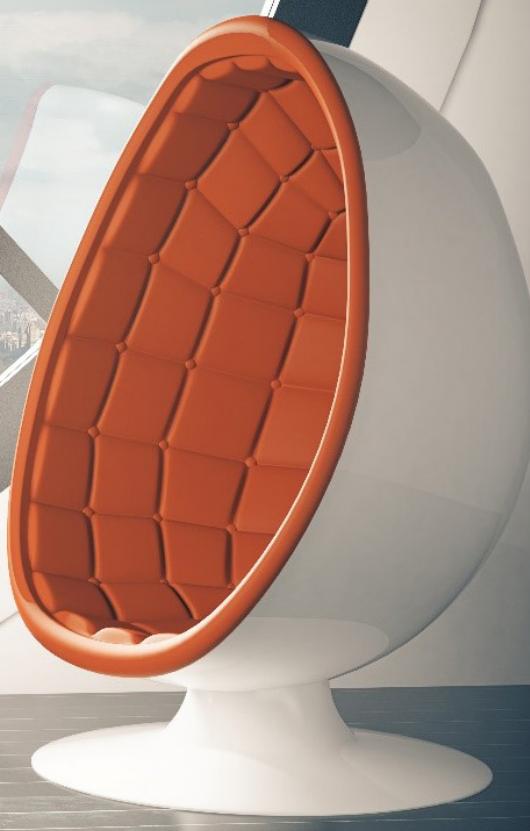


Review of 2021

Supporting members across
the furniture supply chain



Growth and continuing support

2021 has been my first full year as Chair of the Furniture Industry Research Association. During the year we welcomed 28 new members. The experts at our service provider, FIRA International, delivered projects that continued to reflect conditions facing the furniture market, both in terms of regulations and the shifts we were still experiencing in terms of Covid.

The pandemic had a major impact on our industry in 2021 and this impact looks likely to reach far into 2022. Sadly, my plans to meet many members in person were affected and I carry these plans forward into the new year with hope and optimism. Although technology can never replace face-to-face contact, it did allow me to gain some understanding of what you needed from us, and how we could best support our members.



You can see a summary of the Research Association's 2021 activity on the following page. Topics were varied from sustainability through to the issues of contract chairs in the home. We also collated feedback from members on various calls for evidence and standard proposals, representing a strong united voice. 2021 also saw very much the end of an era when we relocated from our former Maxwell Road site, where the Research Association has had a presence since 1964. We remain located with FIRA International in their new custom-built site which is almost 'round the corner' from Maxwell Road. Remaining so local ensured all the FIRA experts experienced no disruption in relocating, and enabled members to receive a continued high level of service. I was fortunate to be one of the first to see our new home and was very impressed. The excellent facilities for the team together with the modern, state of the art, testing environment will enable better service for members who will have the opportunity to visit throughout 2022. I would encourage you to take the time to visit us and meet our team.

Usually, I would take this opportunity to look to 2022 and set out our objectives in terms of what you can expect to see from the Research Association. These remain uncertain times so it's key that we remain flexible in how we serve you and the projects that are undertaken and delivered. We'll be keeping our eyes and ears open across the furniture industry and choosing relevant projects we can deliver quickly and concisely to ensure you have what you need, when you need it.

We'll be keeping our very strong presence on the committee charged with looking at possible changes to the UK domestic flammability regulations, and ensuring members have the opportunity and voice to feed into proposals as and when applicable. We'll also be supporting members through the deployment of the delayed UKCA mark, ensuring we're informing you about compliance as we move toward January 2023. I would also very much like to see a return to our annual reception, as we've not all been together since 2019.

Please remember that the Furniture Industry Research Association is your association, so do contact me with your feedback, especially in terms of what knowledge, research and information you need to support your business and your role. You can get in contact via membership@fira.co.uk.

In closing I would like to thank you for your continued support, and the Council for their support in guiding the Research Association. We would like to thank Alan Bennet who stepped down from the Council in 2021 having served two terms totalling 15 years, we are very grateful for his commitment to furthering the aims of the Association. A warm welcome goes to Joanna Knight who joined the Council in March 2021. The Council are all volunteers, meeting quarterly to discuss activities, ensure we're on track in terms of deliverables, review budgets and assess new project proposals. If you would like to know more about our work or are interested in joining the Council and would like more information, please email membership@fira.co.uk.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BA".

Brian Ahern
Chair, Furniture Industry Research Association

Our work in 2021

New knowledge

A broad range of knowledge was made available to members covering many facets which affect the furniture industry, from sustainability to home working, and from flammability to modern slavery

- Horizon Scanning - New Hardline and Softline Materials. Examining what could be on the horizon for the furniture sector in terms of alternative materials
- Guide to Alternative Packaging and Sustainability. Exploring current and alternative packaging materials
- Flammability Guidance for Contract Seating: Fire Safety of Office Work Chairs in Domestic Environments. Developed in collaboration with Trading Standards
- REACH matrixes for upholstery, mattresses and children's furniture. Detailing what regulations apply to certain products
- Business Support Templates: Carbon Footprint Calculator (Scope 1&2); Environmental Policy Template; GB Biocidal Products Regulation (GB BPR) Labelling for Treated Articles Template; Modern Slavery Policy Template; Product Safety Incident Plan - Template based on PAS 7100 requirements; REACH, POPs and BIOCIDES Chemical Compliance Templates; UKCA Label Template for Marking of Products and Declaration of Conformity (GB Type post Brexit) Template. All to support members with compliance across various regulations
- Home Office Buyers Guide. Helping individuals and companies select fit-for-purpose furniture and accessories

Updated knowledge

Existing knowledge available to members was updated throughout 2021 to reflect continuing changes in guidance and Regulations, most notably via Brexit. Key updated resources to note are:

- Employers' guide to ergonomic home working. Updated to reflect changes from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Electrically actuated furniture for the domestic GB market - a guide to the Regulations; Electrically powered office furniture for the GB market - a guide to the Regulations; and Guide to Regulations for electrical accessories incorporated into furniture. All now reflect amendments related to Brexit and associated legislation changes including the UKCA mark
- UKCA Marking Guide. Updated following UK Government's postponement of the UKCA mark

Accessing member-only knowledge

All knowledge from the Research Association is available in the 'Knowledge Hub' via www.fira.co.uk/knowledge-hub. The Hub contains all the latest resources and is home to reports, publications and recorded training sessions produced by the Research Association for members. Within the Knowledge Hub is a comprehensive standards database which provides an overview of all current furniture related standards. In addition, via the FIRA website, members are kept up-to-date on changes to standards, those in development and ones under discussion.

ACCESS KNOWLEDGE NOW

To access all knowledge members can request a website login via www.fira.co.uk/login,
or email the team at marketing@fira.co.uk



Furniture Industry Research Association

Unit 3, Cockerell Close, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 2NB
+44 (0)1438 777 700, info@fira.co.uk, www.fira.co.uk, @FIRAnews