

# Building Standards Customer Charter



## Purpose of the Building Standards Customer Charter:

The Building Standards Customer Charter provides information about the standards of service that all verifiers should meet. This gives customers the reassurance that a consistent, high-quality service will be delivered no matter which verifier provides the service.

It is divided into two parts:

**Part 1 - National Charter**

**Part 2 - Local Charter**

## Part 1 - National Charter

### Our Aims

To grant building warrants and accept completion certificates:

- To secure the health, safety, welfare, and convenience of persons in and about buildings and others who may be affected by buildings or matters connected with buildings
- Furthering the conservation of fuel and power, and
- Furthering the achievement of sustainable development.

### Our vision/values

To provide a professional and informative service to all our customers.

### Our Commitments

Nationally all verifiers will:

- 1 Seek to minimise the time it takes for customers to obtain a building warrant or amendment to a building warrant.
- 2 Ensure continuous improvement around the robustness of verification assessments to ensure compliance.
- 3 Meet and seek to exceed customer expectations and actively promote the National Customer Survey.
- 4 Proactively engage with customer groups, through focus groups, newsletters, guidance on services etc.
- 5 Act on feedback received from customers (including from the National Customer Satisfaction Survey) to improve services and the customer experience.
- 6 Provide information on local formal complaints procedures, the LABSS Dispute Resolution Process, and the BSD Customer Performance Reporting Service, and refer customers as appropriate.
- 7 Provide accurate financial data that is evidence-based.
- 8 Engage and participate in partnership working at local and national level to identify and embed service improvements at a national level.
- 9 Adhere to a national annual performance report outlining our objectives, targets, and performance.
- 10 Adhere to our Building Standards Annual Report outlining our objectives and performance targets
- 11 Fully adhere to the commitments outlined in this Charter (including information on customer dissatisfaction in relation to building warrant processing timescales, processes, and technical interpretation.
- 12 Use a consistent format for continuous improvement plans.

## Our targets

National information on [the performance framework for verifiers](#) can be found at the Scottish Government website.

| KPO1 Targets  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.1           | 95% of first reports (for building warrants and amendments) issued within 20 days – all first reports (including BWs and amendments issued without a first report).                                                 |
| 1.2           | 90% of building warrants and amendments issued within 10 days from receipt of all satisfactory information – all building warrants and amendments (not including BWs and amendments issued without a first report). |
| KPO3 Measures |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 3.1           | Workforce: Supply v demand levels (%)                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 3.2           | Overall Performance: KPO Targets met (%)                                                                                                                                                                            |
| KPO4 Targets  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 4.1           | Minimum overall average satisfaction rating of 7.5 out of 10.                                                                                                                                                       |
| KPO5 Targets  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 5.1           | Building standards verification fee income to cover indicative verification service costs (staff costs plus 30%).                                                                                                   |
| 5.2           | Building standards verification fee income invested into verification services (%)                                                                                                                                  |
| KPO6 Targets  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 6.1           | Building Standards Annual Report published prominently online with version control (reviewed at least annually).                                                                                                    |
| 6.2           | Building Standards Annual Report to include performance data in line with KPOs and associated targets (annually covering previous year e.g. 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026)                                           |

## Part 2 - Local Charter

### Introduction

The purpose of the Building Standards system is to protect the public interest. The system sets out the essential standards that are required to be met when building work or conversion of a building takes place in order to meet building regulations. The Building Standards system checks that proposed building work or conversion of a building meets standards; inspections are limited to a minimal necessary to ensure compliance with legislation. The control of work on site is not down to the system but is a matter for contracts and arrangements in place between a builder and client. Verifiers, appointed by Scottish Ministers are responsible for the independent checking of applications for building warrants to construct or demolish buildings, to provide services, fittings, or equipment in buildings, or for conversions. Building Standards is the service within the City of Edinburgh Council which carries out the verification function.

### What this charter does

This charter explains what the Council's Building Standards service does and what its customers can expect from us:

We will consider and make decisions on building warrant applications, completion certificates and property inspections to secure the health, safety, welfare, and convenience of users and achieve sustainable development.

### Customer communication and engagement

We recognise the importance of effective communication with customers and engage with them in several ways including:

- issuing a quarterly newsletter
- regular engagement with stakeholders
- facilitating technical and procedural meetings via pre-warrant discussions for large/complex buildings
- provision of an updated and informative website
- publication of Building Standards Customer Charter online
- publication of Building Standards Annual Report online
- regular review of correspondence issued by the service to ensure an accurate and effective customer engagement.

### Customer Satisfaction

Your views on our service delivery mean a lot to us to help shape areas of improvement. In the last year we have listened to feedback from our customers through a series of outbound calls, focus groups and via the National Customer Satisfaction Survey. We strive each year to improve our scoring on the National Survey and will continually engage with our customers to listen and improve service delivery.

## Getting in touch

### If you contact us by telephone:

- We will help you with your query on the spot if we can
- We will aim to respond within one working day if you leave a message
- We will direct you to further information online

### If you email or write to us:

- We will respond to you within ten working days or tell you if we need longer
- We will ensure our response is free from jargon and easy to understand
- We will direct you to further information online
- We will translate information into large print, other languages or Braille if needed.

### If you visit us:

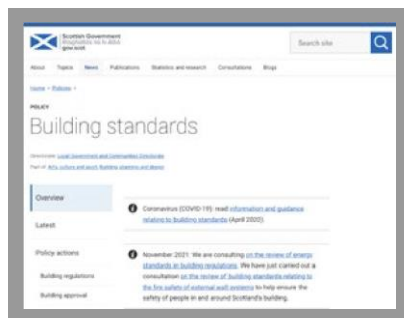
- We now operate a hybrid working model, with staff members working from home on certain days of the week. You can still meet with a member of our staff by booking an appointment directly with them. In most instances we would try to carry this out via a video call but face to face meetings can be arranged if required.
- One of our staff will give you information that meets your needs or direct you to where you can find it online, including online forms
- We will have accessible public offices

### What you need to know

What the Building Standards System does is set out by the Scottish Government in legislation, guidance, and advice. Further information is available on Scottish Government's [Building Standards webpages](#).

#### Building warrants

You should be aware that to carry out work which requires a Building Warrant, without first having obtained this type of approval, is an offence in terms of Section 8(2) of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003. Additionally, it can lead to legal complications if you want to sell your property.



#### Making a building warrant application

Before you carry out any work to your building, you should check our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) to see if you need a building warrant. Most works need a building warrant which you must obtain before starting the work.

You should apply for a building warrant on the [eBuilding Standards website](#). You can also download a paper version of the form from the website.

You can find further guidance on how to apply for a Building Warrant, along with our Building Warrant fees list showing how much your application will cost on our [website](#).

#### Building warrant applications - what you can expect from us

Within four working days, we will carry out an administrative check on your application and advise you of any problems after this check. Alternatively, we will let you know your application is valid and is being progressed.

#### Building Standards performance targets

- **95%** of first reports on building warrant applications, telling you if you need to make changes to your proposals to comply with current building regulations to be issued within 20 working days.
- **90%** of building warrants, if the final revised drawings are altered to the Council's satisfaction, to be issued within 10 working days.
- **90%** of requests for a site inspection in relation to a completion certificate to be responded to within ten working days.

## Making a decision on a building warrant application

We will grant a building warrant if we are satisfied that the building will be constructed, converted or demolished in accordance with the appropriate regulations.

### What you can expect from us

We will seek to minimise the overall average time taken to grant a building warrant measured from the date of a valid application to the date of granting the warrant.

## Works where there is no record of permission

We understand that sometimes work is carried out and there is no record of permission. This is called retrospective works. This can be particularly frustrating when you are trying to sell your house.

If you do not have a building warrant or a certificate of completion, there are various ways you can get this sorted.

### Retrospective works – what you can expect from us

We will direct you to our online [Building Standards Register](#) if you want to check whether work has permission.

We will ask you to submit a [Completion Certificate where no Building Warrant obtained](#) if the work was carried out and completed on or after 1 May 2005, together with plans and the relevant fee. Our target response time is twenty working days.

We will ask you to apply for a [Property Inspection](#) together with the relevant fee, if the work is of a minor non-structural nature and was carried out and completed before 1 May 2005 and you do not have a building warrant for the works.

We will ask you to apply for a [Confirmation of Completion](#) together with the relevant fee, if you have a Building Warrant but do not have a Completion Certificate and the works were carried out before 1 May 2005.

Our target response time for both services is ten working days.

## Information Requests

The Building Standards service holds a great deal of information. Some must be kept in perpetuity, but other information is only kept in accordance with a records retention schedule. Under the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 the Council is obliged to keep schedules of what records we keep and for how long we keep them. You can find further information on our [Records Management webpage](#).

Anyone has a right to request information from a public authority. Data relating to building warrants is available online on our [Public Access](#) system and you may find the information you want there. Paper records are also available to view and copy.

### Information requests – what you can expect from us

We will hold information in accordance with our records retention schedule. We will make information available online in accordance with the Council's publication scheme.

The [Building Standards Plan Store](#) can be contacted to view and copy records when authorised to do so.

## Complaints

We will consider all complaints made to us about service delivery. However, disagreement with a decision of the Council will not, in itself, be a ground for complaint and in many situations, there is a separate procedure for an applicant to appeal against such decisions. The quickest way to sort things out is to talk to the officer concerned. However, if this does not work our formal complaints procedure has two stages:

1. Frontline Resolution
2. Investigation

### Frontline Resolution -

We will respond to your complaint within five working days. We aim to resolve your concerns within this timescale. If we need more time, we'll let you know. If you are not satisfied with our response, you can ask us to review your complaint.

### Investigation -

We will appoint a senior Council officer to review your complaint. We will tell you who the Council officer is and respond within 20 working days. If your complaint is complex, we may be unable to resolve your concerns within this timescale. Instead, we'll contact you to agree a different date.

If you are still not satisfied, you can then contact the [Scottish Public Services Ombudsman \(SPSO\)](#).

If you wish to contact the Building Standards Service in relation to a complaint, compliment, or comment, please [email Building Standards VIP](#).

### Complaints – what you can expect from us

If you make a complaint:

- We will aim to resolve it on the spot
- We will respond to you within five working days if we can't resolve it straight away
- We will investigate your complaint if you are still not satisfied and give you a final response within 20 working days unless we need longer.

### **Data Protection**

When handling personal data, the Council must do so fairly and lawfully in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

#### **Data Protection – what you can expect from us**

We will comply with the Data Protection Act when we publish information.

We will redact any personal email addresses, phone numbers, signatures, and other personal information from our online records.

We will consider whether we can remove information from our website if you are not happy about its publication.

### **Seeking advice**

The Council is committed to giving advice on a range of building warrant proposals. If you are unable to go online to seek advice, you can call us daily between 9am and 1pm on 0131 529 3550 or [email General Enquiries](#) with your question.

#### **Seeking advice – what you can expect from us**

If you have a general enquiry about a building warrant matter, we will aim to respond within ten working days. As part of this process, we will advise you where you can find the information online.

Pre-warrant discussions will normally be restricted to larger high value projects or to more complex lower value projects. Requests for meetings will be handled by team managers and these will be decided based on the complexity and/or size of the proposals.

## Contact Us

Please note that we now operate a hybrid working model, with staff members working from home on certain days of the week. However, you can still contact us in the following ways -

### General Enquiries

If you have a general enquiry not relating to a current Building Warrant, please [email General Enquiries](#) with your question and we will aim to respond within 10 working days.

If you have an enquiry about a current Building Warrant, please email the relevant technical team and we will aim to respond within 10 working days.

### Major Applications team

We process applications for plan assessment and site inspection where the estimated value of works exceeds £250,000 for large or complex construction projects. The team also process all applications in relation to new build housing sites. [Email Building Standards major applications](#) with any queries.

### Plan Reporting team

We carry out the assessment of Building Warrant applications with an estimated value of works up to £250,000. [Email Building Standards plan reporting](#) with any queries.

### Site Inspections team

We deal with inspections at the interim or completion stage for all projects with an estimated value of works up to £250,000. [Email Building Standards site inspections](#) with any queries.

### Phone

The Building Standards service can be contacted daily between 9am and 1pm on

0131 529 3550.

See [our website](#) for more information



Telephone 0131 242 8181

| Version control information |                    |           |          |                      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------|----------------------|
| Version                     | Comments           | Review By | Date     | Date for next review |
| V1.1                        | Initial Version    | DG        | 31/08/17 |                      |
| V1.2                        | Reviewed           | DG        | 29/01/19 | 15/4/19              |
| V2.0                        | Completely Revised | GG/NB     | 20/09/21 | Jan 22               |
| V2.1                        | Document Reviewed  | GG        | Jan 22   | April 22             |
| V2.2                        | Document Reviewed  | GG        | April 22 | July 22              |
| V2.3                        | Minor amendments   | GG        | June 22  | Oct 22               |
| V2.4                        | Minor amendments   | GG        | Oct 22   | Jan 23               |
| V2.5                        | Document Reviewed  | GG        | Jan 23   | April 23             |
| V2.6                        | Document Reviewed  | GG        | April 23 | July 23              |
| V2.7                        | Document Reviewed  | GG        | Oct 23   | Jan 24               |
| V2.8                        | Document Reviewed  | GG        | Jan 24   | April 24             |
| V2.9                        | Document Reviewed  | GG        | April 24 | April 25             |
| V2.10                       | Minor amendments   | GG        | March 25 | April 26             |
| V3.1                        | Completely Revised | GG        | June 26  | April 27             |