



Because
Experience
Counts

Health, safety and environmental ISO audits

A practical guide

britsafe.org



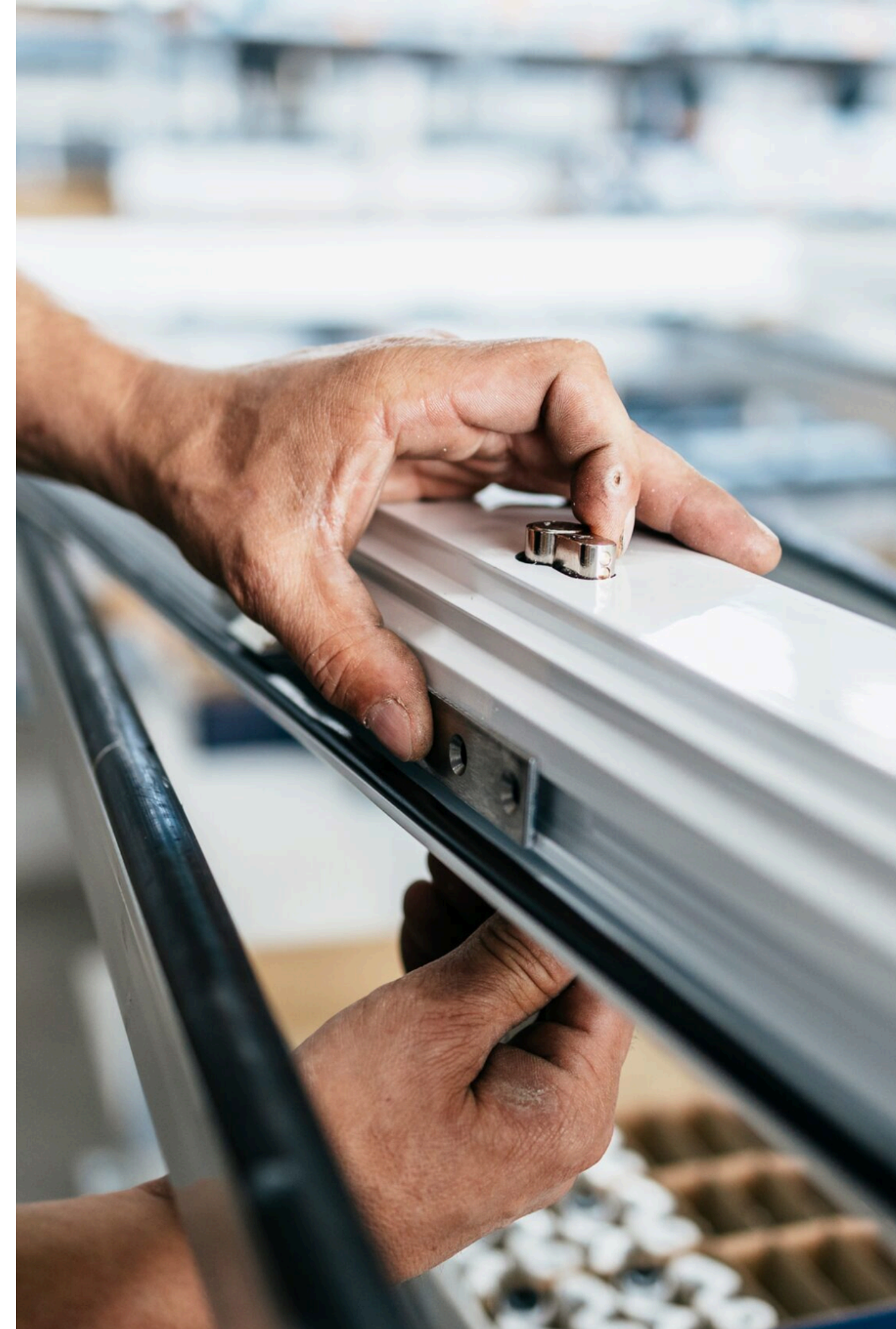
Introduction

Achieving and maintaining ISO certifications – such as ISO 45001 (Health & Safety), ISO 14001 (Environmental), or ISO 9001 (Quality) requires more than simply checking boxes.

These audits are an opportunity to test the strength of your systems, uncover risks, and drive continuous improvement.

At British Safety Council, we've conducted countless independent audits across industries, helping organisations meet international standards while enhancing their operational resilience, employee safety, and environmental responsibility.

This guide provides practical insights into preparing for, conducting, and benefiting from Health, Safety & Environmental (HSE) ISO audits.





Why ISO audits matter

ISO audits aren't just about compliance - they are about building trust, efficiency, and sustainability. The benefits of robust ISO-aligned systems include:

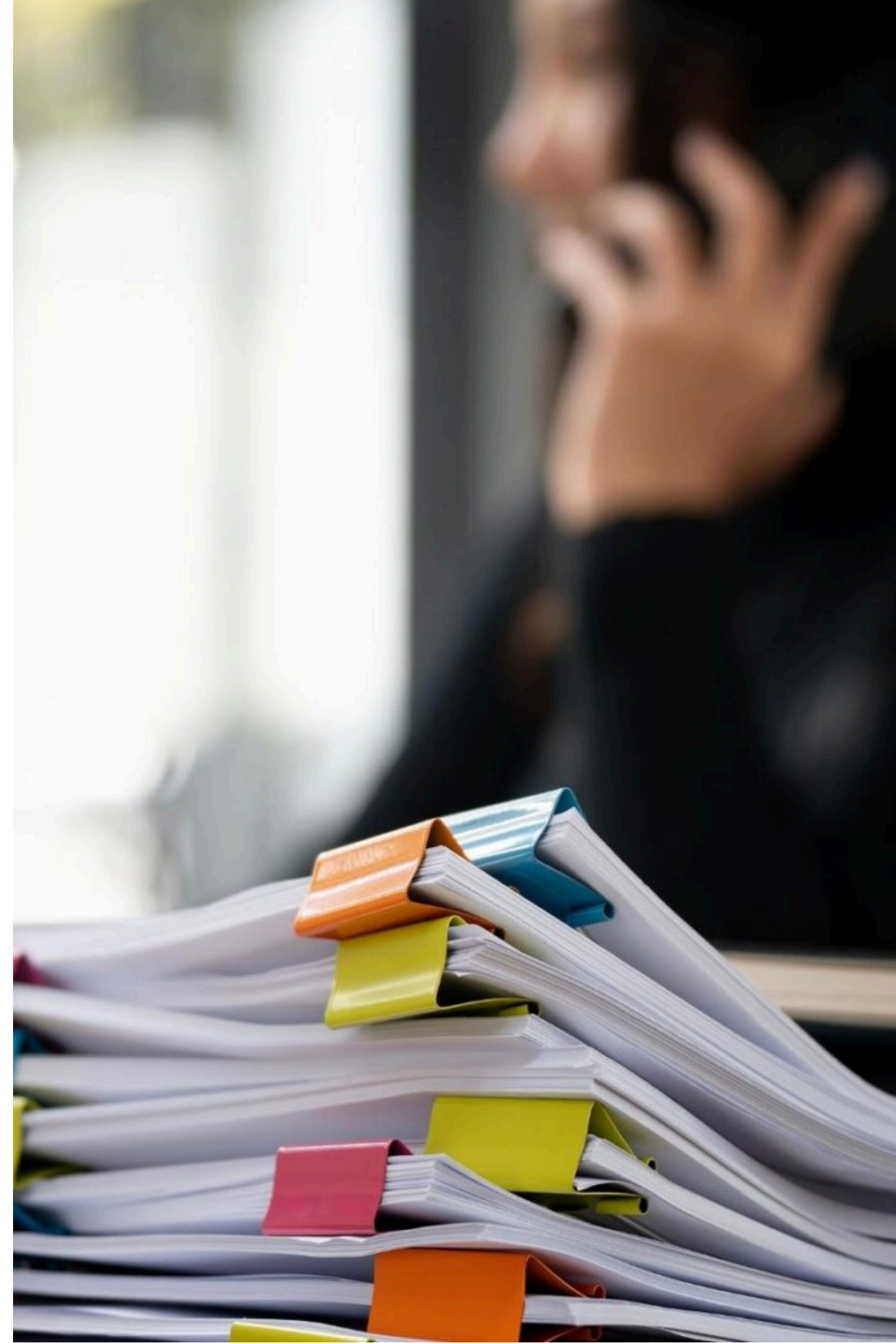
- Legal alignment with health, safety, and environmental regulations
- Risk reduction through proactive identification of hazards and operational gaps
- Reputation building, as ISO certifications are internationally recognised indicators of quality and responsibility
- Continuous improvement, with a structured approach to evaluating and strengthening systems.

The common challenges

Many organisations face challenges with ISO audits due to:

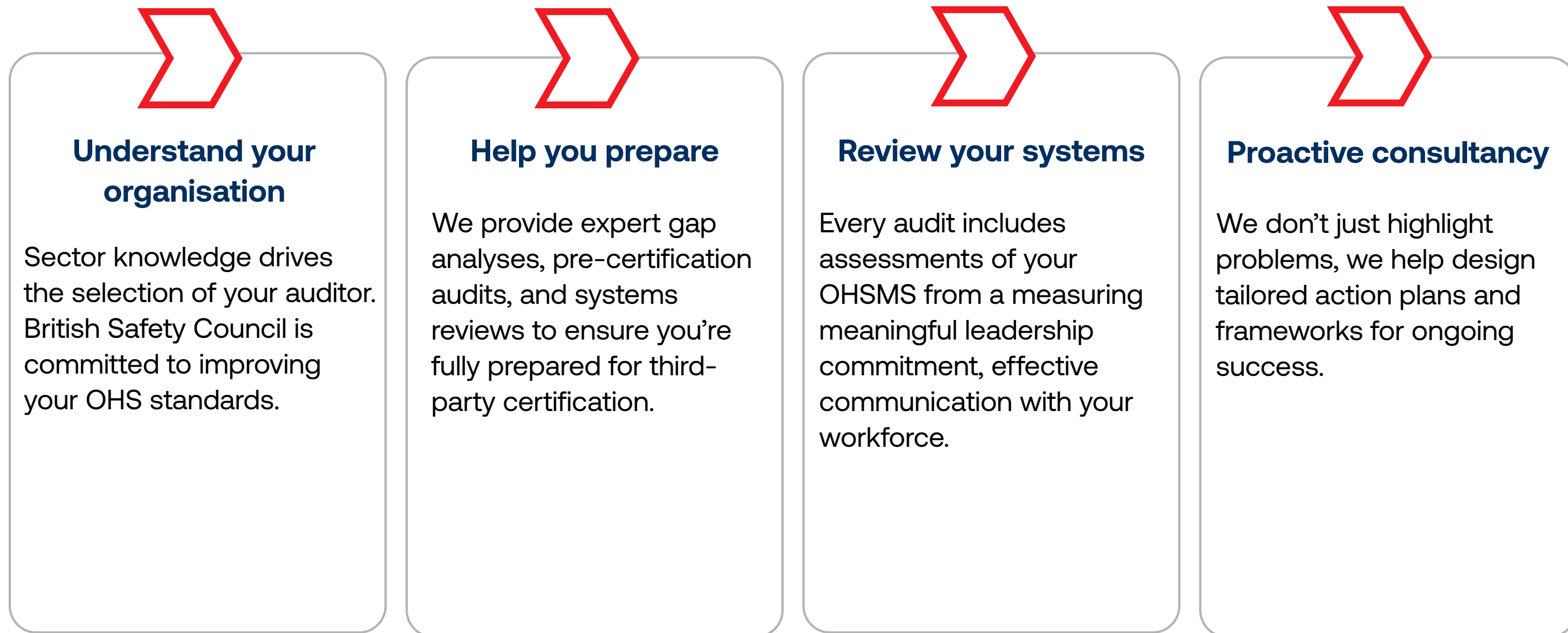
- Poor documentation and record-keeping
- Gaps in risk assessments or change management
- Inconsistent leadership commitment to health, safety, and environmental goals
- Limited staff training or engagement with audit processes
- Over-reliance on compliance “on paper” rather than in practice.

These issues can result in non-conformities, delayed certifications or missed business opportunities.



Our audit approach

British Safety Council has a stated commitment to support organisations in fulfilling their legal and moral obligations. Our approach to ISO certification is built on this.



Preparing for an ISO audit: 5 practical steps

1

Understand the standards

Review the requirements of ISO 45001, 14001, or 9001 in the context of your industry and operations.

2

Close documentation gaps

Ensure risk assessments, incident reports, and policy documents are up to date and readily accessible.

3

Engage your teams

Train and brief employees so they understand their roles in demonstrating compliance during audits.

4

Conduct an internal review

Use internal audits to identify potential non-conformities before the official review.

5

Partner with experts

External consultancy, like that offered by British Safety Council, can provide an unbiased perspective and ensure nothing is overlooked.

Use case example: preparing for ISO 45001 certification

Sector:	Manufacturing
Aim:	Ensuring readiness for ISO 45001 certification
Scenario:	<p>As an organisation that recognises that to assure its clients that it works to the highest possible standards in Health and Safety we chose to undertake a gap audit in preparation for ISO 45001 certification, we would recognise that while you may have policies in place, there could be gaps in how they would be applied day to day. In particular, because many of our employees work alone or on our clients sites, we were concerned about inconsistent incident reporting lines and unclear communication across the workforce. Requesting a gap assessment undertaken by an independent organisation helped ensure that we maintained full transparency and were able to receive valuable recommendations as to how to overcome issues.</p>





Our customers

At British Safety Council, we're proud to have supported some of the world's most respected brands and organisations on their journey to safer, healthier, and more sustainable workplaces.

From global corporations to national institutions, our partnerships reflect a shared commitment to excellence and continuous improvement in health, safety, and wellbeing standards across industries worldwide.

Partner with us today to strengthen your organisation's commitment to health, safety, and wellbeing - and join a global community shaping a safer future for everyone.



Ready to elevate your standards?

Many organisations face challenges with ISO audits due to:

- Poor documentation and record-keeping
- Gaps in risk assessments or change management
- Inconsistent leadership commitment to health, safety, and environmental goals
- Limited staff training or engagement with audit processes.
- Over-reliance on compliance “on paper” rather than in practice.

These issues can result in non-conformities, delayed certifications, or missed opportunities for performance improvement.





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About British Safety Council

For over 60 years, we've been supporting organisations to achieve the highest standards in health, safety and wellbeing.

As a trusted advisor, our mission is simple: to keep people as safe and healthy as possible, wherever they work, and whatever they do.

Contact us: www.britsafe.org/about-us/contact-us
[britsafe.org](https://www.britsafe.org)