

## EDA strengthens UK supply chain ties at Light + Building

A delegation of electrical wholesalers and representatives of the UK's electrotechnical supply chain travelled to Germany to catch up on the latest trends and network with global manufacturers



In March, a senior delegation of UK electrical wholesalers and supply chain leaders travelled to Frankfurt as part of an EDA-led visit to Light + Building 2026 – the world's leading trade fair for lighting and building services technology.

The exhibition attracts more than 150,000 visitors from around the world and remains a barometer for innovation in electrification, energy management, smart buildings and connected technologies.

### Emerging trends

For UK wholesalers, it is an opportunity to see emerging trends first-hand and to strengthen relationships with global manufacturing partners.

This is the third time the EDA has organised a formal delegation,

following visits in 2018 and 2024. Margaret Fitzsimons, CEO at the EDA, said: 'In 2026, the conversations are increasingly centred around electrification, digitalisation and green technologies – all critical priorities for the UK market.'

'For our wholesalers, seeing these innovations at scale helps inform investment decisions,

strengthen supplier partnerships and anticipate customer demand.'

### Supply chain

EDA Wholesaler Member businesses were joined by representatives of key trade bodies across the electrical and building services supply chain, including the Electrical Contractors' Association, SELECT, Cable Makers UK (BCA) and the Lighting Industry Association (LIA).

The two-day programme combined visits to the stands of EDA Affiliate Manufacturers exhibiting at the show with free time to explore. There was also a networking event in the evening with affiliate manufacturers, enabling delegates to explore new product developments and discuss commercial opportunities. ■

### Guten Morgen from Frankfurt

The delegation gets ready to visit EDA Affiliate Manufacturers at the show



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Revealed – the figures that show the positive impact of the EDA's Product Knowledge Modules on your business

### Wholesalers and manufacturers celebrate data excellence



Trophies handed out for developing and using product data, and for those preparing data of exceptional quality

### Two events reward managers and learners for their training efforts



Glittering London ceremonies for those in the sector who have excelled in training using EDA resources

# DIARY DATES

Events are subject to change, so visit [www.eda.org.uk](http://www.eda.org.uk) for the latest details, or call the EDA on 020 3141 7350.

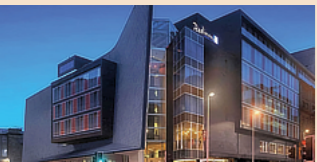
## Friday 24 April 2026

**Q2 2026 Talking Shop Live Online**  
Industry Insight in 90 Minutes. A virtual event for EDA businesses. Held quarterly in 2026:  
 ■ Friday 24 July  
 ■ Friday 23 October  
 Register at [www.eda.org.uk](http://www.eda.org.uk)

## Friday 1 May 2026

**Growing sales in a challenging market**  
A one-hour webinar about structure and discipline in the sales process, presented by accountant and business consultant Peter Hill.  
 Register at [www.eda.org.uk](http://www.eda.org.uk)

## Thursday 7 May 2026



**EDA Scottish Section Sportsman's Dinner, Glasgow**  
Call Maeve O'Dea on 0117 909 9550

## Thursday 21 May 2026

**EDA Regional Business Forum, Brighton**  
Free for EDA wholesalers, manufacturers, solution providers and service providers.  
 Register at [www.eda.org.uk](http://www.eda.org.uk)

## Thursday 9 July 2026

**EDA Manufacturers' and Wholesalers' Summer Event**  
An invitation-only event.  
 For more information, visit [www.eda.org.uk](http://www.eda.org.uk)

## Thursday 27 August 2026

**EDA Regional Business Forum, location tbc**  
Free for EDA wholesalers, manufacturers, solution providers and service providers.  
 Register at [www.eda.org.uk](http://www.eda.org.uk)

## Thursday 12 November 2026

**Power It Up: EDA Industry Insight Conference 2026**  
At the Carden Park Hotel & Spa, Chester.  
 Register at [www.eda.org.uk](http://www.eda.org.uk)



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## Frankfurt delegation visits 20 EDA Affiliate Members on their stands



# CEO verview

EDA Chief Executive **Margaret Fitzsimons** rounds up events in the sector over the past three months.

As the lead articles in this issue of *Taking Stock* demonstrate, the first 10 weeks of 2026 have placed a strong emphasis on face-to-face events.

Our Annual Digitalisation Forum in late February was quickly followed by three further gatherings in the first half of March: our Annual Awards Dinner, the Learners Award Lunch, and a visit to Frankfurt for the huge and inspiring Light + Building exhibition. Events such as these allow us to share information, celebrate and reward excellence, and – importantly – build stronger relationships across our sector. Bringing people together in this way is particularly valuable at a time when the business climate in the UK remains challenging and developments in the Middle East continue to cause concern.

The duration of the conflict and its longer-term consequences remain uncertain. What is clear, however, is the importance of maintaining a strong and supportive supply chain as we navigate potentially difficult months ahead.

Encouragingly, our members and affiliated members report that the supply chain remains resilient and is coping well with transport and freight disruptions. Nevertheless, sustained increases in energy and fuel costs may yet lead to price pressures. Given the importance of petrochemicals in the manufacture of many electrical products, prolonged instability could also affect raw material costs.

It is therefore vital that we remain well informed, share appropriate information across the supply chain, and support customers who must prepare quotations and tender for work in an ever-changing market. The EDA will continue to work closely with members and partner trade associations for the good of the electrotechnical sector. ■

## DASHBOARD: A SUMMARY OF Q1 BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN NUMBERS

**266** WHOLESALER MEMBERS    **1,910** WHOLESALER BRANCHES    **119** AFFILIATE MANUFACTURERS    **13** AFFILIATE SOLUTION & SERVICE PROVIDERS

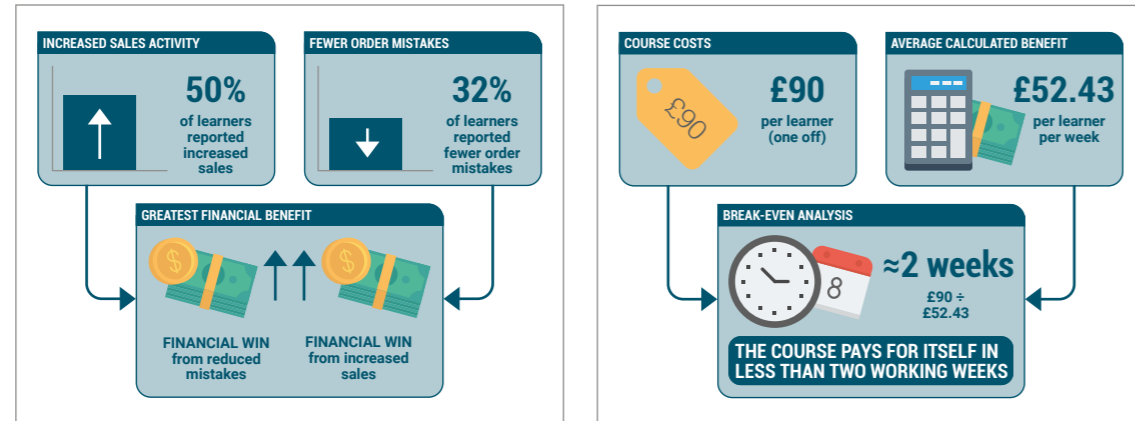
**324,217** SKUs LIVE IN THE EDATA DATA POOL    **851** WHOLESALERS ON THE EDATA PLATFORM HAVE ACCESS TO PRODUCT INFORMATION FROM MORE THAN 100 SUPPLIERS

ACCORDING TO OUR Q1 STATE OF THE SECTOR SURVEY...  
**39%** OF WHOLESALER RESPONDENTS SAID THEY HAD REDUCED THE NUMBER OF SUPPLIERS THEY USE    **69%** OF WHOLESALER RESPONDENTS PREDICTED AN INCREASE IN SALES IN 2026

**1,400** ACTIVE EDA ACADEMY LEARNERS    **84** PEOPLE HAVE ACHIEVED ALL 12 EDA MODULES (ANY GRADE) SINCE THEY WERE LAUNCHED IN 2018    **258** ENROLMENTS ONTO THE 4 EDA WORKPLACE ESSENTIAL COURSES

## Making the business case for the EDA's Product Knowledge Modules

Be the expert your customer relies on, not just the wholesaler they buy products from

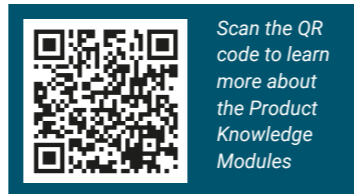


Investing in the EDA's award-winning Product Knowledge Modules isn't just about learning, it has a measurable positive impact on your business and strengthens your position as the trusted expert your customers rely on.

As the graphics above show, the return on investment is both rapid and impressive – payback occurs in less than nine working days, with an annual return on

investment of nearly 2,930%. But the real value goes beyond the headline numbers. By reducing costly mistakes, improving accuracy, and building deep product confidence across your team, the modules empower staff to provide clear guidance on the products they sell. This increases customer satisfaction, builds trust, creates upselling opportunities and ensures that customers return.

The result: improved efficiency, stronger relationships, and long-term, low-risk gains – all from a small upfront investment. ■



## How Cembre's module mania is paying dividends

Cembre Ltd believes that if you don't train your people, you don't just stand still – you go backwards. So the company has implemented an upskilling programme across its workforce, using the EDA's Product Knowledge Modules to bring team members up to a consistent, high standard.

The 29 members of the commercial team set the benchmark, completing 54 modules and achieving a total of 51 distinctions.

The EDA's CEO Margaret Fitzsimmons visited Cembre's premises in February to present certificates to the team in person.



Kerry Evans, HR and Business Change Manager, said: 'This is a fantastic accomplishment and a true reflection of the team's dedication, drive and commitment to continuous improvement.'

In 2026, every new starter at Cembre in Sutton Coldfield will follow a structured development

plan incorporating the modules, building knowledge, capability and confidence from their first days.

By integrating standardised EDA courses directly into the company's induction process, learning is no longer an add-on, it's a core part of the employee experience. ■

## WISKA's apprenticeship success story



Apprentice aid Rhiannon Wilson-Rich, Commercial Manager at WISKA UK Ltd, with Ewan Ross, an apprentice who joined the company with the help of Supplytrain

WISKA UK recently set out to recruit an apprentice to support its data analysis function, a role designed to bring fresh insight into the business and support internal reporting.

However, being in deepest Cornwall has historically presented challenges when attracting apprenticeship talent. So WISKA decided to work with EDA Partner Provider Supplytrain CIC during the recruitment process.

'We act as a bridge between education and employment,' says Phil Golding, Managing Director at Supplytrain. 'Supplytrain is the employer of the apprentice on paper, which is how the hosting service works.'

Rhiannon Wilson-Rich, WISKA's Commercial Manager, says: 'Phil guided us through each step. Supplytrain advertised the role, screened applicants, and presented us with a shortlist of suitable candidates who met the requirements we had. Phil gave details of each of the applicants to help the interview process. Once we selected our apprentice, Supplytrain supported us with onboarding, funding information, and setting up the training schedule.'

WISKA's experience highlights many of the wider benefits of recruiting an apprentice:

- **Cost-effective talent development** With funding support from the National Apprenticeship Service, apprenticeships are an affordable way to develop skilled employees.
- **Skills tailored to your business** Apprentices are trained around your systems, processes and culture.
- **Fresh perspectives** Particularly in areas such as data analysis, apprentices bring current learning and digital confidence.
- **Stronger retention and loyalty** Developing talent internally often leads to long-term commitment.
- **Succession planning** Apprenticeships help build a sustainable pipeline of future specialists and managers.

WISKA's journey also shows the value of working with an experienced partner. By managing advertising, screening, onboarding and compliance, Supplytrain ensured the process was smooth from start to finish. ■



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Apprenticeship changes

17 Level 3+ programmes will have funding withdrawn, with no new starts from September 2026. This includes qualifications such as the Level 3 Team Leader and Level 5 Operations Manager. If you're planning to use funded upskilling, ensure your staff are enrolled before September. Also, employer incentives have been introduced to support SMEs recruiting young people, particularly those who have been unemployed for six months or more. More details soon.

### How to manage stress

EDA businesses can access a free online course, Managing Stress – The Basics, available through the EDA Academy. This short course helps learners understand what stress is, and offers practical techniques to manage it.

Scan the QR code to learn more about this course and others in the Workplace Essentials programme



### Minimum Wage to increase from April 2026

The National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage will increase from 1 April. The Living Wage for workers aged 21 and over will rise to £12.71 an hour, with increases for younger workers and apprentices. The apprentice rate applies only to those under 19, or 19+ in the first year of their apprenticeship. Contact the EDA Training team at [training@eda.org.uk](mailto:training@eda.org.uk) for more information.



Phil Golding MD of Supplytrain, the EDA Partner Provider for apprenticeship services to Affiliate Members



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## EDA training schemes help companies thrive



**Manager winners** EDA CEO **Margaret Fitzsimons** (centre), pictured with (from left to right, top to bottom) **Thomas Holden**, BEMCO – British Electrical and Manufacturing Company; **Michael Griffiths**, LH Electrical Ltd; **John Henry**, Managing Director at EDA Apprenticeships Plus; **Duncan Mearns**, Stearn Electric Co Ltd; **Roger Ellwood**, Ellwood Electrical Wholesalers Ltd; **Sean Cole**, CEF Ltd; **Kerry Evans**, Cembre Ltd; **Edward Locke**, Circuit Supply Limited and **Jamie Gowdy**, Edmundson Electrical Ltd.



**Running man** Special guest Daley Thompson arrives to rapturous applause



**Countdown to the awards** Event host Colin Murray with the EDA's Head of Education & Training Tracy Hewett

This year's eight EDA Investor in Training Award winners demonstrably embed the Association's training portfolio and apprenticeship service into their workforce strategy.

The Awards, now in their 12th year, were presented by *Countdown* host and radio presenter Colin Murray at the EDA Annual Awards Dinner on 5 March, where 570 senior leaders from the UK's electrotechnical supply chain had gathered.

EDA President David Moore of Medlock Electrical Distributors said: 'In times like these, while some pull back, others choose to lean in. They understand that training is not a luxury or a "nice to

have", but the fuel that drives long-term success.'

Margaret Fitzsimons, CEO at the EDA, added: 'Quite simply, you win by using the EDA's training and apprenticeship programmes – and using them well. Our Awards are earned, not entered. There are no nominations, no popularity vote. Just proven use and impact of EDA training.'

'The companies that will thrive are those building knowledge, capability and leadership from within.'

The Awards were sponsored by EDA Apprenticeships Plus, the partner provider for the EDA Apprenticeship Service for wholesalers. ■



**Table talk** There were 570 guests at the 2026 Annual Awards Dinner

“The companies that will thrive are those building knowledge, capability and leadership from within”

**Margaret Fitzsimons**  
CEO, EDA

## Learners rewarded for aiming high at The Shard



**Learner winners** (from left to right, top to bottom) **Samuel Cooper**, CEF Ltd; **Oliver Graham**, CEF Ltd; **James Sanders**, G & R Electrical Wholesalers Ltd – part of the AWEBB buying group; **Joshua Tompkins**, 3 Line Electrical Wholesaler – part of the AWEBB buying group; **Euan Johnstone**, Ellwood Electrical Wholesalers Ltd – part of The IBA Buying Group; **Jason Goss\***, Gil-lec Ltd – part of the Fegime UK buying group; **George Jefferies**, Stearn Electric Co Ltd; **Isaak Veide**, BEMCO – British Electrical Manufacturing Company Ltd – part of the ANEW buying group; **Charlie Tomlinson\***, Edmundson Electrical Ltd; **Tom Hopkins\***, Electric Center; **Zach Winter\***, Edmundson Electrical Ltd; **Tom Willetts**, Eyre & Elliston – part of the ANEW buying group; **Harry Hulbert**, BEW Electrical Distributors – part of the Fegime UK buying group; **Savanah Benecke\***, AT&T (GB) Ltd – part of the Fegime UK buying group; **Madison Davies**, Midshires Electrical & Lighting Ltd – part of the Fegime UK buying group; **Eva Thomas**, Stearn Electric Co Ltd; **Charlie Glover\***, Lockwell Electrical; **Lucas Morgan\***, Edmundson Electrical Ltd; **Lauren Homan\***, EWL Electric Ltd; **Nick Thomson\***, Electric Center; and **Cathy Keenaghan\***, Eastern Electrical.

\* Indicates Awards for completing all 12 EDA Product Knowledge Modules and attaining Distinction in every one.

Marking its 12th year, the EDA hosted its annual Learning Achievement Awards on the 37th floor of The Shard in London. The 2026 ceremony honoured 21 outstanding individuals from across the UK's electrotechnical sector, recognising exceptional achievement in Apprenticeships or the EDA's award-winning Product Knowledge programme.

The awards shine focus on those who have shown dedication, professionalism and commitment to continuous development.

Presenting the trophies on behalf of the Association were EDA President David Moore, Director at Medlock Electrical Distributors (part of the ANEW buying group),

and John Henry, Managing Director at EDA Apprenticeships Plus, which operates the EDA's Apprenticeship Service for Wholesalers – and also sponsors the Awards.

The Association's CEO, Margaret Fitzsimons, said: 'Congratulations to our 21 winners, and to the managers, mentors, and families whose guidance and encouragement plays such an important role in shaping these success stories.'

'It was a privilege to celebrate the success of our winners with their special guests at The Shard, a venue that was specially chosen to reflect the aspirations we encourage across our membership: to aim high and rise to the top.' ■



**And the winner is** EDA President David Moore presented the awards

## Sector reflects on digitisation progress and awards excellence

The EDA looks to the future of digital innovation and data excellence in the electrotechnical sector at its Digitalisation Forum and Data Quality Awards

Now in its 7th year, the Association's Digitalisation Forum and Data Quality Awards 2026 was held in London in February.

Delegates heard from expert speakers and listened to panel discussions on topics surrounding the rules and tools that are shaping the way product sustainability data, notably embodied carbon data, is shared and used, and the role of artificial intelligence in making the supply chain more agile.

At the heart of the event are the Data Quality Awards, where leading manufacturers are singled out as top contributors to the EDATA data pool – and EDA wholesalers are feted as exemplars



of data pool engagement.

Margaret Fitzsimons, CEO at the EDA said: 'Congratulations to all our award winners – your dedication to the EDATA data pool sets the benchmark for excellence across our sector.'

### Latest from the EDATA Steering Group Meeting



The EDATA Steering Group met on the day before the Digitalisation Forum. The group heard about forthcoming developments to the platform including the upgraded search routines announced in the last issue of *Taking Stock*.

Wholesalers with large numbers of users will be able to make EDATA available across their

branches with minimal user administration. There will also be a feature that allows simple search for sustainability and packaging data. More enhancements will be announced throughout the year.

The meeting was followed by a networking dinner at The Ivy, Tower Bridge. Thanks to our sponsors Epicor Software (UK) Ltd.

The event was made possible thanks to the support of these EDA Solution Provider sponsors who also exhibited at the Forum



## Celebrating data excellence at the Data Quality Awards 2026

Manufacturer Data Awards (right, left to right) Matt Woodward and Autumn Fox, Collingwood Lighting; Jeremy Dodge and Martin Russell, Marshall-Tufflex Ltd; Richard Baxter, Edmundson Electrical Ltd and outgoing Chair of EDA Data Services; Mike Rymarz, Atlantic; Steve Marr, Legrand Electric Ltd.



Wholesaler Engagement Awards (below, left to right) Gerard Gallagher, Chorley Electrical Traders Ltd; Andy Johnson, LEW Electrical Distributors; Richard Baxter, Edmundson Electrical Ltd and Doug Day, also of Edmundson Electrical Ltd.



Manufacturer Gold Certificate Winners (below, left to right) Kiran Kotecha, Integral LED; Antony Timms, Scame-UK Limited; Gareth Davies, Consort Equipment Products Ltd; Brinley Buckley-Roberts, Carl Kammerling International Ltd; Dominic Millard, Armorduct Systems Ltd; Richard Baxter, former Chair of the EDA Data Services Board; Jade Harris-Payne, Armorduct Systems Ltd, with Certificate for Cutterwell & Co; Steve Marr, Legrand Electric Ltd; Kate Hughes; Hispec Electrical Products Ltd; Margaret Fitzsimons, CEO, EDA; with certificate for ALL LED Limited; Trevor Horner, Megaman (UK) Ltd, and Steve Hayes, TIS (Test Instrument Solutions) Ltd.



## Survey reveals state of digitalisation in the electrotechnical sector

Two years after the Association first quizzed its Wholesaler Members and Affiliate Manufacturers about digitalisation, the latest survey shows just how much the landscape is changing

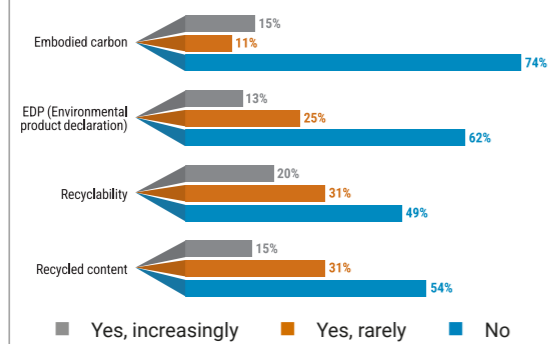
It's been two years since the EDA published the results of its first survey into the state of digitalisation in the sector. Now the Association has revealed the results of its second such survey, and attendees at the EDA Digitalisation Forum and Data Quality Awards were given a sneak peek of the results.

EDA Head of Digitalisation Richard Appleton presented the findings in two sessions at the forum: one addressing the demand for product sustainability data, particularly embodied carbon information; the other on the impact of AI in the sector.

### Sustainability

On the specific topic of sustainability, the survey asked wholesalers if their customers were asking for product data in a number of categories: embodied carbon, environmental product declarations, recyclability and recycled content of products.

### Are your customers asking for any of the following sustainability-related data about products?



'Looking at wholesaling as a whole,' said Appleton, 'the numbers that are being asked for this information by their customers is relatively small.'

For example, 45% of medium/large wholesalers (six or more branches) have been asked for embodied carbon data compared with only 9% of smaller wholesalers (1-5 branches).

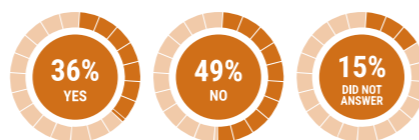
In follow-up phone discussions, wholesalers revealed which kinds of clients were asking for sustainability data. One said: 'It's not really an issue unless you're dealing with large contractors on government-type projects or councils.'

Another added: 'We are seeing requests for

carbon related data from all sectors, not just from large nationals but now also from larger regional players.'

Manufacturers were asked if they were able to supply sustainability data for their products. For embodied carbon, 28% said they could, and another 53% said they were working on it. Figures were similar for other types of data. Richard Appleton said: 'There's a big drive to create this data and make it available down the supply chain.'

### Do you use any AI tools in your business?



### The rise of AI

The rise of artificial intelligence in all sectors is hard to ignore, and the survey asked wholesalers if they used AI tools in their businesses. The response was mixed – 36% said yes, 49% said no. 'You can see there's a beginning of an adoption, but there's quite a long way to go,' said Appleton.

In the telephone interviews, wholesalers revealed how they used AI tools. Common responses were for analytics or creating marketing content, improving text or generating images.

About half of respondents agree or somewhat agree that AI will transform the way the sector buys and sells products by the end of the decade. ■

Thanks to these EDA Affiliates for sponsoring our latest EDA Digitalisation Survey



You can download a PDF copy of the EDA Digitalisation Survey 2026, or request a printed copy, from our website – scan the QR code below



## And then there were 27 – a pair of new data pool sponsors



Two organisations have announced their sponsorship of EDATA – the data pool for the electrotechnical sector, which is managed by the EDA – joining 25 other wholesalers, manufacturers and buying groups.

The first is The Associated National Electrical Wholesalers (ANEW) buying group. Samantha McFall, CEO at ANEW, said: 'EDATA is a powerful data engine, not only as a standalone resource, but also its seamless integration with the software wholesalers rely on ensures accurate, high-quality product information is at the heart of every wholesaler business.'

The second new sponsor is Affiliate Manufacturer Europa PLC. Managing director Sonia Freed said: 'Europa joined the data pool in 2021, and the opportunity to upgrade our support to sponsorship level

reflects our commitment to the wholesale channel and EDATA's strategic role in delivering the highest-quality product information.'

The wholesaler and wholesaler buying group sponsors of EDATA are: ANEW buying group, BED (Corby) Ltd, CEF Ltd, Edmundson Electrical Ltd, Fegime UK, The IBA Buying Group Ltd, LEW Electrical Distributors and Stearn Electric Co Ltd. The manufacturer sponsors are: ABB Ltd – Electrification, Aico Ltd, Ansell Lighting, Cembre Ltd, Collingwood Lighting, Deta Electrical Co Ltd, Dimplex, Eaton, Electrium Sales (A Siemens Company), Europa, Hager Ltd, Legrand Electric Ltd, Luceco PLC (BG Electrical), Marshall-Tufflex Ltd, Prysmian Group, Schneider Electric Ltd, Thorn Lighting, Toolbank Limited and Vent-Axia. ■

**Pool sponsorship**  
Representatives of ANEW (left) and Europa PLC (right) with the EDA digitalisation team



# NEWS IN BRIEF

### Submit enhancement requests for ETIM 11.0

With more manufacturers applying ETIM classification to their products, it's important that we all keep up with any changes. If you have any enhancement suggestions, please contact Phil Thompson – at phil.thompson@etim-uk-and-ie.org – before 31 May so they can be scheduled for ETIM 11.0, which is due to be released this Autumn.

### Data consultant joins EDATA team



We are pleased to welcome Julie Houghton, who joins the EDATA team as data consultant. Julie brings

many years of product data experience in the sector and will be a familiar face to many EDATA manufacturers.

## Five new members join the EDATA Data Services board

Five new members were appointed to the EDA Data Services Ltd board in February. Ollie Pearson (Edmundson Electrical Ltd) and Steve Mortlock (CEF Ltd) join as wholesaler representatives, and on the manufacturer side we welcome Louise Baker (Schneider Electric

Ltd), John Humphery (Marshall-Tufflex Ltd) and Andrew Jackson (Vent-Axia).

Thank you to the outgoing board members Sean Jordan (Schneider Electric Ltd), Michael Wright (Aico Ltd) and Ian Hunter (Luceco PLC).

A special mention must go to Richard Baxter of Edmundson Electrical Ltd, the outgoing Chairman.

Mark Ashworth (from ABM, representing The IBA Buying Group Ltd) has taken up the chairmanship of the board. ■



Ollie Pearson



Steve Mortlock



Louise Baker



John Humphery



Andrew Jackson



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## Mixed messages from wholesalers and manufacturers in Q1 survey

January's Talking Shop meeting kicked off with a whistle-stop tour of some key developments in the sector presented by Paul Reeve, special adviser to the EDA.

He started with some good news – the Government had, in January, published its Warm Homes Plan, which shows a commitment to low-carbon domestic electric heating.

The Government's plan aims for 450,000 new heat pumps to be installed every year, with 70% of those heat pumps made in the UK by 2035. It also wants 3 million more homes to have solar energy by 2030.

The Government will also extend the boiler upgrade scheme. But Reeve added that what really matters is how and when this extra money will become available.

The Government has also announced a £39 billion social and affordable homes programme, which will run for 10 years from 2026-27 to 2035-36. It is designed to deliver about 300,000 new homes. The funding is, however, only part funding, and real world allocation of the funds will depend on extra money from the private sector.

### Economic position

Then Professor Noble Francis, economics director at the Construction Products Association, presented the CPA's quarterly construction forecast. He said the CPA was expecting a 1.4% growth in GDP this year, which he described as 'muddling along'. He added that some pre-Autumn Budget uncertainty had ended and that inflation is on a general

downward trend. Also, most of the tax rises announced in the Budget will come into effect at the end of the Parliament, not in the next 12 to 18 months.

Housebuilding remains the largest of the construction sectors, and the key issue for major private housebuilders is whether the spring selling season will be strong. In the public sector, the CPA believes housebuilding may gradually rise as a result of the social and affordable homes programme mentioned by Reeve.

“It's a case of just muddling through rather than strong, robust growth”

The market for private housing repair, maintenance (RM&I) and improvements was subdued in 2025, and consumer confidence remains poor. The market for solar PV and heat pumps is still strong, and the Warm Homes plan is expected to boost RM&I in the longer term.

In the commercial sector, smaller high-end, high-value refurbishment and fit-out remains very strong, as does the market for student accommodation and private health.

In industry, there are still some small and medium-sized warehouse and factory projects post-pandemic, and data centre investment is expected to increase fourfold over the next five years. Gigafactories are planned in Somerset and Sunderland; and Tata has invested £1.5bn in Wales converting its blast furnaces to electric arc steel facilities.

Activity is strong in major

## January's Talking Shop focused on growth in construction, renewables and the commercial sector, and challenges such as cost increases and skills shortages

infrastructure projects, including electricity distribution and investment by water companies, which is expected to increase significantly in 2026. Spending on roads is expected to decline.

In summary, key opportunities include commercial refurb and fit-out, data centres, schools, military housing and prisons, energy generation and water sector investments. The key risks are building safety, increasing costs and insolvencies, and skills shortages in the medium term.

### Q1 survey results

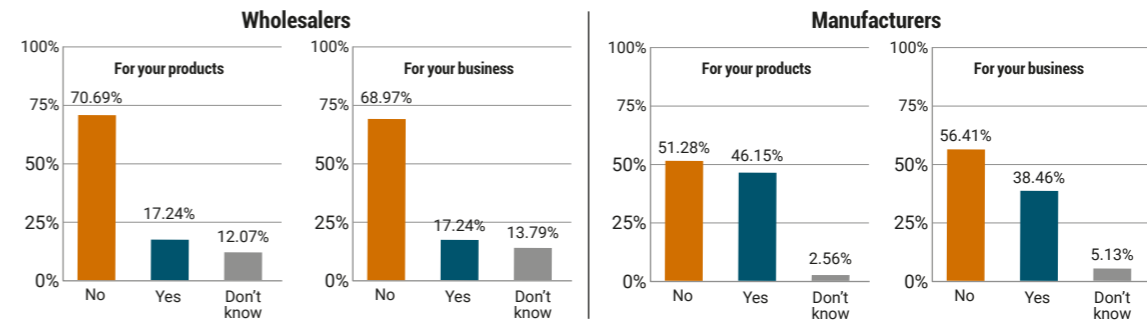
Finally, Anne Vessey, Head of Marketing & Communications, presented the results of the latest EDA State of the Sector survey. Wholesaler response was 28%, manufacturer response was 34%.

In common with every survey, we first asked wholesalers and manufacturers about turnover. When asked to compare turnover in the fourth quarter of 2025 with the same quarter in 2024, nearly 23% of wholesalers said turnover was up 11% or more. The corresponding figure from the previous survey was just over 23%.

When comparing turnover in Q4 2025 with the previous quarter, just over 15% of wholesalers said turnover was up 11% or more (18.76% in the previous survey).

Things were more positive when manufacturers compared Q4 2025 with Q4 2024, nearly 27% of them said turnover was up 11% or more, nearly 8% more than in the previous survey.

Wholesalers were asked if they had experienced a change in turnover in particular sectors



between the last two quarters of 2025, and the answers reflect the CPA's forecasts. The greatest growth was in commercial, industrial, new public housing and then new private housing. It was the same story for manufacturers.

Renewables remained a strong area of growth for wholesalers. The greatest growth was in heat pumps, solar PV inverters and EV charging products. If the respondents who said demand had significantly increased or slightly increased are added, a different picture emerges. EV charging then takes the top spot and heat pumps drop further down the chart.

Vessey said the strategic takeaways from this were to focus on commercial, industrial, renewables and infrastructure; to prioritise battery storage, EV charging and data centres; to compete on service, relationships and service; and to reduce exposure to online competition.

### Pressing challenges

The most pressing operational challenges for both wholesalers and manufacturers included overheads, the downturn in

demand, delays to project starts, a slowdown in traditional market segments and recruitment.

The next part of the survey covered carbon, sustainability and environmental issues.

This includes:

- **Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs)**, a comprehensive analysis of a product's environmental impact across its life, covering water use, pollution and resource depletion as well as carbon.
- **Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs)**, which are third-party documents that summarise LCA results for public or business use.
- **TM65** from Cipse, which is a calculation method specifically for building services products.

We asked wholesalers if their customers were asking for environmental accreditation of their products or their businesses. About 70% replied 'no' on both counts, little different from the response last time we asked this question 18 months ago. Eighty-two per cent of wholesalers were unaware of TM65, and 68% were

unaware of EPDs. Those that were aware of EPDs said 60% of their manufacturer suppliers were able to provide them.

Forty six per cent of manufacturers said wholesalers were asking for third party environmental assessment of their products, with 56% asking about their businesses.

### Consolidation of stock lines

Manufacturers were asked whether their wholesaler customers were consolidating their stock lines and reducing the number of suppliers they used – and 82% said this was something they recognised.

Then we asked wholesalers if they had reduced the number of suppliers they use. Around 39% said they had. And a similar number said they hadn't, and they had no plans to do so. Twenty-two per cent said it was in their plans.

Finally, on a more positive note, wholesalers and manufacturers were asked how they expected sales to change in 2026. Among wholesalers, 69% predicted an increase in sales; and 90% of manufacturers thought sales would improve. ■

**Going green?** We asked wholesalers and manufacturers if their customers and wholesaler partners were asking for third party assessment of their environmental credentials

Scan the QR code to download the EDA's State of the Sector Survey results



## Growing sales in a challenging market

Accountant and business consultant Peter Hill will deliver a one-hour webinar titled 'Growing sales in a challenging market' for EDA businesses on 1 May.

His message will be that the economy is struggling to get moving. Growth in 2025 was just 1.3%, and construction output fell by 2.1%. How can your company grow?



Peter Hill

There is no magic answer. It is all about structure and discipline in the sales process. There are key actions that great sales teams and individuals do - and less successful ones don't. Every business needs to know what these are, adapt them to their business, and then use carrot and stick to make sure people do what has to be done. ■

Scan the QR code below for more information.



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# EDA COMMUNITY

## Prizewinners at the Digitalisation Forum

Matt Woodward, Senior Product Data Manager at Collingwood Lighting (top), and Joshua Massey, Business Development Manager at B2BE Limited (bottom) picking up their raffle prizes during the EDA's Digitalisation Forum and Awards 2026 – an 11-inch, 256GB silver Apple iPad (2025) sponsored by Aico, and Apple AirPods Pro 3 sponsored by Agathos Systems Ltd. ■



## More following ETIM on LinkedIn



The number of followers of ETIM UK and Ireland on LinkedIn leapt by 88.5% in 30 days earlier this year – thanks for joining us. ■

**Certified gold**  
EDA CEO Margaret Fitzsimons presents the Going for Gold certificate to Jamie Shemie, Director of ALL LED Limited, who could not attend the Digitalisation Forum in February (see page 8)



## Two veterans wave goodbye to the wholesaling sector

**Barry Jacobs**, Manager at Ryness Electrical Supplies' King's Road Branch in Chelsea, is retiring after 50 years in electrical wholesaling. The picture shows Barry (left), with his colleague George Jefferies at the EDA's 2026 Learner Achievement Awards at The Shard in March. George won for his outstanding results in the EDA's Product Knowledge Modules.

Barry was also at the EDA's Annual Awards Dinner the night before – his first and last EDA Dinner.



And **Micky Jackson**, Commercial Control Manager at BEW Electrical Distributors Ltd, has hung up his wholesaling boots after 44 years with the company.

The company says if you cut Micky Jackson open, BEW will run through him like a stick of rock. He joined CEW in Chelmsford (pictured, left) on day one in 1982, later moving to BEW in Balham High Road.

He has had many different roles, in branches and at the company's headquarters. ■



**Raising funds for the Electrical Industries Charity** Margaret Fitzsimons, CEO of the EDA presents the charity cheque to Kate Adamczyk, Director of Marketing & Business Development at the Electrical Industries Charity. Guests at the dinner entered a raffle for the chance to win a Samsung Music Frame Smart Speaker, generously donated to help raise funds for the charity. A total of £7,235 was raised for the Electrical Industries Charity (EIC) during the EDA Awards Dinner 2026. The Electrical Industries Charity is the national charity supporting people working in the electrical and energy industries. The EDA and its members have proudly supported the charity for almost 100 years, with the raffle at the EDA's Annual Dinner continuing to play an important role in raising funds for the EIC's vital work.

## GLT Electrical Wholesalers and Circuit Supply open new branches

A pair of electrical wholesalers have opened new branches – one in Aylesbury, the other in Portsmouth.

First, ANEW Buying Group member **GLT Electrical Wholesalers Limited** has opened in Aylesbury. The company has grown

from a single branch to a five across London, the Home Counties, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The company says 'this is only the beginning'.

The company says its growth is the result of its people, suppliers and customers.

Meanwhile, Fegime UK member **Circuit Supply Ltd** has a new trade counter in Portsmouth. The new site will work alongside Circuit Supply's Waterlooville trade counter to support customers across Portsmouth and the South Coast. ■



## Feedback from EDA Light + Building delegation



Delegates on the EDA-led visit to Light + Building 2026 in Frankfurt (seen above being addressed by representatives of wholesalers and manufacturers at a networking event) were enthusiastic about the trip...

"An enjoyable networking trip which I think my work colleagues also enjoyed"

"This is a prime example of industry partners supporting each other"

"Thanks for your efforts in organising and hosting a fantastic trip to Light + Building this year"

"I loved it, my only regret is not wearing better shoes!"

## New Members and Affiliates

A number of new Wholesaler Members have joined the Association.

One from 1 March 2026:

- **Cable Management Warehouse Ltd**, an independent wholesaler.

The others joined from 1 April 2026:

- **TLA Distribution Ltd** (part of the ANEW Buying Group). Four members from the AWEBB Buying Group join the EDA:

- **A B Electrical Wholesalers Limited**
  - **Impulse Electrical Supplies Ltd**
  - **Reform Electrical Distributors Ltd** and
  - **Switch Electrical Distributors Limited**.
- And two new members are part of The IBA Buying Group Ltd:
- **Gordons Electrical Supplies**
  - **Mech-Elec Wholesale Limited**. ■



# SECTOR INSIGHTS:

## UPDATES, PERSPECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDED READING

### Government issues Construction Product White Paper in wake of Grenfell tragedy

The Government has issued a 'Construction Products Reform White Paper' setting out its aims for system-wide reform of the construction product (CP) sector, following the Grenfell Tower tragedy. Here is a headline summary.

The White Paper outlines the Government's aim of aligning the UK regime for construction products covered by designated standards or technical assessment with EU-CPR 2024. It notes that 'new regulations will (in time)... replace the current regulatory regime' to cover all CPs. It will remain mandatory for manufacturers to declare the performance of any CP covered by a designated standard and to provide

compliance information, while CPs subject to UK or European technical assessment will also be regulated.

However, a key pillar of regulatory change will be to bring all CPs that are *not* covered by a designated Standard or subject to technical assessment under a 'general safety requirement' (GSR). Manufacturers, distributors and others would have specific regulatory obligations under new GSR Regulations (see *summary below*). Also, further regulatory requirements are planned for CPs classed as 'critical to safe construction'.

Regarding regulatory requirements for product information (for CPs covered by standards, technical

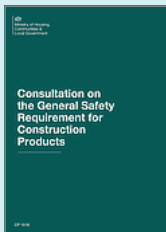
assessments or GSR) the Government says: 'Manufacturers and others (including distributors) must take responsibility and ownership of product safety across the lifecycle and provide clear, accessible information to users.' The White Paper says all CP information would need to be available digitally, and CPs covered by designated standards will need a digital declaration of performance and conformity.

The White Paper adds that there will be 'clear expectations of accountability across the product supply chain'. Significantly, if any party (a distributor, for example) takes on another role (beyond selling into the marketplace)



it will also take on any associated obligations under the proposed new CP regulatory regime.

The EDA will respond to the White Paper and the GSR proposals, both of which are seeking stakeholder comments with a 20 May consultation deadline. ■



Download the consultation documents here: for Construction Products Reform:



...and for the GSR:



### General Safety Requirement set to affect distributors

Alongside the White Paper, the Government is consulting specifically on plans to expand UK Construction Product regulation. A key regulatory proposal is a 'general safety requirement' (GSR) that would apply to construction products not covered by designated standards or technical assessments. This would be introduced in 2027 under the Building Safety Act 2022, with specific obligations for supply chain businesses, including distributors, to ensure construction product (CP) safety. It would be enforced by a national regulator for CPs and there would be sanctions for non-compliance.

While manufacturers would have primary duties under the proposed GSR, importers and distributors would be required to check that manufacturers have met GSR obligations. The Government's White Paper adds: 'We expect industry to take steps now to prepare for the introduction of the GSR'.

Proposed GSR requirements on CP manufacturers and others include:

- Assess safety risks regarding intended and reasonably foreseeable conditions of use and implement proportionate risk-mitigation measures.
- Clear, accurate, and complete information – including on intended use, technical

specifications, installation guidance, safety warnings and usage restrictions.

- Unique identifiers and other details to enable product traceability.
  - Retain risk assessments, product documentation and any safety incident records for 10 years.
  - Monitor products for any safety risks, investigate and record complaints, and take corrective action such as amending product information or product withdrawal.
- Consequently, proposed requirements on distributors under the GSR include:
- Checking the manufacturer has completed a CP risk assessment.
  - Checking that CP documentation is suitable, comprehensive and complies with the GSR, and that it is provided to the customer.
  - Inspection of product labelling to confirm it conforms with the GSR, where applicable.
  - Retaining purchase and supply records for 10 years, to allow for traceability.
  - Passing on any customer complaints or reported safety issues to their CP supplier.

This document also contains a series of complementary GSR requirements on importers and online marketplaces. ■