

# Travis Perkins boss slams government housing policy as he calls for national retrofit strategy

The boss of building materials supplier [Travis Perkins](#) has slammed government housing policy as he calls for a national strategy to retrofit homes across Britain with better [insulation](#).

Travis Perkins CEO Nick Roberts told the Standard: “We’ve seen 20 housing ministers since 1997 – they make a few tweaks at the edges and then another person comes in.

“We need the planning process sped up.”

Housebuilding in the UK was failing to keep up with demand, Roberts said, while the government has so far failed to deliver on its pledge of building more [hospitals](#).

“The biggest thing we need is a national strategy on retrofit,” he said.

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“Housing stock in the UK is on average 75-80 years old. With the way energy costs have gone and with the climate crisis, the best way to tackle that is to improve the efficiency in homes.”

Travis Perkins shares dropped 7.5% in early trading this morning after the company posted a £10 million knock to its operating profit, as the company wrestled with higher prices in energy-intensive building materials. It's performance was aided by the resilience of its core builders' merchant division.

The group's sales for the first half of 2022 climbed 10% to £2.5 billion. Revenue at the company's high street retailer, Toolstation, dropped 4.6% following a drop-off in DIY activity post-pandemic.

“We're not immune from the impact of the economic environment,” Roberts said.

“Residential repairs, maintenance and improvement is closest to the consumer and therefore most at risk.”

The softening DIY backdrop at Toolstation, with 550 stores in the UK and Europe, did little for sentiment across the sector as investors worry households will be deterred from home improvement projects by high energy bills.

Having fallen recently on the back of a cautious update from Wickes, shares in B&Q owner Kingfisher dropped 2% or 6.2p to 252.8p and kitchens supplier Howden Joinery by 19.6p to 660.2p in the FTSE 100 index.