Role Profile

Role Title: Principal Designer & Design Compliance Manager

Business Area: Development & Asset Management
Department/Team: Asset Management
Reports to: Senior Design & Technical Manager
Direct Reports and span of control: No direct reports.
Dimensions (budget holder, level of contract/systems etc responsibility): Client-side lead for design risk, Principal Designer duties and design compliance across major asset investment, remediation, fire safety and other complex projects. Responsible for coordinating and assuring design-stage health and safety, Building Regulations compliance and dutyholder requirements, with external specialist support commissioned where required.
Created/Reviewed date: October 2026

Role Purpose

The Principal Designer & Design Compliance Manager provides dedicated leadership and assurance for design risk, statutory design compliance and Principal Designer responsibilities across major asset investment, remediation, fire safety and other complex projects. The role helps ensure that health and safety, Building Regulations and wider compliance requirements are embedded throughout design development rather than addressed retrospectively.

Working under the direction of the Senior Design & Technical Manager, the post holder will undertake Principal Designer duties where appropriately appointed and demonstrably competent and will coordinate external Principal Designer or specialist compliance support where project complexity, capacity, independence or competence requirements make this necessary.

The role will work closely with architects, the Building Safety & Fire Design Manager, Project Delivery colleagues, commissioning teams, external designers, contractors and other dutyholders to establish clear compliance arrangements, coordinate design risk management and maintain the evidence and audit trail required to demonstrate that design obligations have been properly discharged.

Key Accountabilities

- Act as the Design & Technical Team's lead for design risk management, Principal Designer responsibilities and design compliance across major asset-led projects.
- Undertake the Principal Designer role under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 where formally appointed and where the postholder has the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and organisational capability.
- Undertake or support the Principal Designer function under the Building Regulations dutyholder regime where formally appointed and where appropriate competence and organisational capability can be demonstrated.
- Where internal appointment is not appropriate, define the scope and coordinate the procurement and management of competent external Principal Designer and specialist design compliance services.

- Establish clear project-specific arrangements for design risk, statutory compliance, dutyholder responsibilities, design reviews, information exchange and assurance from project inception.
- Plan, manage, monitor and coordinate health and safety during the pre-construction phase, ensuring designers fulfil their duties and foreseeable risks are eliminated, reduced or controlled so far as reasonably practicable.
- Provide advice and constructive challenge to designers and project teams on compliance with relevant Building Regulations, CDM requirements, organisational standards and other applicable design obligations.
- Work with the Senior Design & Technical Manager to ensure compliance requirements are incorporated into project briefs, design programmes, information requirements, design gateways and procurement documentation.
- Coordinate with the Building Safety & Fire Design Manager to ensure building safety and fire requirements are appropriately integrated into wider design compliance and dutyholder arrangements.
- Review design information and evidence to identify compliance gaps, unresolved design risks, incomplete coordination or matters requiring specialist advice, escalating material issues where necessary.
- Support and contribute to multidisciplinary design reviews, technical assurance reviews, buildability reviews and project gateways, providing a clear compliance perspective before projects progress.
- Ensure designers and other relevant dutyholders demonstrate appropriate competence for the work they are undertaking and that competence considerations are recorded and escalated where concerns arise.
- Ensure design risk registers, compliance trackers, decisions, approvals and other relevant records are maintained to provide a clear and auditable evidence trail.
- Support Higher-Risk Building and other regulated projects by coordinating relevant design compliance evidence and contributing to information required for statutory submissions and Gateway processes where applicable.
- Support the development and maintenance of the golden thread of information by ensuring relevant design compliance records are accurate, accessible and appropriately controlled.
- Review proposed design changes, substitutions and departures during construction where they may affect compliance, design risk or the basis on which previous assurance or approvals were obtained.
- Work with Project Delivery teams to ensure significant compliance issues and design risks are understood before procurement and construction and that agreed controls are carried through into delivery.
- Support the collation and review of completion and handover information, ensuring relevant design compliance records and Principal Designer information are complete and transferred appropriately.
- Develop and maintain consistent design compliance procedures, templates, checklists, assurance tools and guidance for use across the major projects programme.
- Provide advice, coaching and awareness to internal project and design colleagues on Principal Designer duties, design risk management, Building Regulations dutyholder requirements and good compliance practice.

- Capture lessons learned from projects, audits, regulatory feedback and assurance reviews and use these to improve future project briefs, design processes and governance.
- Maintain professional competence and current knowledge of relevant legislation, regulations, Approved Documents, standards, guidance and emerging practice relating to design risk and compliance.

Experience and Qualifications

- Relevant degree or equivalent qualification in construction, architecture, architectural technology, building surveying, engineering, health and safety or another appropriate built-environment discipline and/or the ability to demonstrate equivalent relevant experience.
- Relevant professional membership, registration or recognised qualification appropriate to Principal Designer, design risk or Building Regulations compliance responsibilities is desirable.
- Demonstrable experience of design risk management and design compliance within construction, refurbishment, remediation, housing or major asset investment projects.
- Strong working knowledge of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and the duties of clients, designers and Principal Designers.
- Good working knowledge of the Building Safety Act 2022, Building Regulations and the Building Regulations dutyholder and competence regime, including the role and responsibilities of the Principal Designer.
- Understanding of Higher-Risk Building requirements, Gateway processes and the importance of maintaining accurate and auditable design and compliance information.
- Experience of planning, managing, monitoring and coordinating multidisciplinary design activity from a health and safety and compliance perspective.
- Experience of reviewing design information, identifying compliance gaps and design risks, and providing proportionate technical challenge to designers, consultants and project teams.
- Experience of establishing and maintaining design risk registers, compliance trackers, assurance records and other project evidence.
- Ability to understand the boundaries of personal and organisational competence and identify when specialist, independent or externally appointed Principal Designer support is required.
- Understanding of the design and construction lifecycle, including briefing, design development, procurement, construction change and handover.
- Experience of refurbishment, remediation, occupied residential buildings and/or social housing is desirable.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to explain regulatory and compliance requirements clearly to technical and non-technical stakeholders.
- Ability to manage competing priorities across multiple concurrent projects while maintaining robust records, quality and attention to detail.
- Collaborative approach with the professional confidence to challenge constructively, escalate risk and work effectively with clients, designers, contractors, consultants, building control and other stakeholders.

General

- Promote and maintain an active approach to health and safety, in respect of yourself, colleagues and customers.
- Ensure that the Aster Group Equality & Diversity Policy is fully implemented at all times.

- Comply with the requirements of the Aster Group Data Protection, Privacy & Confidentiality Policy, the IT Security & Usage Policy and supporting Data Protection Framework insofar as they relate to the duties of the role.
- This role profile is intended as a guide and is not an exhaustive list of the duties and responsibilities of this role. Such duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the role or the level of responsibility entailed.
- Embrace the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies, using approved tools to improve efficiency, innovation and service outcomes in line with Aster's policies and guidance.