



RISE

Retrofit information,
support & expertise

Coordinating multi-trade retrofit projects

Supply chain advice pack

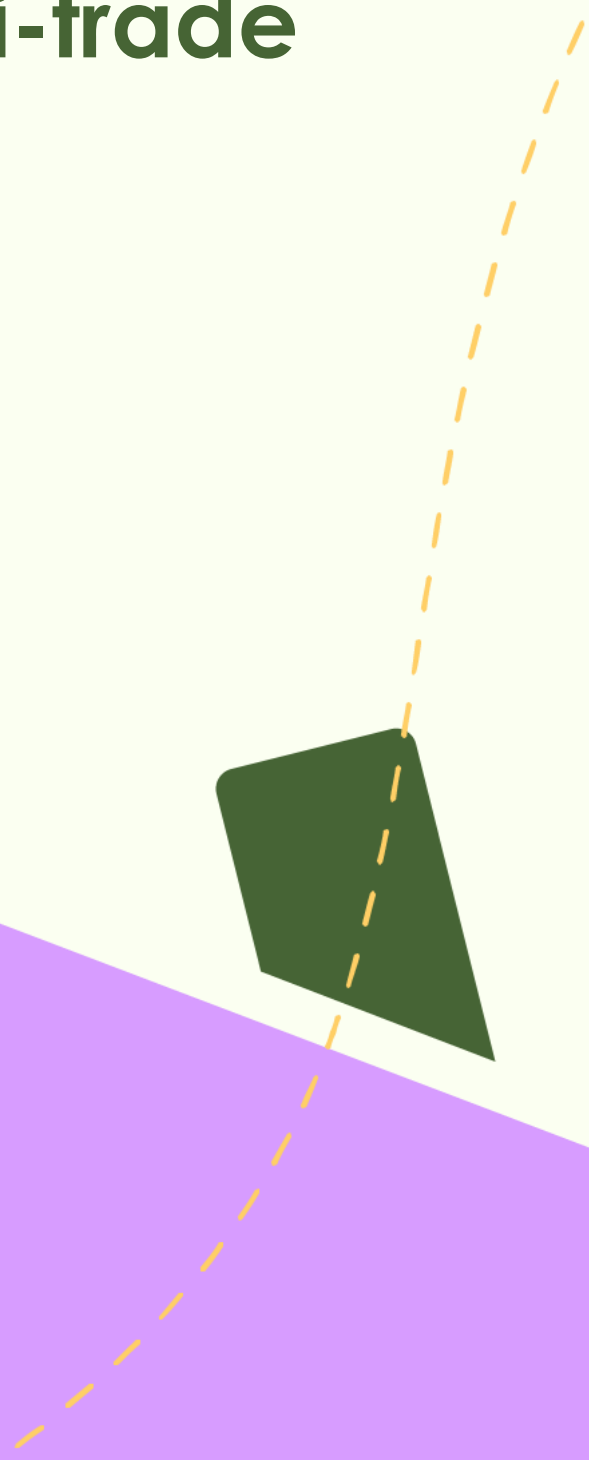
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Overview

Successful retrofit projects rely on effective coordination between multiple trades. Poor planning, communication and sequencing can lead to delays, rework, defects and performance issues. This is especially important where measures interact, such as insulation, ventilation, heating systems and renewable technologies.

This Advice Pack provides practical guidance on planning, coordinating and delivering multi-trade retrofit projects. It focuses on site coordination, communication, sequencing and quality assurance to help supply chain organisations deliver successful whole-house retrofit projects.

Introduction

Whole-house retrofit projects often involve several trades working on site at the same time or in close succession. While installation quality remains important, successful outcomes depend equally on how well trades coordinate their activities, manage interfaces and communicate throughout delivery.

Good coordination helps avoid common issues such as rework, programme delays, damage to completed works, condensation risks and poor system performance. By planning works effectively and managing trade interactions, retrofit teams can improve quality, reduce disruption and achieve better outcomes for residents.

Why multi-trade coordination matters

Retrofit projects often combine insulation, ventilation, heating and renewable energy measures. Poor coordination between trades can lead to defects, delays and reduced performance, for example insulation affecting ventilation, or heat pumps being installed before fabric improvements are complete. Effective coordination helps deliver better quality outcomes, minimise rework and reduce project risk.

Adopting a whole-house approach

PAS 2035 promotes a whole-dwelling approach, recognising that fabric, ventilation and building services all affect overall performance. Measures should be planned together rather than delivered in isolation.

Fabric first

Fabric First remains a fundamental principle. Reducing heat loss through insulation and fabric improvements should generally be considered before introducing low-carbon heating systems.

Medium-term improvement plans

Not every measure needs to be installed immediately. PAS 2035 promotes Medium-Term Improvement Plans (MTIPs), allowing improvements to be staged while ensuring earlier works do not compromise future upgrades.

Outcomes-focused retrofit

UKGBC recommends focusing on outcomes rather than individual technologies, considering comfort, resilience, health, wellbeing and whole-life value as well as energy savings.

Planning a multi-trade retrofit project

Successful retrofit projects require clear objectives and effective planning and collaboration between trades. Key activities include:

- Agreeing energy, carbon, budget and resident requirements.
- Reviewing retrofit assessments and designs to understand trade interactions. It is crucial that measures are installed in accordance with the approved design, as any unapproved changes could affect the performance of other measures.
- Identifying risks such as damp, ventilation issues, heritage constraints and hidden defects.
- Developing a programme that includes trade dependencies, inspections, testing and handover activities.
- Selecting contractors who demonstrate quality and collaborative working, rather than focusing solely on lowest cost.

Example practical delivery planning checklist:

Before work begins confirm:

- ✓ Access and scaffold arrangements
- ✓ Material storage and welfare facilities
- ✓ Resident requirements and working hours
- ✓ Inspection, testing and commissioning dates
- ✓ Trade dependencies and design approvals

Delivering measures in the right order

Good sequencing reduces risk, improves quality and helps avoid rework. For example, ventilation and airtightness should be designed into the project at an early stage, with service routes planned and coordinated before insulation and airtightness measures are completed.

A typical retrofit sequence is as follows:

1. Assessment and surveys
2. Design development
3. Repairs and defect remediation
4. Insulation and airtightness improvements
5. Ventilation upgrades
6. Heating and hot water systems
7. Renewable technologies
8. Testing, commissioning and handover

Key considerations:

- Access and site logistics
- Occupied properties and resident communication
- Material storage and waste management
- Protecting completed work from damage

Where coordination really matters

Most retrofit failures occur when different measures and trades interact. The following table highlights interfaces where the importance of co-ordination comes to light.

Potential interface	Importance of coordination
Insulation and ventilation	Improving insulation and airtightness may increase condensation risk if ventilation is not upgraded at the same time.
Airtightness and moisture management	Poor detailing can trap moisture within the building fabric, leading to damp and mould problems.
Heating systems and controls	Heating systems should be designed and commissioned to suit the upgraded building fabric.
Electrical upgrades and low-carbon technologies	Heat pumps, solar PV, batteries and EV chargers may require electrical upgrades that need to be planned early.
Windows, doors and fabric interfaces	Careful installation is needed to avoid thermal bridges, air leakage and water ingress.

Renewable technologies	Renewables work best when integrated with wider fabric and energy efficiency improvements.
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Practical coordination activities

The following activities should be implemented to improve coordination.

Sequencing workshop

Before work starts, gather all delivery partners and walk through:

- Access requirements
- Material deliveries
- Inspection points
- Areas of shared working
- Potential clashes

Interface register

List all areas where trades overlap and assign ownership of each interface. For example:

Interface	Trades involved
Window reveals	Window installer and insulation contractor
Loft insulation	Insulation contractor and ventilation installer
Heat pump installation	Heating contractor and electrician
Solar PV	Roofer and electrician

Site coordination and handovers

Hold brief regular site meetings to discuss:

- Progress and upcoming work
- Access issues
- Design changes
- Risks and safety concerns

Before a new trade starts, inspect and hand over completed work to confirm:

- Work is complete
- No damage is present
- Required information is available

Change and risk management

Ensure all trades work from the latest approved drawings and specifications. Any design changes or concerns should be raised and reviewed promptly to avoid downstream issues and rework.

Managing co-delivery on site

Many retrofit projects require multiple trades working simultaneously. To manage this, the following approaches could be implemented:

- **Zone-based working:** different trades work in different parts of the property e.g., loft team in roof space, whilst electrician is on the ground floor and the heating contractor works externally.
- **Room-by-room delivery:** complete all activities within one room before moving to the next so there's less resident disruption, easier quality inspections and fewer clashes.
- **Shared programme boards:** site board showing current trades on site, planned activities, inspection dates and hold points which is updated daily.
- **Trade leads:** nominate one representative from each trade who attends coordination meetings and resolves issues quickly.

Roles and responsibilities

Various roles and responsibilities are important for enabling good coordination. The following table highlights where these roles may come into play.

Activity	Lead	Supports
Pre-start coordination meeting	Retrofit Coordinator	Designers, contractors
Sequencing works	Main Contractor	All trades
Interface checks	Trade Leads	Retrofit Coordinator
Design changes	Retrofit Coordinator	Designer
Resident communications	Site Manager	Client team
Sign-off before next trade starts	Outgoing trade	Incoming trade

Embedding quality into delivery

Quality should be built into every stage of the retrofit process. See the RISE Advice pack on Quality and Quality Assurance [here](#). Key quality activities include:

- Inspecting critical elements before they are concealed, such as insulation, airtightness measures and ventilation installations.
- Checking compliance with PAS 2035, PAS 2030, Building Regulations and manufacturer requirements.
- Collecting evidence, including photographs, inspection records and commissioning certificates.
- Completing testing and commissioning activities, such as ventilation, heating and electrical checks.
- Providing residents with clear guidance on operating and maintaining new systems.

This helps ensure compliance, verify performance and support a successful resident handover.

Multi-Trade Retrofit coordination checklist

Before work starts, ask:

- Do all trades understand the retrofit design and objectives?
- Have measure interactions been reviewed?
- Have ventilation implications been considered?
- Are programme dependencies clear?
- Have inspection and hold points been agreed?
- Is evidence collection planned?
- Are design changes controlled?
- Has responsibility for quality assurance been allocated?
- Is the resident communication plan in place?
- Have commissioning and handover requirements been fully defined?

Resources



Podcast: All RISE podcasts are available [here](#).

Podcast: The importance of communication in retrofit available [here](#).



Masterclass: All RISE masterclasses are available [here](#).

Masterclass

Understanding PAS 2035 available [here](#).



Advice pack: All RISE advice packs available [here](#).

Advice pack: Different approaches to ventilation, and minimising conflict available [here](#).



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