Golden Thread Definition

Summary

The golden thread is the both information that allows you to understand a building and the steps needed to keep both the building and people safe, now and in the future.

Full Definition

1. The golden thread will hold the information that those responsible for the building require to identify, understand, manage and mitigate building safety risks in order to prevent or reduce the severity of the consequences of fire spread or structural collapse throughout the lifecycle of the building. The information stored in the golden thread will be reviewed and managed so that the information retained at all times achieves this purpose.

2. The golden thread covers both the information and documents and the information management processes (or steps) used to support building safety. The government has defined the information as including all the information necessary to understand and manage risks to prevent or reduce the severity of the consequences of fire spread or structural collapse in a building.

3. The golden thread information should be stored as structured digital information. It will be stored, managed, maintained and retained in line with the golden thread principles (see annex below). The Government will specify digital standards which will provide guidance on how the principles can be met.

4. The golden thread information management approach will apply through design, construction, occupation, refurbishment and ongoing management of buildings. It supports the wider changes in the regime to promote a culture of building safety.

5. Building safety should be taken to include the fire and structural safety of a building and the safety of all the people in or in the vicinity of a building (including emergency responders).

Ministry of Housing,
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Annex: Draft golden thread principles

1. **Accurate and Trusted:** the dutyholder/Accountable Person/Building Safety Managers (BSM) and other relevant persons (e.g. contractors) must be able to use the golden thread to maintain and manage building safety. The Regulator should also be able to use this information as part of their work to assess the safety of the building and the operator's safety case report, including supportive evidence, and to hold people to account. The golden thread will be a source of evidence to show how building safety risks are understood and how they are being managed on an ongoing basis. The golden thread must be accurate and trusted – it will not be used unless people trust that the information in the golden thread is accurate and up to date . The information produced will therefore have to be accurate, structured and verified, requiring a clear change control process that sets out how and when information is updated and who should update and check the information.

2. **Residents feeling secure in their homes**: residents will be provided information from the golden thread – so that they have accurate and trusted information about their home. This will also support residents in holding Accountable Persons and Building Safety Managers to account for building safety. A properly maintained golden thread should support accountable persons in providing residents the assurance that their building is being managed safely.

3. **Culture change:** the golden thread will support culture change within the industry as it will require increased competence and capability, different working practices, updated processes and a focus on information management and control. The golden thread should be considered an enabler for better and more collaborative working.

4. **Single point of truth:** the golden thread will bring all information together in a single place (potentially a Common Data Environment) meaning there is always a 'single point of truth'. It will record changes (i.e. updates to information/plans), including the reason for change, evaluation of change, date of change, and the decision-making process. This will reduce the duplication of information (email updates and multiple documents) and help drive improved accountability, responsibility and a new working culture.

5. **Secure**: the golden thread must be secure, with sufficient protocols in place to protect personal information and control access to maintain the security of the building or residents. It should also comply with current GDPR legislation where required.

6. **Accountable:** the golden thread will record changes (i.e. updates to information), when these changes were made and by who. This will help drive improved accountability. The new regime is setting out clear duties for the duty holders and the Accountable Person for maintaining the golden thread information to meet the required standards. Therefore, there is accountability at every level – from the Client/Accountable Person to those designing, building or maintaining a building. This will mean that changes can more easily be tracked, and this will support better building safety.

7. **Understandable/ Simple to access (accessible)/Consistent:** the golden thread needs to support the user in their task of managing building safety. The information in the golden thread must be clear, understandable and focused on the needs of the user. It should be presented in a way that can be understood and used by users. This also should consider that users have different needs. The information should be accessible so that people can easily find the right information at the right time. This means that the information needs to be stored in a structured way (i.e. like a library) so people can easily find, update and extract the right information. The Government will set out the digital standards which will apply to the golden thread. Storing information to digital standards would mean the information is stored in a structured way. To support this dutyholders/Accountable person should where possible make sure the golden thread uses standard methods, processes and consistent terminology so that those working with multiple buildings can more easily access, understand and use the information consistently and effectively.

8. **Longevity/ Durability of information**: the golden thread information needs to be formatted in a way that can be easily handed over and maintained over the entire life time of a building. In practical terms this is likely to mean that it needs to align with the rules around open source data – so that information can be handed over in the future and still be accessed. Information should be able to be shared and accessed by contractors who use different software and if the building is sold the golden thread information must be accessible to the new owner. This does not mean everything about a building and its history needs to be kept, the golden thread must be reviewed to ensure that the information within it is still relevant and useful.

9. **Relevant / Proportionate:** preserving the golden thread does not mean everything about a building and its history needs to be kept and updated from inception to disposal. The objective of the golden thread is building safety and therefore if information is no longer relevant to building safety it does not need to be kept. The golden thread, the changes to it and processes related to it must be reviewed periodically to ensure that the information comprising it remains relevant and useful.