

Our Ref: LJD/TTA

27 July 2010

BBC Complaints
PO Box 1922
Darlington
DL3 0UR

Dear Sirs,

DIYSOS – Bedroom Bedlam, Broadcast on 23 July 2010

The Tile Association is the trade association that represents manufacturers, suppliers and contractors in the wall and floor tile industry. The Association has just over 600 members whose turnover represents just under £1billion per annum.

I noted that on the programme that was broadcast last Friday, the following comments were made:

“Julia: Julian is doing the tiling this week.

Nick Knowles: Tiling is a piece of cake. I can tile, any old fool can tile. Tiling is a like giving a child building bricks and say "build me a tower." Piece of cake. You just put them on the wall.”

As the voice of the wall and floor tiling industry we take great exception to the statements made on the programme. As the trade body it is our role to improve standards across the industry particularly as it applies to training and qualifications.

In saying that “Julian will be doing the tiling this week” the producers also added fuel to the fire by implying that any tradesman can tile. This is simply not the case and is evidenced by the number of complaints we deal with where non-competent tradesmen have carried out tiling work in consumer's homes.

Tiling is a craft or trade in its own right with NVQ Qualifications Levels 2 and 3 in wall and floor tiling, which is offered by over 20 colleges in the UK. Very soon, there will be a qualification for Heritage Tiling Work which will be a NVQ Level 3. A three year apprenticeship is available to young people wishing to join our industry.

In terms of technical standards, British Standard BS5385 is the code of practice for wall and floor tiling. This Standard, along with technical specifications published by The Tile Association provides all the information and guidance that is needed to undertake successful tiling projects. For example, when tiling a shower area it is important to make sure that the background is already waterproof, I did not notice any background preparation taking place, which would have included waterproofing the background in the ensuite shower area.

I note that Nick Knowles commented about the size of the tiles being used on the project saying in his opinion that 2ft by 1ft tiles were much better. Had he been technically competent he would have known that fixing those tiles to a background that is not dimensionally accurate and stable using incorrect fixing methods is a failure waiting to happen.

I also noted that Nick Knowles was using a tile cutter on the programme, yet there was no evidence of the use of any PPE (personal protective equipment) being used.

The Tile Association is committed to ensuring that tile consumers do not suffer from the "rogue trader" image that is prevalent in the UK building industry. We have a warranty scheme, which offers tile consumers a 6 year warranty on tiling works carried out in their home.

Any tile fixer that applies to join our association is thoroughly vetted to ensure that he or she is technically competent.

I would also add that it is members of our Association that are providing the tiles and tiling services to the Olympic site in London, a sign that competency is an essential requirement in this major building project.

I am extremely disappointed at the comments made on the programme and hope that by making this complaint that the producers will recognise the importance that all the trades in the building process are carried out by competent specialist contractors who are aware of all the technical requirements for their trade.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Day
Executive Officer