-purpose Level 2 Fitted Interiors Apprenticeship, ready for the next generation. Whilst there are pockets of activity across England and Wales, the reality is that the apprenticeship is not being universally adopted by the industry. Government data from March 2026 shows less than 200 active apprentices on the course, despite the positivity and the furious agreement across the sector that apprenticeships are fundamental in building a future workforce to bridge the skills gap.

There are several valid reasons why this is the case, from a perceived lack of government support for employers and a lack of awareness, but the underlying issue remains that apprenticeships are driven by employers, and in our industry, those employers are, by majority, micro SME's that simply do not feel incentivised to take on an apprentice.

Our recommendations:

- Continued collaborative review of the apprenticeship standard, to ensure it meets the needs of an evolving industry.
- Retailers and main contractors to lead on apprenticeships, by:
 - a) Incentivising its workforce to employ apprentices
 - b) Consider developing their own apprenticeship programme
- Suppliers, distributors and manufacturers to become official BIFIS Advocates to support our continued work on the subject.

Our actions:

- ✓ We will continue to expand the Fitted Interiors Education Committee, ensuring that the industry collaborates on learning and development in the sector.
- ✓ We will continue to pressure government, through lobbying, to increase support and incentives for SME uptake on apprenticeships. Specifically, how government can provide support for funding the payroll burden for small businesses – either through taxation relief or grant funding.
- ✓ We will continue to deliver a national school's programme to generate interest in vocational learning and drive the next generation of talent to our industry. Promotion of our industry will not be limited to installation vacancies, as we take the opportunity to promote other career options within the sector.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

CPD is essential for maintaining the highest levels of competence and adaptability within the fitted interiors industry. As the sector evolves and regulatory demands increase, CPD ensures that professionals remain updated with best practices, new technologies, and legislative changes. This ongoing commitment to learning will be fundamental in shaping future licensing frameworks, guaranteeing that only those who demonstrate consistent professional growth and adherence to standards are qualified to operate within the industry.

Current position:

The fitted interiors industry can be proud of its investment in skills and training but, by design, opportunities for learning and development remain fragmented despite the efforts of training groups, past and present. Suppliers, distributors and manufacturers lead the way on training initiatives, supplementing regulatory training largely focused on health and safety.

BIFIS believes significant change is on the horizon, which could include licensing for frontline operatives and therefore the industry must unite to ensure that fit-for-purpose learning and development opportunities are readily available and accessible to the professional workforce.

Our recommendations:

- Industry stakeholders continue to develop specific learning and development opportunities, to include installation related content, with future licensing in mind.
- Retailers and main contractors consider the introduction of mandatory CPD for their respective workforce, to ensure skills are developed and learning and development prioritised.
- Industry stakeholders use BIFIS as a conduit to share learning and development.

Our actions:

- ✓ We will evolve the Fitted Interior Skills Hub, delivered via the BIFIS mobile app, as a free-to-use portal for the industry's CPD opportunities and will ensure its frontline registered businesses are signposted to relevant content.
- ✓ The Fitted Interiors Skills Hub offers structured, modular learning pathways, accessible both online and in-person and is a place for learning, not restricted to installation. Certification and digital badging will incentivise ongoing engagement, while our peer-to-peer learning forums will foster knowledge exchange and professional networks across the sector.
- ✓ We will continue to work with our strategic Associate Partners in understanding wider CPD requirements and ensuring that we remain the vehicle for relevant information.
- ✓ We will remain the voice of fitted interiors specialists, representing them at the highest level, whilst influencing government and legislative change to benefit the sector.

Retraining

Retraining is set to play a pivotal role in rapidly contributing to the reversal of the skills gap within the fitted interiors sector, by delivering a steady stream of qualified professionals.

Our close relationship with the armed forces community, exemplified through the Armed Forces Covenant, positions BIFIS to tap into a pool of skilled, disciplined, and trusted professionals transitioning from military to civilian life.

If leveraged successfully, this partnership could provide the industry with nearly limitless access to talent, accelerating workforce development and strengthening our capacity to meet evolving market demands.

Current position:

Our established relationship with the Ministry of Defence has created a pathway between the Armed Forces community and the fitted interiors sector. However, we are yet to formalise a meaningful transitional career pathway, in volume, to significantly increase the supply of fitted interiors installation professionals to our industry. We must also consider the wider Armed Forces community (the families of service personnel) if we want to attract labour to hot spot locations. Can we create opportunities elsewhere in our businesses to accommodate their family and their career aspirations?

Our recommendations:

- Manufacturers to consider retraining in their learning and development plans and to incentivise retraining amongst their respective stakeholders.
- Industry considers the wider armed forces community (families of military personnel) for work placement, enabling armed forces veterans to relocate in high-priority locations throughout the UK.
- Employers register with CTP (Careers Transition Partnership) and FFJ (Forces Families Jobs) to advertise careers to the armed forces community.

Our actions:

- ✓ We will continue to develop the relationship between the fitted interiors sector and the Armed Forces community via our Employer Recognition Scheme and the Armed Forces Covenant. We will become leading advocates for the scheme as we move towards Gold status.
- ✓ Recognising the need for workforce adaptability, BIFIS will launch targeted retraining bootcamps and career conversion programmes nationally, especially for those transitioning from adjacent sectors or re-entering the workforce.
- ✓ We will partner with technology providers to integrate the latest tools and systems into retraining modules, ensuring our workforce remains competitive in the face of automation, digitalisation, and evolving customer demands.



02: STANDARDS

Setting and advancing industry benchmarks

BIFIS is dedicated to the continual evolution of industry standards, ensuring they not only meet but anticipate regulatory and legislative requirements. Our approach is collaborative, transparent, and proactive.

Standards

Current position:

Recent figures obtained from the Citizens Advice Service suggest that fitted interiors related consumer complaints are decreasing year-on-year, with 2025 figures down by almost 20% compared to 2024. Whilst this is encouraging, we must ensure that standards remain a priority for the sector – not just their existence, but their accessibility to those responsible for delivering them on the front line.

With fast-moving legislative change an ever-present factor, the dissemination of information remains a challenge within the industry, with the sheer volume of regulatory and non-regulatory information in circulation being a contributor to a lack of general awareness.

Our recommendations:

- Suppliers, distributors and manufacturers connect with BIFIS via our Advocate programme, ensuring that product development factors the installer and their experience. This can be extended to the delivery of learning and development, using the Fitted Interiors Skills Hub as a vehicle to drive awareness to learning opportunities.
- Retailers connect with BIFIS via our Partner programme, strengthening their proposition through insight and our AiM initiative, as well as reducing risk through compliance management mechanisms.
- Industry representatives embrace the BIFIS Standards Committee by nominating appropriate personnel to actively join the group.

Our actions:

- ✓ We will conclude our leadership of the Competency Framework Working Group and Super Sector Review in 2026 and move into the next phase's delivery. Working with partners, we will standardise and promote the newly defined core competencies within our sector – ensuring that only those that meet the standard can operate within the industry. We will work with government to introduce licensing within the industry as a way to improve standards, promote professionals and drive out rogue traders.
- ✓ We will convene regular roundtables with legal experts, technical authorities, and representatives from all regions of our network, to interpret and respond swiftly to legislative changes.
- ✓ The BIFIS Standards Committee will develop and publish detailed guidelines and best practice documents, updated regularly, and distributed widely across our industry.
- ✓ In partnership with external regulators and industry bodies, we will facilitate joint training sessions and compliance workshops, ensuring that every registered business is equipped to implement new standards effectively and consistently.
- ✓ We will establish working groups focused on horizon scanning, identifying future trends and legislative shifts, and providing timely guidance so our stakeholders can proactively adapt.



03: COMPLIANCE

Leading with integrity and readiness

A robust compliance framework is essential for industry confidence and public trust. BIFIS will deliver a suite of transparent, accessible compliance services, with an emphasis on risk reduction and future proofing:

Compliance

Current position:

Litigation remains a quantifiable risk to the industry, especially when the delivery of installed services remains dominated by sub-contracted (but not exclusively) workforces. Industries have suffered at the hands of on-trend legal claims, which largely focus on breaches of industry compliance requirement.

It is therefore vital that the fitted interiors industry protects itself by ensuring compliance remains a priority, especially in relation to their installation propositions – whether they employ, sub-contract or signpost their customers to an installed service.

Businesses have relied on the presentation of compliance documents on face-value, but in the transformative digital world, with accessibility to high-powered Artificial Intelligence at the fingertips of everyone, the risk of compliance fraud has accelerated over recent years.

Our recommendations:

- Retailers and installers undertake an immediate review of the compliance procedures, whether that's an internal or external process. This review must not only focus on the document management, but document legitimacy policies.
- Retailers consider the compliance management services of BIFIS via Partnership and installation businesses via Registration.
- Retailers and installation businesses consider the Accredited Installation Methods (AiM) initiative with a view to standardise (and formally recognise) the industry's installation methodology, to enable a sector wide reduction of installation risk.

Our actions:

- ✓ We will provide guidance to the industry on how they can review internal procedures to reduce compliance-based risk. We will ensure the industry retains access to practical operational and strategic thought leadership to ensure the sector both understands its responsibilities and that it has cost-effective solutions to resolve outstanding areas of risk.
- ✓ We will continue to invest in CAMS (Compliance & Administrative Management System), integrating Artificial Intelligence to continually improve document processing efficiency and security, followed by tailored action plans to close any identified gaps.
- ✓ Anticipating the potential for mandatory registration of home improvement specialists, BIFIS will launch a readiness assessment programme and a comprehensive support package, including legal helplines, template documentation, and briefing sessions to ensure all registered businesses are fully prepared should such regulation be introduced.
- ✓ Our mobile app will provide clear, step-by-step guidance on regulatory requirements, with live chat support and a dynamic compliance review service.
- ✓ Regular publication of compliance bulletins and case studies will foster a culture of transparency, shared learning, and continual improvement throughout our network.



04: **SUSTAINABILITY**

Championing environmental and workforce longevity

BIFIS views sustainability as a dual imperative: environmental stewardship and the creation of a resilient, future-ready workforce.

Sustainability

Current position:

Environment: Our industry has a responsibility to reduce its carbon footprint and to ensure our customers have access to environmentally protective product that will safeguard the future of our generation and generations to come. Tradespeople play a key role in our overall environmental strategy, yet the workforce remain largely disjointed with the manufacturing and design facets of the sector. We must make a collaborative effort in bridging this gap, as tradespeople become a more influential partner in the consumer buying process.

Workforce: The industry is yet to embrace a unified solution to overcoming the skills gap. As such, the gap not only remains critical, but is worryingly widening. This is not exclusive to the fitted interiors sector, or indeed the UK, but we have seen other countries and sectors make meaningful progress in filling the gap, which is something we must emulate as a priority.

Our recommendations:

- Manufacturers to use BIFIS as a conduit for information, helping tradespeople to connect with product innovation, environmental benefits for adoption and consumer trends.
- The industry to continue supporting BIFIS through Associate, Advocate and Partner programmes, enabling the organisation to drive its work on workforce future proofing, development and retention strategies.

Our actions:

- ✓ Development of an industry-specific sustainability charter, co-created with stakeholders and reviewed bi-annually, to set ambitious, actionable goals for carbon reduction, waste management, and resource efficiency.
- ✓ Launch of the BIFIS Green Innovation Fund, providing grants for stakeholders investing in eco-friendly technologies, renewable energy, and sustainable materials.
- ✓ Implementation of a workforce resilience programme, offering mental health resources and a sustainability leadership academy designed to equip future leaders with the skills to drive sustainable transformation.
- ✓ Annual benchmarking of environmental and workforce sustainability metrics, with results transparently reported to all stakeholders.

Organisational Development

Springboarding BIFIS into the next 20 years

The past two decades has seen the launch and development of the UK's first and only institute dedicated to the kitchen, bedroom and bathroom sector.

As we expand our proposition to extend further into the fitted interiors sector, we take the opportunity to focus on key areas of expansion, ensuring we have the mechanics in place to manage and thrive on growth.

Our vision for the future is bold, yet achievable:

BIFIS Regionalisation Program (BRP)

As part of our commitment to strengthening industry representation and responsiveness, BIFIS will launch an innovative program that establishes regional chapters across the UK.

These chapters, comprised of and led by local BIFIS stakeholder businesses, will focus on addressing region-specific challenges and opportunities, ensuring that local voices are heard and actively shape the national agenda.

By reporting directly into the national organisation, each chapter will elevate local priorities to a national platform, fostering greater inclusivity, more effective advocacy, and the agility to tailor initiatives to the unique needs of every community.

This approach not only empowers local leadership but also enhances the overall impact and relevance of BIFIS, driving meaningful progress at both regional and national levels.

To ensure a thoughtful and effective implementation, we will begin by trialing the regional chapter model in select locations throughout 2027. Insights and feedback from these pilot chapters will inform best practices and allow us to refine the approach. Following this initial phase, we aim for a full nationwide roll out in 2028, establishing regional chapters across the UK and embedding local leadership at the heart of BIFIS's growth strategy.

BIFIS National Training Facility

It is our intention to explore the establishment of a national training facility dedicated to the fitted interiors sector.

This centre will serve as a pioneering space, bringing together suppliers, distributors, and manufacturers of fitted interior products to collaborate within the UK's first truly independent and collective training environment.

Here, leading brands will have the opportunity to showcase their latest innovations, host hands-on and virtual training sessions, and share best practices directly with sector professionals.

By fostering a culture of shared learning and continuous development, the centre will not only elevate industry standards but also help bridge knowledge gaps, support emerging talent, and promote excellence throughout the fitted interiors community.

Ultimately, our goal is to create an accessible hub that empowers businesses and individuals alike, driving progress and professionalism across the sector, providing a physical gateway for vocational learning to the next generation, whilst delivering learning and development opportunities to the existing workforce.

Unprecedented growth plans

Over the past two decades, BIFIS has experienced substantial organic growth, steadily expanding its influence and reputation within the fitted interiors sector.

Building on this solid foundation, we are now entering a new phase marked by proactive initiatives designed to accelerate our reach and impact across the UK.

A key focus is the expansion of our network of independent retailers, an under-represented but vital sector, offering tremendous potential to connect with thousands of front-line specialists.

In 2026, we celebrated a strong start to this growth journey with the appointment of a Director of Strategic Partnerships, tasked with driving this important agenda forward.

In tandem, we are committed to rapidly increasing registrations of installation professionals, ensuring the industry's talent pool is robust and responsive to evolving demands.

Our digital strategy is central to these ambitions: the launch of our mobile app, combined with the activation of existing strategic partnerships, will provide essential infrastructure to streamline engagement, support growth, and empower both new and established members.

These efforts will position BIFIS as the leading home for independent retailers and professional installers, fostering a more inclusive, dynamic, and future-ready industry.

Alongside our independent retail network, we are proud to have established strong relationships with some of the UK's most successful, respected, and influential national retailers.

These partnerships serve as quantifiable testimony to our effectiveness and commitment to the sector. However, we recognise that our reach has not yet met all frontiers; there remains significant work ahead as we strive to broaden our national retail network.

With the ongoing support of our existing national Partners, we are confident in our ability to continue expanding and enhancing our impact across the industry.

Ongoing commitment to industry collaboration

As BIFIS continues to push boundaries and set new standards across the fitted interiors sector, we are expanding several flagship initiatives designed to further unify and strengthen our professional community. These upcoming expansions reflect our commitment to innovation, collaboration, and excellence as we move forward in our ambitious growth strategy.

- **National roll-out of AiM:** Our Accredited Installation Methods (AiM) accreditation is supporting retailers and main-contractors to solidify their installation models. Following an extensive period of trialling, the initiative is ready to be deployed across the UK.
- **Digital community building:** Our commitment to continuous development of the mobile app reflects our vision for a unified industry. By creating a dedicated digital community space, we make it easier for professionals across the sector to connect, share knowledge, and foster collaboration - strengthening our collective impact.
- **BIFIS Awards and conference expansion:** The expansion of the BIFIS awards and conference programme at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham not only increases event capacity but also opens new communicative channels that extends our reach. This growth enables greater participation and engagement, helping us tap into new audiences and build lasting relationships throughout the industry.
- **Recognition and talent retention:** It is essential for the industry to unite in ensuring that recognition remains central to our efforts. A strong recognition platform not only attracts fresh talent to the sector but also encourages retention by celebrating achievements and reinforcing a sense of belonging within our professional community.

CLOSING REMARKS

From the outset in 2006, the intention was always to deliver an institute that would make a positive difference to the industry it represents.

As we reflect on the progress outlined here, BIFIS stands at the forefront of a rapidly evolving industry. By focusing on expanding our network of installation professionals, embracing digital transformation, and strengthening our strategic partnerships, we have set a solid foundation for continued growth and future success. Our commitment to building an inclusive and resilient professional community will ensure that BIFIS remains the natural home for fitted interiors specialists.

The development of our mobile app and the ongoing expansion of our awards and conference programme are testament to our drive for innovation and connectivity. These initiatives not only foster greater engagement and collaboration but also help to raise the profile of our sector nationwide. Recognising and celebrating talent will remain central to our vision, underpinning our efforts to attract new professionals and retain the invaluable experience within our community.

Looking ahead, I am energised by the challenges and opportunities that lie before us. There is still much work to be done, broadening our reach, deepening our partnerships, and championing excellence at every turn.

With the unwavering support of our Registered Businesses, Partners, Advocates, Associates and wider industry stakeholders, I am confident that together we will continue to shape a dynamic, collaborative and future-ready fitted interiors sector.

Thank you for your dedication, your innovation, and your belief in our shared vision. Let us move forward with ambition and measured excitement, knowing that we are building a legacy for generations to come.



**The home for fitted interiors
specialist contractors**



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