



ANNUAL REVIEW 2025



Together we can build a better
furniture industry

Introduction



Welcome to the 2025 Annual Review from the Furniture Industry Research Association (FIRA). As I step into my fifth year as Chair, I'm delighted to share the progress we've made and how we continue to support you, our members.

Last year, we welcomed 20 new members, many of whom highlighted access to knowledge, updates to standards, and expert advice as their main reasons for joining. This reinforces our commitment to lead as the trusted source of technical expertise and industry insight.

Advocacy is at the heart of what we do. We work closely with the British Furniture Confederation (BFC) to represent your interests and champion a strong, successful furniture industry. With challenges such as flammability regulations for domestic upholstery, rising energy and employment costs, and changes to business taxation, having a clear and united voice with policymakers has never been more important. That's why this year we combined our Annual Reception with the BFC's Confederation Lunch, the industry's flagship event for engaging with Government - held at Westminster in November. It was fantastic to see so many of you there and to showcase the strength of our community.

We also play an active role in standards and regulatory committees, shaping the future of our sector. You'll find a summary of this work and key regulatory developments on pages 4 and 5.

Over 227 member companies turned to us for expert guidance this year, demonstrating the trust and value members place in our technical support services. Our team worked closely with members to provide tailored advice on the issues that matter most—product safety, compliance, and innovation. We helped ensure designs meet comfort and usability standards through ergonomics, guided businesses through complex regulatory frameworks, to help ensure flammability, and structural requirements are achieved to protect product integrity and consumer safety. By offering this level of expertise, we helped members stay compliant, improve product quality, and remain competitive in a challenging market.

Alongside this, we delivered a wide range of projects in 2025. We published Sustainability Challenges and Opportunities in the Furniture Industry, helping stakeholders identify pressing issues and actionable opportunities for greener practices. We released a practical guide, Understanding Your Furniture Test Report – Structural Testing, giving members confidence in interpreting test results. In the autumn, we published the latest Statistics Digest for the Furniture Industry, providing data-driven insights into the industry's size, scope, and activity for informed decision-making. A full list of our 2025 projects can be found on page 2.

Earlier in the year, we welcomed three new FIRA Council members: Tristine Hargreaves, Executive Director of the National Bed Federation; Chris Meadows, Technical Manager at Track Record Global (TRG); and Phil Spademan, Managing Director of the British Furniture Association (BFA). They join our dedicated council team in guiding FIRA's work and ensuring your interests remain at the heart of what we do.

Looking ahead to 2026, we'll continue to deliver quality research and host exclusive member events, including in-person sessions dedicated to electrics in furniture and powered designs. We'll also update the FIRA Flammability Guide to reflect the regulatory changes introduced in October 2025, helping members stay fully compliant.

Finally, thank you for your continued support and commitment to FIRA. Everything we do is driven by your needs, and we're here to help you succeed. If you have ideas, feedback, or areas you'd like us to explore, please reach out to us at membership@fra.co.uk. Your input shapes our work and together, we can keep building a stronger, more innovative furniture industry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Ahern'.

Brian Ahern
Chair, Furniture Industry Research Association

2025 Projects



Carbon Footprint Calculator

Updated with 2024 factors so you can measure and manage your environmental impact accurately and confidently.

Sustainability Challenges and Opportunities in the Furniture Industry

An in-depth overview of modern sustainability thinking, offering actionable insights for product development and organisational improvements across the supply chain.

Lean Manufacturing Training Toolkit

These modules give you practical strategies to boost efficiency, cut waste, and improve productivity.

- **Part 7: Problem Solving**
- **Part 8: Line Balancing**
- **Part 9: Value Stream Mapping**

These modules give you practical strategies to boost efficiency, cut waste, and improve productivity.

Statistics Digest for the Furniture Industry 2025

A comprehensive analysis of the latest industry data, including furniture manufacturing trends, consumer spending, retail performance, and international trade figures.

Understanding Your Furniture Test Report – Structural Testing

A clear, practical guide to help you navigate the testing process and interpret structural test results with confidence.

Communicating Environmental Data – Best Practice Guide for the Furniture Industry

Defines industry-accepted sustainability parameters, explains calculation methods, and reviews the state of recycling in the UK to ensure recyclability claims are meaningful and achievable.

Accessing Our Member-only Knowledge

Our Knowledge Hub continues to provide members with quick access to essential resources, including technical reports, guides, business templates, recorded training, and our comprehensive standards database. The Hub is available at www.fira.co.uk/knowledge-hub.

Members needing login details can request access via www.fira.co.uk/login or by contacting membership@fira.co.uk.

Research

Educational Furniture Procurement Project – 2025 Summary

Recap of 2024

Last year, we completed a pilot study examining how schools purchase classroom furniture. The study revealed several challenges, including tight budgets, limited awareness of ergonomic standards, and outdated procurement processes. It also highlighted strong industry support for improving the quality of school furniture and laid the groundwork for a multi-stage research programme to better understand the wider educational furniture system.

Progress in 2025

This year, our focus was on raising awareness of the pilot findings, strengthening partnerships, and developing a clearer picture of how decisions about classroom furniture are made across the education system. Key achievements included:

- Building relationships with government bodies, industry representatives, schools, and professional networks.
- Presenting research to the British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA) Furniture Group and contributing evidence to a national parliamentary inquiry.
- Creating a growing stakeholder directory and research archive to support future project stages.
- Developing a systems map illustrating the interconnected factors influencing furniture design, selection, and procurement.

These activities increased visibility of the issue and identified areas requiring deeper research - particularly among government teams, architects, school designers, local authorities, and Multi-Academy Trusts.



Next Steps

The next stage will focus on engaging these stakeholders directly to understand their needs, constraints, and influence within the system. This will help shape further research and validate the pilot study findings.

Overall Impact

2025 has been a year of momentum-building: expanding our network, deepening our understanding of the system, and strengthening the foundations needed to drive meaningful change in classroom furniture provision, ultimately supporting children's learning and wellbeing.

Standards and Regulatory Work

Throughout 2025, we continued to play a key role in shaping the standards and regulations that influence the furniture industry across the UK, Europe, and internationally. We chaired two of the ten European furniture standards committees (CEN TC 207 WG6 – Educational Furniture and CEN TC 207 WG9 – Test Methods), and our experts contributed across all ten CEN committees as well as several ISO committees.

In addition, FIRA chairs the UK's national BSI Furniture and Ergonomics Committees. Through this work, we supported the development of future focused standards aligned with safety, sustainability, and innovation, reinforcing our position as a leading contributor to both national and international standards development.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN 2026

UK Fire Safety Regulations

We played an active role in the Government's review of the UK Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations. Parliament approved several changes to the Regulations, which came into force in October 2025. These included removing certain low risk children's products from scope, removing display label requirements, and extending the legal proceedings window.

Due to ministerial changes, the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) was not able to finalise the full draft regulations before the end of 2025. A decision is now anticipated in Q1 2026.

The delay led to additional preparatory work within BSI committee FW/6, where we contributed to the early revision of associated standards, including the first draft update of BS 7177 (mattress test method). Our work remains focused on helping the industry balance reduced chemical flame retardant use with appropriate fire safety performance.

Ecodesign and Digital Product Passports

With the EU's Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation introducing mandatory Digital Product Passports from 2026, we engaged in the development of the supporting standards. Our involvement in drafting prEN 18239 and prEN 18246 is helping to shape future requirements around data security, authentication, and information management. This work is critical to supporting UK manufacturers exporting products into the EU.

Electrically Operated Furniture Standards

We continued our involvement in the development of the mechanical safety standard for electrically operated furniture, FprEN 17684, through CEN TC 207 WG9. Working alongside CENELEC, which is producing the complementary electrical safety standard, we helped resolve outstanding issues raised by the HAS Consultant (European Commission's independent expert). The final draft of FprEN 17684 was submitted in December 2025 and is now awaiting review.

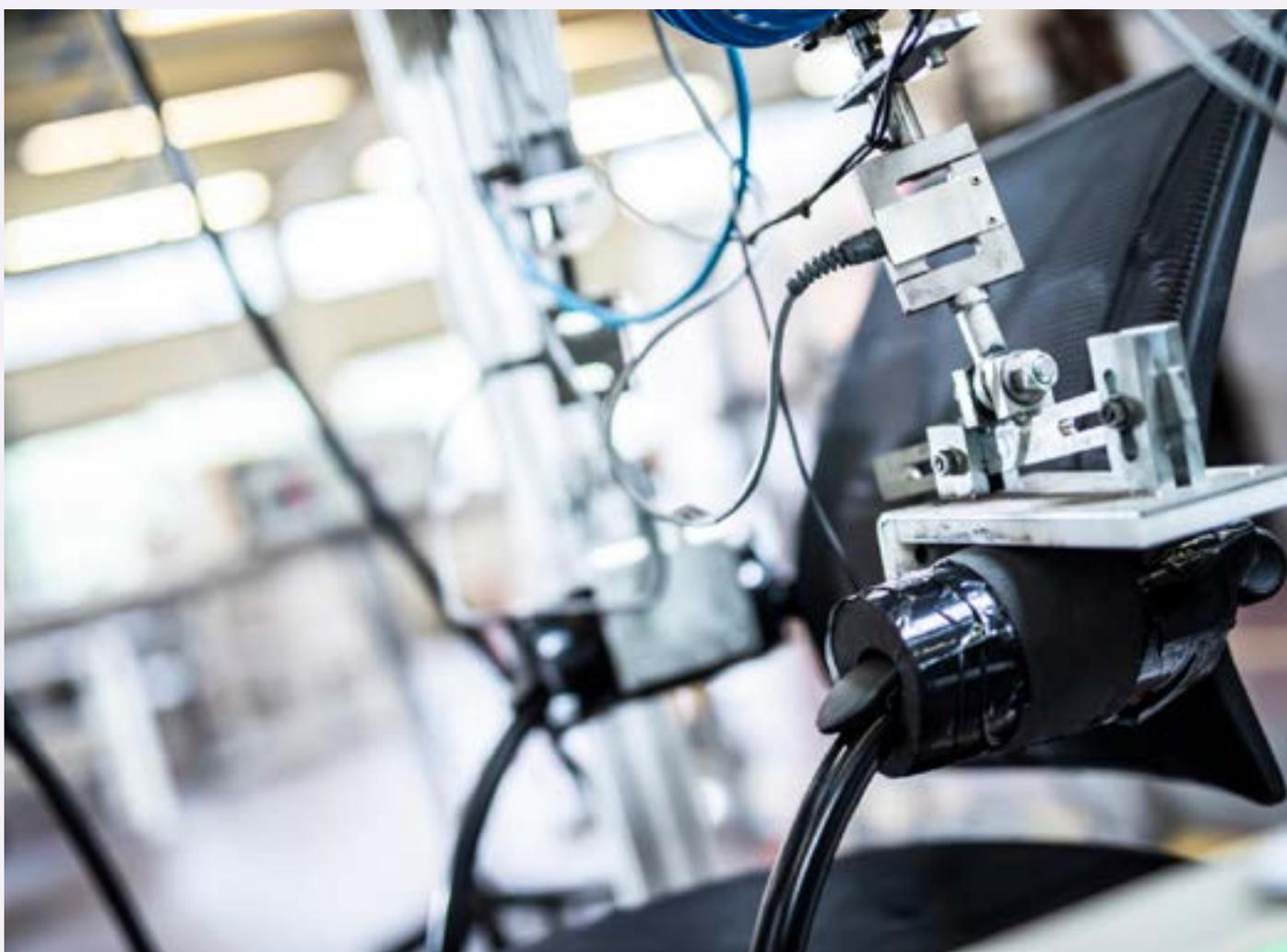
Our work in 2025 strengthened our position as a trusted authority in standards and regulatory development for the furniture sector. By leading key committees, contributing technical expertise, and engaging closely with stakeholders, we helped shape reforms and standards that support safer, more sustainable, and more innovative furniture products. As we move into 2026, we remain committed to supporting the industry through upcoming regulatory changes and continued advancements in European and international standardisation.



Furniture Standards Published in 2025

New Standards Published

- BS EN 16139:2025 Furniture - Safety, strength and durability - Requirements and test methods for non-domestic seating
- BS ISO 25131:2025 Hardware for furniture - Strength and durability of hinges and their components - Stays and hinges pivoting on a horizontal axis
- BS ISO 4211-1:2025 Furniture - Tests for surface finishes - Assessment of resistance to cold liquids
- BS ISO 4211-6:2025 Furniture - Tests for surface finishes - Part 6 Assessment of resistance to scratching (1)
- IEC 60335-2-116 Edition 2.0 2025-12 Household and similar electrical appliances - Safety - Part 2-116: Particular requirements for furniture with electrically motorised parts
- PD CEN/TS 13387-1:2025 Childcare articles - General safety guidelines - Part 1: Safety philosophy and safety assessment
- PD CEN/TS 13387-2:2025 Childcare articles - General safety guidelines - Part 2: Chemical hazards
- PD CEN/TS 13387-3:2025 Childcare articles - General safety guidelines - Part 3: Mechanical hazards
- PD CEN/TS 13387-4:2025 Childcare articles - General safety guidelines - Part 4: Thermal hazards
- PD CEN/TS 13387-5:2025 Childcare articles - General safety guidelines - Part 5: Product information
- PD ISO/TS 24929-2:2025 Childcare articles - General safety - Part 2: Mechanical hazards
- BS EN 17826:2025 Childcare articles - Chemical hazards - Requirements



Industry Engagement

In 2025, the Association strengthened its role as a trusted voice and thought leader within the furniture industry. Through active participation in high-profile forums, exhibitions, and events, we showcased our commitment to innovation, sustainability, and collaboration ensuring our members' interests were represented at every level.

Highlights from the Year

January

- **Furniture Show** – FIRA's Environmental Expert, John Hubbard, joined a panel discussion on the future of sustainable furniture design and production.

March

- **Furniture Makers Forum Materials Choices for More Sustainable Products** - John Hubbard spoke at this well-attended event, sponsored by the Furniture Industry Sustainability Programme (FISP)
- **Furniture Components Expo 2025** – The Association exhibited at the show, sharing a stand with FISP to promote sustainability initiatives

April

- **Standards Show – Are You Sitting Comfortably?** – Podcast featuring Levent Caglar, FIRA's Standards and Regulatory Expert and Senior Ergonomist, discussing the recent revision of BS EN ISO 9241-5 and its impact on ergonomic design and safety.
- **Sustainably by Design – How to Leverage Certifications** – Podcast with John Hubbard exploring environmental certifications and their benefits for manufacturers.

June

- **FIRA Open Day** – Members and non-members joined an engaging event covering digital product passports, furniture circularity, and the launch of the new guide Understanding Furniture Test Reports, followed by tours of FIRA International's testing facilities

November

- **Reception & British Furniture Confederation Lunch** – The industry's flagship event for government engagement. This year, the combined format created an even stronger platform for collaboration and dialogue.





Furniture Industry Research Association
Unit 3, Cockerell Close
Stevenage
Hertfordshire
SG1 2NB

T: +44 (0)1438 777 700
E: info@fira.co.uk
W: www.fira.co.uk

