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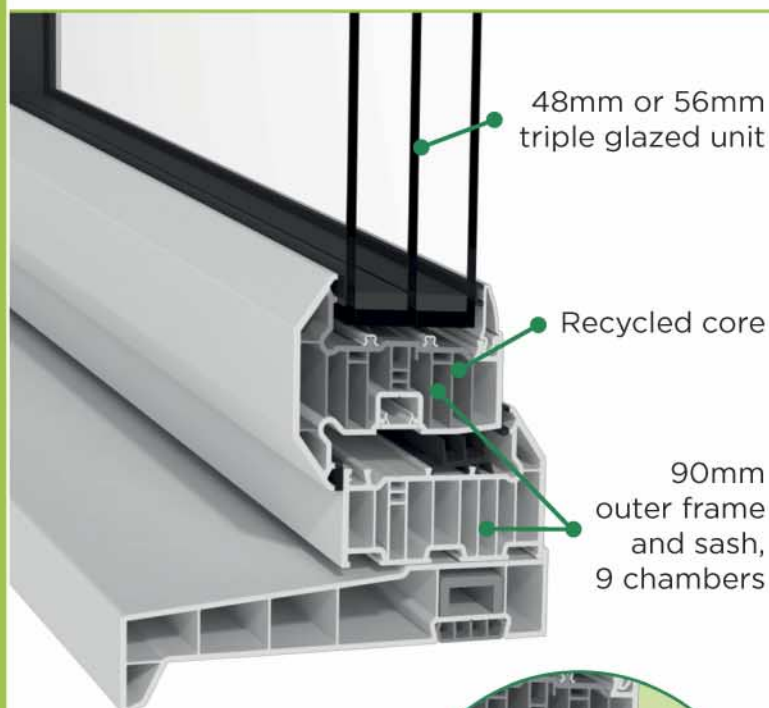


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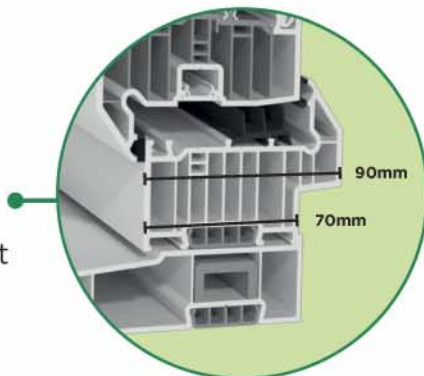
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renewed focus investment, innovation and resilience

As we open the year, this month's edition delivers a clear and encouraging message: despite continued pressure on volumes and margins, the sector is responding with investment, sharper products and a renewed focus on doing things better.

2026 starts with a refreshingly practical launch from advertiser Roof in a Box. Their new aluminium lantern system is both cost-effective, at £295 per roof kit, but more importantly, is designed to be cut to size from the box, making it ideal for manufacturers who want to make their own lanterns and not carry any stock. Simply order the kit with the colour you want and it arrives next day. With no setup requirements, multi-kit discounts, free software and their team of technical support staff, Roof In A Box makes the transition from a buyer to a manufacturer simple. The roof kits come with everything that is needed to make a roof up to 2950mm x 1650mm and any size in between, Glass excluded. This brand-new concept, in roof design and supply, puts their customers in the driving seat. With kits available from stock, waiting for your lantern to be delivered is a thing of the past. The free software supplied, produces cutting sheets, glass sizes, quotes and invoices, everything you need to be your own aluminium lantern roof fabricator.

Longevity and consistency remain powerful themes. Celebrating 40 years, Secondary Glazing Master, Fletcher Fabrications and N E Fasteners all demonstrate how steady evolution can outperform short-term thinking. Fletcher Fabrications' growth from a turnover of around £400,000 to more than £1 million annually since the Covid period is a strong example of what happens when traditional values are paired with modern processes and

an expanded product mix. Alongside this, Secondary Glazing Master's ongoing work on listed and heritage buildings continues to show the value of secondary glazing as a practical route to improved thermal comfort and acoustic performance without full window replacement.

Security innovation is another standout this month. Kenrick's AK SecureCore cylinder achieving Sold Secure Diamond Standard 2024 and a Kitemark 3 Star rating marks a meaningful technical milestone. Resistance to snapping, drilling, bumping, gluing and freezing, combined with 11 pins and over 800,000 key combinations, raises the baseline for what installers can confidently specify. Add in a £5,000 security guarantee, and it's clear why Kenrick reports strong early feedback. Yale's expanded Lifetime Total Trust Guarantee reinforces the same direction of travel, pairing PAS24-accredited hardware with tangible financial reassurance for homeowners.

On the manufacturing side, targeted capital investment continues to pay dividends. Pioneer's adoption of the Graf SLS CNC mill welder is a reminder that quality gains often come from removing inefficiencies. Seamless welds, automated sprue removal and single-operator use reduce rework, labour dependency and waste, while delivering a visibly higher finish. Haffner's 100-year milestone provides useful context here too, with machinery such as the SMR-5 five-head welder reportedly allowing a single operative to weld twice as many frames as a standard quad system.

Product momentum is also evident. DoorCo reports a 300% rise in Eaton door sales during the latter part of 2025, driven by its 2100mm x 950mm standard size, design flexibility and Part M-friendly accessibility credentials. Framexpress exceeding £1 million in aluminium sales in its first full year further underlines growing installer confidence in higher-spec systems that arrive ready to fit.

Taken together, this month's stories point to an industry that is adjusting with intent. Technical standards are rising, investment is being made where it counts, and practical innovation continues to create opportunity for those prepared to move decisively.

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haffner celebrates 100 years of machinery excellence

haffnerltd.com

1st January, 2026 marks the centenary of Haffner Germany, the manufacturer of PVC-U and aluminium fabrication technology. Dave Thomas, CEO and founder of Haffner Ltd, said: "Haffner machines have transformed the way windows and doors are manufactured, driving productivity, quality and efficiency for fabricators around the globe. Reaching 100 years is not only a celebration of our heritage, but a reminder of how our machinery continues to set the benchmark for the industry."

Founded in 1926 in Pforzheim, Germany, by Gotthold Haffner, the company began by producing precision woodworking hand machines. Over the decades, Haffner has evolved into one of the most influential names in the fenestration sector, known globally for its advanced CNC technology and fully automated fabrication lines.

Today, the company is perhaps best known for its SBA profile machining centres. The latest iteration, the SBA-4 PVC-U Profile Machining Centre, draws on decades of automated expertise and delivers an exceptional balance of cutting and machining performance for PVC-U profiles.

Haffner's impact on fabrication efficiency is also demonstrated by its welding technology. The SMR-4 Four Head Welder eliminates corner-weld

misalignment by automatically aligning corners and transoms, removing the need for a highly skilled operator and significantly reducing costly remakes. Alongside it, the SMR-5 Five Head Welding Machine allows a single operative to weld twice as many frames compared to a standard quad welder, transforming productivity and profitability on the shop floor. Haffner's KT Assembly Tables further enhance workflow by bringing multiple assembly processes together in a single, efficient workstation.

Haffner Ltd has been part of the Haffner story for more than 35 of the 100 years, and the company has always continued the track record of excellence set by its German counterparts. It has won two G Awards for Machinery Supplier of the Year and

secured two NFA Awards for Machinery Company of the Year. Dave said: "Our multiple awards reflect our commitment to delivering machinery, technical expertise and long-term partnerships that help fabricators scale with confidence."

Dave concluded: "As we celebrate this important milestone, we're not just reflecting on the past, we're looking firmly ahead. Haffner's legacy is built on precision machinery design, but its future is about enabling fabricators to compete and grow in an evolving market. Celebrating 100 years is a proud moment for us all and we're committed to ensuring the next century has just as much impact on the industry as the last."



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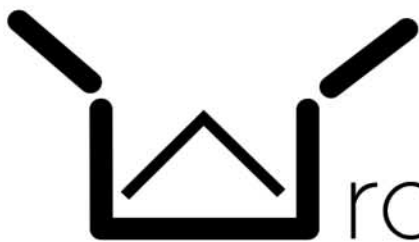
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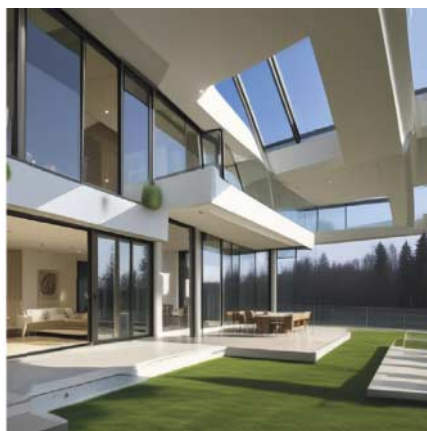
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kenrick launches new high-security cylinder

kenricks.co.uk

Longstanding hardware supplier Kenrick has announced the launch of its new AK SecureCore 3 Star high-security cylinder, developed to deliver exceptional protection against today's most sophisticated break-in methods.

With more than two centuries of hardware innovation behind it, Kenrick continues to build on its reputation for reliable, UK-designed products that meet the evolving security needs of fabricators and installers across the industry.

AK SecureCore has achieved the Sold Secure Diamond Standard 2024, the most demanding cylinder certification available and carries the Kitemark 3 Star rating. It has been designed to resist every major form of attack, including picking, bumping, drilling, snapping, gluing and freezing. Featuring 11 pins and more than 800,000 key combinations alongside patented ALPS anti-manipulation

technology, it offers a level of resilience far beyond that of conventional cylinders. Its reinforced anti-snap design and excess-discharge vents further enhance its defence against destructive or substance-based attacks, ensuring dependable performance in the most challenging conditions.

Andy Meakin, Sales and Marketing Manager at Kenrick, said: "AK SecureCore represents a significant step in our commitment to delivering reliable, high-performance security hardware solutions. The response from early users has been extremely positive and we believe AK SecureCore will quickly establish itself as a go-to cylinder for fabricators, installers and locksmiths who value security, ease of installation and long-term reliability."

Homeowners who choose AK SecureCore can also activate the £5,000 security guarantee by registering their lock, demonstrating the confidence the company places in its testing processes and product durability. AK SecureCore has undergone rigorous assessment both



in specialist laboratories and through hands-on locksmith evaluation to ensure it performs consistently across all scenarios.

Importantly, AK SecureCore integrates seamlessly with Kenrick's AK Touch Secure smart door lock, allowing homeowners to combine advanced mechanical strength with the latest connected technology. Andy commented: The AK Touch Secure, which has achieved Secured by Design accreditation and IASME IoT Cyber

Assurance Level Two, can be fitted to any door handle equipped with a Kenrick 3 Star cylinder, making AK SecureCore the ideal pairing for installers wanting to offer both physical and digital security in a single package."

He added: "Kenrick has always stood for quality, dependability and practical hardware innovation and AK SecureCore builds on that foundation and gives our customers a cylinder they can trust. Whether used as a standalone high-security solution or as part of a fully connected smart locking system, it has been developed to deliver outstanding protection and complete peace of mind."

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the uk's most in-demand composite door trends and what installers can expect in 2026

info@compdoor.co.uk

New sales analysis from Comp Door has revealed the composite door styles, colours and components that continue to shape installer demand across the UK, with data showing that while new finishes are gaining ground, reliability and timeless design still dominate the market.

Reviewing nationwide order volumes over the last two years, Comp Door's figures highlight a clear preference for glazed traditional door styles, neutral colour palettes and proven component choices, with only gradual shifts emerging as installers respond to evolving homeowner tastes.

Glazed traditional door designs continue to lead the way, with styles such as Whitmore Glazed, Somerset and Buxton consistently topping order volumes. These door styles remain popular across both period and modern properties, reinforcing the ongoing demand for light-enhancing designs that deliver kerb appeal without feeling overly contemporary.

"What we see year after year is that homeowners still want doors that feel established and familiar," explains Richard Diliberto, Sales Director at Comp Door. "Glazed traditional styles tick a lot of boxes for installers because they suit such a wide range of properties and buyer profiles."

Colour choice remains equally consistent. "Grey isn't going anywhere in 2026," Richard adds, "But we are seeing more confidence around softer neutrals. Installers who offer a broader grey and off-white palette are giving homeowners more choice without increasing complexity."

Glazing design also plays a key role in purchase decisions, with decorative options still far outperforming minimalist styles. Victorian Border, Classic and Kensington glazing designs remain the most popular choices, reflecting a continued preference for privacy, character and visual interest at the front of the home.

While standard cassettes continue to account for the majority of orders, this remains closely linked



to homeowner familiarity and its availability across the full door range. Within the door styles where ultimate cassettes are offered, they are typically specified on projects where a more premium finish or enhanced detailing is required, rather than as a direct replacement for standard options.

While standard door skins continue to account for the majority of overall volumes, Comp Door's latest figures show that the demand for SleekSkin is steeply and steadily growing, one order in every five placed has been a request for their unique SleekSkin door finish.

"What we're seeing is a growing appetite for cleaner, more contemporary finishes, even on traditionally styled doors," says Richard. "SleekSkin gives installers the ability to offer that smoother, more refined look without moving away from the door designs homeowners already know and trust. It's an easy way to modernise the final appearance while keeping the core style familiar."

Looking ahead to 2026, Comp Door expects continuity rather than disruption. Glazed traditional doors, grey-led colour palettes and familiar hardware choices are all set to remain installer staples, while premium finishes such as SleekSkin and darker hardware tones are predicted to continue their gradual rise.

"The big takeaway for installers is that trends are evolving, not flipping overnight," Richard concludes. "Grey will likely remain dominant, traditional glazed doors will continue to lead volumes, and we'll see incremental growth in premium finishes rather than sudden change."



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regulation, costs and planning delays defined 2025

what will 2026 look like for uk new build?

Early 2025 saw housebuilders navigating multiple overlapping challenges. High interest rates suppressed buyer demand, while material inflation, energy costs and persistent labour shortages added significant pressure to project viability. While some of these challenges have 'eased', there is still some way to go.

Many developers entered the year with cautious optimism and an expectation that activity would lift in the second half of 2025. According to Eurocell's Head of New Build, Martin Benn, that recovery failed to materialise, due to a combination of subdued consumer confidence, persistent cost pressures and ongoing delays within the planning system. Together, these factors created a tougher-than-expected operating environment and held back the anticipated uplift in activity.

Martin said: "Affordability remains the biggest barrier. Without intervention to stimulate demand, and with borrowing still expensive for both buyers and developers, we've seen momentum stall. The appetite is there, but the conditions simply haven't aligned."

Regulation: The sector's biggest unknown

Regulation has been another major source of uncertainty. The 2021 uplift to Approved Document L (ADL) required around a 31-35% reduction in CO₂ emissions compared with previous standards, increasing build costs through additional fabric measures, higher-performing windows, improved airtightness, PV arrays and mechanical ventilation.

ADL 2025 is expected to form part of the upcoming Future Homes Standard, currently anticipated to come into force soon, which targets a 75-80% reduction in whole-house emissions. While full details are still to be confirmed, the shift is set to significantly tighten performance requirements and reshape specification choices across the sector.

However, the delayed publication of ADL 2025 has left housebuilders unable to plan specifications, pricing or product choices with confidence.

Martin said: "Developers are effectively planning blind. Multiple parts of the building regulations, L, F, O, B and M, don't currently harmonise, and consultation documents have lacked detail. Uncertainty slows delivery, increases cost, and introduces risk into every step of the process."

Eurocell anticipates a period of rapid technical recalculation once ADL 2025 is released, as housebuilders push for marginal gains on U-values and performance criteria to achieve compliance. It expects technical teams across the country to play an increasingly crucial role in helping developers shape commercially viable specifications under the new rules.

Building safety and sustainability: The shift continues

Alongside energy performance, the Building Safety Act continued to reshape responsibilities and liabilities throughout 2025, particularly in mid- and high-rise projects. Martin notes that the additional accountability introduced by the Act has already begun to shift the market: "We're seeing more scrutiny, more documentation, and a higher bar for product evidence. For some suppliers, that burden may prove too heavy. For others, it's an opportunity to demonstrate robustness and technical credibility."

Sustainability is also evolving rapidly. The growing adoption of Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) is introducing new transparency into materials, giving recycled content and embodied carbon measurable, tradeable value. Eurocell expects sustainability data to become a core part of specification decisions in 2026 and beyond.

Looking ahead: Opportunities for 2026

Despite the headwinds of 2025, Eurocell sees reasons for cautious optimism heading into 2026. Greater regulatory clarity, once delivered, is expected to unlock delayed projects and allow developers to move forward with confidence. Sector outlooks indicate a stabilising economic picture and increased focus on high-performance materials could also create new opportunities for manufacturers.

Martin adds: "The industry is resilient. What housebuilders need now is certainty - clear regulation, stable policy and practical guidance. Once that arrives, the sector will move quickly. Our focus at Eurocell is on supporting that transition with the right technical expertise, product development and data to help our customers meet the next stage of change."

As part of its support for the industry, Eurocell will also continue with its successful CPD programme designed to help housebuilders, specifiers and technical teams understand any potential conflicts within Approved Documents to meet Building Regulations, and how engaging with systems houses early can help overcome these challenges. The sessions provide practical guidance on expected changes, specification impacts, and how to achieve compliance efficiently.



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four decades of growth

secondaryglazingmaster.com
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Two of the UK's most established family-run glazing specialists—Secondary Glazing Master and its sister company, Fletcher Fabrications—are celebrating four decades of growth, product diversification, and industry leadership.

Founded together in 1985 by Andrew and Gerda Fletcher, the two companies began as a small family enterprise focusing on secondary

glazing for both retail and trade customers. Today, they stand as trusted names nationwide, known for their commitment to craftsmanship, a personal approach, and long-lasting results.

In 1994, their son Gary Fletcher joined the business straight from school, later taking the helm alongside his wife, Zuzana—expanding operations, modernising processes, and introducing new product lines such as bi-folding and patio doors. Since returning from the Covid period, this strategic development has fuelled notable growth, with Fletcher Fabrications rising from a turnover of around £400,000 to over £1 million annually.

Despite this expansion, the companies' values remain firmly rooted in family principles.



Kevin Goddard, Factory Manager & Gary Fletcher, MD

"Our focus has always been on providing honest advice, long-lasting solutions, and the level of service you can only get from a family-run business," says Managing Director Gary Fletcher.

Secondary Glazing Master specialises in high-quality secondary glazing solutions for homes and commercial properties across the UK. Their systems are designed to deliver warmer, quieter, and more secure environments without the disruption or cost of full window replacement. The company is particularly renowned for its sensitive work on listed and heritage buildings, where discreet, efficient solutions are essential.

Fletcher Fabrications expands the group's offering with a comprehensive manufacturing and installation service, including: Aluminium Patio doors, bi-folds, windows and UPVC windows.

Together, the two brands offer a complete portfolio for homeowners,

landlords, and businesses seeking reliable, high-performance glazing and door solutions.

Across both companies, customer satisfaction remains central—from initial consultation to final installation. Transparent pricing, tailored recommendations, and consistent communication underpin every project, ensuring a smooth process and dependable results.

"As we continue to grow, staying true to the values that built this business is our priority," Fletcher adds. "We take pride in being a family company our customers can trust."

With nearly four decades of experience, Secondary Glazing Master and Fletcher Fabrications continue to strengthen their presence within the glazing and home-improvement sectors. Their blend of tradition, innovation, and personal service positions them for steady, sustainable growth in the years ahead.

freefoam cork plant now powered by 100% renewable energy

freefoam.com

Freefoam Building Products is proud to announce that its Cork manufacturing facility is now operating entirely on renewable energy. This milestone marks a significant achievement in Freefoam's five-year Sustainability Plan, launched earlier this year, and reinforces the company's commitment to environmental responsibility.

The Cork plant, which runs 24/7 producing long lasting building products, now sources its electricity from a mix of resources including



some solar and wind energy. Kevin Cronin, Chief Operating Officer, commented, "Freefoam has set clear and ambitious sustainability targets. Transitioning to renewable electricity is a major step toward reducing our carbon emissions and building a more sustainable future." This initiative is part of a broader strategy to embed sustainable business practices across

Freefoam's operations. Dedicated energy teams at each site are actively exploring ways to improve efficiency and reduce energy consumption. "This change is something all businesses can take on," Kevin added. "We believe it's the right choice and one that quantifiably reduces our greenhouse gas emissions." With numerous projects underway, Freefoam is

accelerating its circular economy activities. "We're on a journey," Kevin concluded. "Our aim is to put reduce, re-use, and recycle at the heart of everything we do."

This move positions Freefoam as a future-fit organisation and a responsible partner for customers seeking sustainable solutions.

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creating a content plan

Copywriter to the glazing industry, Helen Savage, discusses why planning is so important when it comes to content creation and explains step by step how to create a plan you will stick to.

People now use the word 'content' to mean a lot of different things. Some use it to describe social media messages or videos specifically, others use it to cover any online material, while others still incorporate its traditional meaning covering any words or pictures featured in print and/or online. If there is a shared understanding among all stakeholders as to what the term 'content' covers, it doesn't really matter which definition is used. And I would argue creating a plan for all types of content is useful. The key is to keep it simple.

First things first, what shall I write about?

Whether you are planning for your social media channels, blog posts, or articles in a trade magazine, a good first step, is to make a list of topics you want to talk about. Some ideas that you could use, or that may inspire you, include: advice for your audience, benefits of services or products you offer, a new launch, step by step guides related to your field, answers to questions you have been asked, and an insight into the more personal side of your business such as introducing team members or 'behind the scenes' entries.

Timing is everything

Once you have your list of topics, there are lots of online tools you could use to plan out your content including Trello, Monday.com, or Asana, but if you're just starting out you can keep it simple to begin with and draw up a table or excel spreadsheet with months or weeks listed and then use your bank of topics to populate your timeline. Some posts may be time relevant – for example if they relate to an event, product launch, or season – while others can be posted anytime. It can be helpful to keep this plan separate from anything else, so it is easy to read at a glance.

A well-balanced plan

When you have your plan, double check it to make sure it is well-balanced. You want to make sure that you don't have three behind-the-scenes posts back-to-back, or you haven't put all your more technical articles upfront and left all the softer issues for later.

Stay flexible

Once you have created your Content Plan, be prepared for things to change and allow your plan to be flexible. Things change, new things come up, product launches get delayed, your customers ask new questions that you think would be useful to share sooner rather than later. Whatever changes arise, try and keep your plan up to date.

Planning out your content in one place is incredibly useful because it allows you to immediately see topics you have covered, topics you have yet to cover and gaps in the content you're providing. It also ensures you create copy consistently for maximum results.

 **BlogWrite**
Helen Savage
Director



pvc vs aluminium

astrawindows.co.uk 01204 793333

Installers are often presented with an either-or proposition: PVC or aluminium. However, for most trade professionals working on the ground, the reality is far less binary. Instead, it's about practicalities: what's right for the job, what fits the budget, what the client expects, and, crucially, what makes the install as smooth and efficient as possible.

A good trade supplier doesn't just offer both materials, they understand how and where each one performs best, and how to make that performance easily accessible for the installer. This is something Astra Windows, a Greater Manchester-based fabricator with over three decades of experience, has built its reputation on.

Established in 1989, Astra Windows has long supported UK installers with a dual-material offering: premium aluminium and reliable PVCu, both manufactured in-house. But what defines Astra isn't just its product range. It is also the company's ability to understand how different projects demand different solutions, and how to support trade professionals across the full spectrum. "Installers aren't asking whether aluminium or PVC is 'better' in theory," says David Jackson, Managing Director. "They're asking what's going to install easily, perform well, and keep their customers happy in the long term. That's what we focus on, making sure every product we supply does that job properly."

Although we could debate which material is theoretically superior all day, real installers don't work in theoretical conditions. They work on tight schedules, with real customers, real deadlines, and reputations on the line. Astra Window's role is to make sure whatever material is chosen, it installs smoothly, performs reliably, and helps the installer move on to the next job with confidence.

In recent years, aluminium has moved from niche to necessity. Homeowners and architects are demanding slimmer sightlines, larger glazing areas, and premium finishes, the kind that PVC often struggles to deliver. Installers are recognising aluminium not just for its looks, but for its dimensional stability, long-term durability, and growing ease of use. Systems like Astra's ALUK windows,

sliders and commercial entrance doors, ALUNA bifolds, Jack Aluminium internal doors and screens, and Signature entrance doors are designed around the realities of trade work with batch consistency, installer-friendly detailing, and quick-fit componentry built in. These are essential features for tradespeople trying to complete more jobs with fewer headaches, and sufficiently tight margins.

Furthermore, in commercial settings, aluminium is fast becoming the only viable option. This is another area where fabricators and suppliers have had to up their levels, adapting to the latest expectations. Astra Windows also provide curtain walling and shopfront solutions, with a strong focus on safety features like integrated finger trap protection and PAS24 system compliance, to give installers the confidence to tackle higher-spec jobs with less risk of post-fit issues.

That said, Astra Windows isn't pushing an either-or agenda. Its in-house PVCu window and door systems remain a core part of its offer, and for good reason. In applications where simplicity, budget, or legacy aesthetics dictate the spec, PVC still delivers. For many of Astra's trade customers, the value lies not in being forced to choose one material over another, but in having access to both, supported by a supplier who understands how to make each one work to their advantage.

Astra backs its product range with services that matter to fitters: quotes turned around in 24 hours, nationwide delivery direct to site, and a team that prioritises clear, straightforward communication. It's this focus on practicality, not just product, that has helped the company build long-term relationships with many installers across the UK, as it aims to position itself as a complete partner, where installers can get everything they need.

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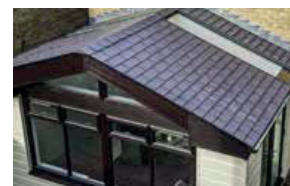
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2026 annual predictions

warmerroof.com

New Year, Same Plan, Different Challenges.

And like that, another year goes by. Some desperate for the year to eclipse into the next, whilst some wishing for the standard twelve month year to become fifteen. 2026 is shaping up to be a similar landscape that we've come to know too well, with confidence continuing at it's all time low with the anti-business policy driven government, it's understandable that pessimism is shared amongst many peers in the industry. The days of "growth by default" are gone; the companies that hold their nerve, protect their margins, and double down on operational discipline will be the ones still standing by Q4.

Last year in my annual predictions, we had predicted cautious growth here at Warmer Roof, and expectations were well exceeded. But, not to the detriment of our core values that some concede in a desperation to get business in. We have continued the upwards trajectory by sharing the same principles that our partners do.

With these times and the introduction of AI being the shiny new toy, I feel our industry will claw at it's use case at every opportunity, funnelling it into all aspects of business – some even where it's not required. Reliance on this takes away the innovation and experience to push a competitive edge, slowly removing the very instincts that built our sector in the first place.

AI will absolutely streamline quoting, speed up admin, and help businesses look more polished online. But it doesn't understand the nuance of an onsite challenge, or the judgement call made at 7:45am when a delivery needs rerouting, or the real world implications of a millimetre tolerance on a bespoke roof panel. Too many will forget that. They'll over-automate, under communicate, and trust a system that simply doesn't have the scars, intuition, or context to be the final decision maker on a job that carries liability.

This tech can be a force multiplier, no doubt but only when it enhances experience, not replaces it. The companies that lose sight of that will end up with faster processes but weaker outcomes, eventually diluting the very craftsmanship and reliability that customers in our space are paying for.

And that's where I think 2026 creates a real competitive divide.

That's why we're positioning ourselves to step into the gaps the market has left behind:

- Faster lead times, without compromising quality.
- Predictable pricing.
- A joined-up offering with our partners, where exclusivity and specification matter more than ever.
- A brand that speaks the language of trust, not transactional quick wins.

2026 isn't about survival. It's about strategic elevation and levelling up.

And Warmer Roof is walking into that space with momentum, clarity, and zero intention of slowing down.



pioneer invests in seamless welder

haffnerltd.com

Pioneer Trading Company has further strengthened its manufacturing capabilities with the purchase of the groundbreaking Graf SLS Single Head CNC Cill Welder from Haffner. The state-of-the-art machine is the first and only single-head CNC welder specifically designed to deliver seamless bay cills with exceptional efficiency and consistently flawless aesthetics.

After researching the market, Pioneer identified the Graf SLS as a genuine step-change in cill fabrication. The machine produces a perfectly seamless weld with fully automated sprue removal, eliminating the need for any post-weld cleaning or touch-ups and significantly improving fabrication efficiency. Its single-operator design further boosts productivity, while automatic measurement and recalibration of profile tolerances ensure consistent accuracy and reduced material waste.

Danny Williams, Managing Director at Pioneer Trading Company, said: "I've been in the industry for 36 years and during that time, manufacturing quality across most areas has improved beyond recognition, except when it comes to PVC-U cills. The same traditional methods are still being used today. The Graf SLS is an absolute game-changer: The finish quality is exceptional, it de-skills labour and the efficiency gains are outstanding. There's nothing like it on the market."

He continued: "I was impressed by what I'd read about the machine, but it wasn't until I visited the Haffner Village at FIT Show 2025



and saw the Graf SLS in action that I fully appreciated its capability. After just one weld cycle, I was sold and signed up there and then."

Danny was equally impressed with the service received from Haffner during the purchasing process. He said: "Bryan Dando and the Haffner team have been exceptional; the whole process from order to installation has been seamless."

Now fully installed and operational at Pioneer's Essex fabrication site, the response from customers has been overwhelmingly positive. Danny added: "The feedback has been excellent, and the quality of the cills we are now delivering are superb."

Bryan Dando, Commercial Director at Haffner, commented: "Pioneer has always been known for its commitment to quality and forward-thinking investment. Danny immediately recognised how the Graf SLS could transform cill production. The SLS delivers outstanding accuracy and efficiency and we are delighted to support Pioneer as they continue to elevate their manufacturing standards."

Pioneer's investment in the Graf SLS CNC Cill Welder further reinforces its position as one of the industry's most innovative and quality-driven fabricators, ensuring every component of its window and door products meets the exceptional standards customers expect.

talking shop

peopleinglazing.co.uk

Glazpart is pleased to announce a series of new events for 2026 in partnership with PiGs (People in Glazing Society).

The new event called "Talking Shop with Glazpartners" is in conjunction with the five PiGs events across the UK in 2026. The sessions sponsored by Glazpartners, will take place an hour before the PiGs events in the same venues, and will have technical experts from Glazpartners present for informal discussions.

Dean Bradley, Glazpart Sales Director commented "Glazpartners was started two and a half years ago and has grown to sixty five companies across the supply chain. It was set up to encourage greater collaboration between us and our customers and partners. The five Talking Shop events in 2026 will be the ideal platform for companies to discuss issues with experts in an informal setting."

Glazpart has already had invitations accepted from technical consultants and



technical staff from professional bodies such as GGF (Glass and Glazing Federation) and CAB (Council for Aluminium in Building) to take part in the new events, which start at 4pm before all PiGs social events in 2026.

"Talking Shop" offers companies a chance to discuss the issues that matter most to their business with experts who can help with ideas, information and solutions.

The dates and venues of the PiGs events are spread across the UK throughout the year:

- 26 Feb - Birmingham (Revolucion de Cuba)
- 23 April - Belfast (Whites Tavern)
- 25 June - Bristol (Brown and Bye)
- 24 Sep - Newcastle (Pitcher and Piano)
- 12 Nov - Manchester (Revolucion de Cuba)

Dean Bradley added, "We always look forward to seeing everyone at the PiGs. If you are going to any of the PiGs events in 2026, why not come an hour early, meet the experts and enjoy the pre-event hospitality."

Anyone working in the glass and glazing sector can book their place at PiGs on their website

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high street installer backs the value of physical showrooms as market tightens

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While many installation companies continue to prioritise digital channels, Upminster-based installer Ken Rhodes is making the case for the continued power of the high street—especially as homeowners grow more cautious in the current economic climate.

The business, founded in 1985 by Scottish carpenter Ken Rhodes Snr, remains rooted in its original high street location. Now run by his son and namesake, the company has gradually evolved its product range and marketing approach to reflect shifting customer expectations. Despite the modest frontage, the firm operates with the same entrepreneurial drive that has long defined the UK's independent window and door sector.

A key part of that evolution has been the introduction of the Gerda steel and aluminium entrance door range—installed as a full working sample in the showroom. According to Ken Rhodes, the decision was driven by growing demand for demonstrable security and premium build quality:

"When Pioneer introduced the Gerda door to us, we knew it was something a bit special," he said. "Security remains a real concern for many of our customers, so it's reassuring to have a product that can demonstrate high levels of secure locking that the more premium householder is seeking."

The timing is significant. Ken reports that leads are currently down by around 30%, and the typical sales cycle has extended from 28 days to 35. Homeowners, he argues, are increasingly selective:

"The typical customer today is less keen to take on any significant debt and is increasingly stringent in choosing quality when making a significant purchase."

In response, the business has adopted a more proactive marketing strategy. This includes data reactivation work, such as a recent SMS trial on 500 existing customers that generated seven appointments—a modest but welcome return at a time when every lead counts.

Ken adds that brand recognition remains a valuable driver, praising



Pioneer's support and the upcoming TV campaign for Gerda.

He also believes the wider industry has lost some of the visibility once generated by national players:

"The loss of some of the larger multinationals has probably affected the public perception of products as a whole—the millions that were once pumped into nationwide advertising is no longer there. The onus on us being more proactive has definitely increased."

Alongside retail installations, the company continues to service local commercial work, recently completing four Gerda door installations on a new-build development that required non-standard widths.

"Gerda fits that bill of being something a bit alternative, without compromising on aesthetics, nor whacking up the price," Ken said. "It's the perfect door brand to help us through the tougher months."

fmb survey shows small housebuilders have optimism despite challenges

It reveals encouraging signs of confidence among small builders alongside persistent challenges that continue to hinder the sector.

The survey of 169 housebuilders found that 73% anticipate robust buyer demand, 69% are planning to increase their workforce, and 68% believe the Government's planning reforms can help diversify the market and boost the number of small developers.

However, Brian Berry, Chief Executive of the FMB, highlighted ongoing concerns about the decline of small housebuilders, noting that their share of new homes has fallen dramatically from 40% in the 1980s to just 9% today.

"This decline is not just bad for local house builders, it is bad for consumer

choice, it is bad for the range of design being made available, and it is bad in terms of delivery," Berry said.

The survey also revealed significant barriers, with two-thirds of respondents reporting they are unable to pursue sites due to anticipated Section 106 costs, and over a third stating the process for obtaining planning permission is getting worse.

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government, announced that the Government has launched changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

"We've simplified planning for sites under 9 homes. Such developments now benefit from faster decisions by expert planning officers with streamlined biodiversity net gain requirements," Baroness Taylor said.

She outlined additional measures including £48 million to support recruitment and training of planners, selling more of Homes England's land in small-only sales, and a £700 million extension to the Home Building Fund.

"We recognise the challenges you face," the Minister said. "Planning delays, regulatory burdens, a lack of suitable sites and access to finance you need to grow and invest, these have hindered SME builders to do what you do best."

In a notable show of cross-party consensus, Sir James Cleverly MP, Shadow Secretary of State for



Housing, Communities and Local Government, pledged Conservative support for ambitious reforms.

"The Government will have the support of the opposition benches if they are genuinely courageous in reducing the tax burden, reducing the regulatory burden, in making it easier for small local builders to get stuff done," Sir James said.

He emphasised the Conservative commitment to scrapping stamp duty to increase market churn.

"Small is beautiful. And whenever you see a market that only has half a

dozen players, that is not a properly functioning market," he added.

The Government has committed to building 1.5 million new homes by the end of this parliamentary term, with both ministers and shadow ministers emphasising the vital role small and medium-sized building companies must play in achieving this target.

"Your work shows the very real constraints SMEs face, and underscores where our reforms must go further," Baroness Taylor said. "We will keep pushing to ensure you are able to unleash your full potential."

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clearview new build secures four 'subcontractor of the month' awards

Clearview New Build has reinforced its reputation for quality, consistency and on-site professionalism after being awarded Subcontractor of the Month four times in the past quarter. This achievement is more impressive as they came on four different developments and were awarded by three different house builders.

The recognition reflects Clearview New Build's consistently high performance across key criteria, including site safety, installation quality, and on-time delivery.

With each award earned on a different development, the achievement highlights the company's ability to maintain standards across a broad and growing portfolio of live sites.

The company attributes this run of success to a strong operational culture built around experience, quality, and a "right first time" approach to fabrication, fitting and communication.

Backed by the scale, capability and product quality of CO Manufacturing, Clearview New Build has quickly established itself as a trusted partner for housebuilders seeking reliability, responsiveness and high installation standards on busy sites.

David Maybury, Divisional Head of Clearview New Build, said: "Being recognised four times in such a short period is a real testament to the consistency and professionalism of our team.

"Every development, every site and every contractor has different pressures, but our philosophy never changes. We focus on safety, quality and delivering on programme, and it's fantastic to see that recognised independently by several leading developers."

The business continues to expand across the North of England, supporting major developers with window and door installations across an increasing number of live sites.

"We're proud of the momentum we've built, but this is only the start," David added.

With more developments coming online and further investment in our people and processes, we're committed to continuing this level of



performance and helping housebuilders deliver homes efficiently, safely and to the standard buyers expect."

Clearview New Build's award wins underline the company's growing presence in the new-build sector and reinforce its position as a valued partner for developers seeking dependable subcontractors able to deliver at scale.

modplan further strengthens its national sales team

modplan.co.uk

Trade fabricator Modplan has further strengthened its national sales team with the appointment of Calum Williams as Business Development Manager (Midlands).

Calum is an experienced Area Sales Manager with a strong background in the Building Plastics and Fenestration industry. His skill set spans negotiation, sales, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and account management, supported by an impressive track record of delivering results.

Commenting on his appointment, Calum said: "I'm delighted to be joining Modplan at such an exciting time in its growth journey. Having worked in the fenestration sector for a number of years, I know

Modplan's reputation for quality and service is second to none. The company's focus on long-term partnerships and customer success really aligns with my own approach and I look forward to helping customers across the Midlands grow their businesses."

Calum will report directly to Liam Isaac, Modplan's Head of Sales and Marketing. Liam commented: "Calum is no stranger to the industry and brings a wealth of knowledge, energy and professionalism to the role. His customer-first mindset and proven ability to build strong relationships will be invaluable as we continue to expand our presence in the Midlands. He's a great fit for the Modplan team and our culture of continuous improvement."

As Business Development Manager (Midlands), Calum will focus on supporting Modplan's existing customer base while identifying and developing new opportunities across the region.

With over 50 years of experience, Modplan continues to lead the way in trade fabrication and supplying premium-quality PVC-U window, door and conservatory products across the UK. Operating from its impressive multi-site fabrication facilities near Newport, Gwent, the company offers one of the industry's most comprehensive product portfolios.



Calum's appointment further strengthens Modplan's national sales team and reinforces the company's commitment to delivering exceptional value to its partners.

celebrating 40 years

screwshop.co.uk
nefasteners.co.uk

N E Fasteners and its online arm Screwshop.co.uk – the home of own brands Rhino and Turboqwik screws, are proud to be celebrating 40 years in the trade.

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Nigel Elliott set up N E Fasteners in his garage in 1985, and his first customers and suppliers are still

with us, his son Matt joined him in 2001, and the company has gone from strength to strength, now employing near 20 people in all departments including a very popular kitting and packaging line with new automated machinery running in early 2025.

Our year of celebrations has been filled with memorabilia recognising the journey N E Fasteners has taken within the crucial industry and the immense commitment from our team. Each team member was presented with a special 40-year gift box, personalised cupcakes and a relaxed afternoon off work.

Looking to the future, N E Fasteners aims to continue delivering value and building trusted relationships with its customers and suppliers and constantly having a strong customer led focus in person or with its e-commerce presence (Screwshop) to improve customers' buying experience on line.

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