

Quick Guide to Use Classes and Permitted Changes of Use

The change in the use of land or buildings is ‘development’ and therefore requires planning permission in most circumstances.

What amounts to a material change in the use of the land depends on the facts and circumstances of each case.

Some individual uses which are similar are grouped into separate classes by the use classes order 1997. Where a building or land is used for a purpose which is included in a particular class, the use of that building or land for any other purpose in the same class, shall not be taken to involve development and therefore it would not require planning permission. In certain circumstances, this is subject to conditions.

Changes are also permitted by the General Permitted Development Order 1992, which provides that certain changes of use, though involving development, are nonetheless permitted and therefore no planning permission is required.

Where a proposed activity falls into two classes, the proposal is considered as ‘mixed-use’ and will likely require planning permission.

Class 1 and 2 no longer exist and were replaced by Class 1A in March 2023.

This document is for guidance purposes only, for any clarification the planning authority should be contacted, or reference made to the following legislation and all subsequent amendments:

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997

Use Class	Use Description	Changes Permitted
<p>Class 1A. Shops and financial, professional and other services</p>	<p>Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) for the retail sale of goods other than hot food, (b) as a post office, (c) for the sale of tickets, (d) as a travel agency, (e) for the sale of cold food for consumption off the premises, (f) for hairdressing, (g) for the direction of funerals, (h) for the display of goods for sale, (i) for the hiring out of domestic or personal goods or articles, (j) as a laundrette or dry cleaners, (k) for the reception of goods to be washed, cleaned or repaired, where the sale, display or service is principally to visiting members of the public. <p>Use for the provision of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) financial services, (b) professional services, (c) any other services, <p>which it is appropriate to provide in a shopping area and where the sale, display or service is principally to visiting members of the public.</p> <p><i>Other examples: supermarket; chemist; auction room; showroom, box office, offices of lawyers, accountants and other professionals (only where there are visiting members of the public); estate agent; health centre; doctors', dentists' or vets' surgery, bank, building society, foreign currency exchange; beautician; nail salon; massage or other therapies</i></p>	<p>Change to Class 3 permitted, unless it would result in the change of use of a building unit situated below any part of a dwelling, or it would result in the change of use of a building or a building unit which is within 1 metre (without taking account of any communal access) of a dwelling.</p> <p>Change to Class 4 permitted, only if the building or building unit is 300sqm or less.</p> <p>Planning permission required for change of use to any other class.</p>

Class 3. Food and drink	<p>Use for the sale of food or drink for consumption on the premises.</p> <p><i>Examples: Cafés; snack bars; restaurants; coffee shops.</i></p>	<p>Change to Class 1A permitted.</p> <p>Change to Class 4 permitted, if the building or building unit is 300sqm or less.</p> <p>Otherwise, planning permission required for change of use to any other class.</p>
Class 4. Business	<p>Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) as an office, other than a use within paragraph 2 of class 1A (financial, professional and other services); (b) for research and development of products or processes; or (c) for any industrial process; <p>being a use which can be carried on in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.</p> <p><i>Examples: Corporate office, research laboratory, government office with no visiting members of the public; manufacturing of goods (not within class 5)</i></p>	<p>Change of use to Class 6, only if it relates to 235sqm or less of floor space of the building.</p> <p>Otherwise, planning permission required for change of use to any other class.</p>
Class 5. General Industrial	<p>Use for the carrying on of an industrial process other than one falling within class 4 (business).</p> <p><i>Examples: heavy industry; vehicle repair workshop; car wash.</i></p>	<p>Change of use permitted to Class 4.</p> <p>Change of use to Class 6, only if it relates to 235sqm or less of floor space of the building.</p> <p>Otherwise, planning permission required for change of use to any other class.</p>
Class 6. Storage and Distribution	<p>Use for storage or as a distribution centre.</p> <p><i>Examples: self-storage premises, storage warehouse, parcel distribution depot.</i></p>	<p>Change of use permitted to Class 4.</p> <p>Otherwise, planning permission required for change of use to any other class.</p>

Class 7. Hotels and Hostels	<p>Use as a hotel, boarding house, guest house, or hostel where no significant element of care is provided, other than premises where alcohol (within the meaning given by section 2 of the Licensing Scotland Act 2005) is sold, pursuant to a premises licence issued under that Act to persons other than residents or to persons other than persons consuming meals on the premises and other than a use within class 9 (houses).</p>	<p>Planning permission required for change of use to any other class.</p>
Class 8. Residential Institutions	<p>Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care other than a use within class 9 (houses); (b) as a hospital or nursing home; or (c) as a residential school, college or training centre. <p><i>Other examples: hospices, boarding schools, care home</i></p>	<p>Planning permission required for change of use to any other class.</p>
Class 8A. Secure residential institutions	<p>Use for the provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short-term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as military barracks.</p>	<p>Planning permission required for change of use to any other class.</p>
Class 9. Houses	<p>Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) as a house, other than a flat, whether or not as a sole or main residence, by- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a single person or by people living together as a family, or • not more than 5 residents living together including a household where care is provided for residents; (b) as a bed and breakfast establishment or guesthouse, not in either case being carried out in a flat where at any one time not more than 2 bedrooms are, or in the case of premises having less than 4 bedrooms 1 bedroom is, used for that purpose. 	<p>Planning permission required for change of use to any other class.</p>

<p>Class 10. Non-residential institutions</p>	<p>Use, not including residential use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) as a crèche, day nursery or day centre; (b) for the provision of education; (c) for the display of works of art (otherwise than for sale or hire); (d) as a museum; (e) as a public library or public reading room; (f) as a public hall or exhibition hall; or (g) for, or in connection with, public worship or religious instruction, or the social or recreational activities of a religious body; or (h) as a law court. 	<p>Planning permission required for change of use to any other class.</p>
<p>Class 11. Assembly and leisure</p>	<p>Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a cinema; (b) a concert hall; (c) a bingo hall or casino; (d) a dance hall or discotheque; or (e) a swimming bath, skating rink, gymnasium or area for other indoor or outdoor sports or recreation, not involving motorised vehicles or firearms. <p><i>Examples: amusement arcade; amusement park; bowling alley; break-out rooms; casino; childrens' soft play; pool or snooker hall.</i></p>	<p>Planning permission required for change of use to any other class.</p>

Summary of Sui Generis Uses and their Permitted Changes of Use

Any use not falling within a specified class is known as being Sui Generis, which is a Latin expression meaning of its own kind, or unique in its characteristics.

This list below comprises uses specifically mentioned in the 1997 order as being excluded from any use class. There will be other uses which are sui-generis so the list is non-exhaustive.

Use Description	Changes Permitted
Use as an amusement arcade or centre or funfair	None
Use as a theatre	None
Use for the sale of fuel for motor vehicles	None
Use for the sale or display for the sale of motor vehicles	Change of use to Class 1A permitted, only of a building whose total floor area does not exceed 235sqm. Otherwise, planning permission required for change of use to or from this use.
Use for a taxi business or for the hire of motor vehicles	None
Use as a scrap yard or yard for the breaking of motor vehicles	None

Use for the storage or distribution of minerals	None
Use as a public house	None
Use for any work registerable under the Alkali etc. Works Regulations Act 1906	None
Use as a waste disposal installation for incineration, chemical treatment (as defined in Annex IIA to Directive 75/442/EEC under heading D9), or landfill of waste to which Directive 91/689/EEC applies	None
Use as a residential flat	None
Use as a betting office	<p>Change to Class 1A permitted.</p> <p>Change to Class 3 permitted, unless it would result in the change of use of a building unit situated below any part of a dwelling, or it would result in the change of use of a building or a building unit which is within 1 metre (without taking account of any communal access) of a dwelling.</p> <p>Change to Class 4 permitted, if the building or building unit is 300sqm or less.</p> <p>Otherwise, planning permission required for change of use to or from this use.</p>

Use as a pay day loan shop	<p>Change to Class 1A permitted.</p> <p>Change to Class 3 permitted, unless it would result in the change of use of a building unit situated below any part of a dwelling, or it would result in the change of use of a building or a building unit which is within 1 metre (without taking account of any communal access) of a dwelling.</p> <p>Change to Class 4 permitted, if the building or building unit is 300sqm or less.</p> <p>Otherwise, planning permission required for change of use to or from this use.</p>
Use as a short term let	None