

**Comhairle nan Eilean Siar**  
**Building Standards**

**Customer Charter 2024 -25**

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1.0	01/04/2024	2024-25 Customer Charter
1.1	26/08/2024	Document Revision 1.1
1.2	06/11/2024	Document Revision 1.2

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **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:

1. National Charter
2. Local Charter

## **PART 1: National Charter**

### **1.1. The Building Standards Service - Aims and Commitments**

#### **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;
- 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:

- seek to minimise the average time it takes for customers to obtain a building warrant or amendment to a building warrant;
- ensure continuous improvement around the quality of our assessments to ensure compliance;
- meet and seek to exceed customer expectations;
- carry out local customer satisfaction research, such as surveys, focus groups etc.
- address feedback obtained through local and national customer satisfaction research (including a National Customer Satisfaction Survey) to improve the customer experience;
- provide information on local formal complaints procedures, the LABSS Dispute Resolution Process, and the BSD Customer Performance Reporting Service, and refer customers as appropriate;
- provide accurate financial data that is evidence-based;
- engage and participate in partnership working at local and national level to identify and embed service improvements at a national level;
- Work collaboratively with the Scottish Building Standards Hub;
- adhere to a national annual performance report outlining our objectives, targets and performance;
- 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);
- use a consistent format for continuous improvement plans.

## **Our targets:**

**(See next page)**

	<b>KEY PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES</b>	<b>NATIONAL TARGETS</b>
KPO1	Minimise time taken to issue a first report or to issue a building warrant or amendment to building warrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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).</li> <li>• 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).</li> </ul>
KPO2	Increase quality of compliance assessment during the construction processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targets to be developed as part of future review of KPO2.</li> </ul>
KPO3	Commit to the building standards customer charter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National customer charter is published prominently on the website and incorporates version control detailing reviews (frequency of reviews to be at least quarterly).</li> <li>• 95% of BSD requests for information on a BSD 'Verifier Performance Reporting Service for Customers' case responded to by verifier within 5 days.</li> </ul>
KPO4	Understand and respond to the customer experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum overall average satisfaction rating of 7.5 out of 10.</li> </ul>
KPO5	Maintain financial governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building standards verification fee income to cover indicative verification service costs (staff costs plus 30%).</li> </ul>
KPO6	Commit to e-Building Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of e-Building Standards are published prominently on the verifier's website.</li> <li>• 75% of each key building warrant related process being done electronically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan checking</li> <li>• Building warrant or amendments (and plans) being issued</li> <li>• Verification during construction</li> <li>• Completion certificates being accepted</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
KPO7	Commit to objectives outlined in the annual performance report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual performance report published prominently on website with version control (reviewed at least quarterly).</li> <li>• Annual performance report to include performance data in line with KPOs and associated targets.</li> </ul>

## **PART 2: Local Charter**

### **2.1 Local Building Standards Role**

At a local level, the primary functions of the Building Standards Section of the Comhairle is to provide:

- administration of the Building Warrant Process (known as Verification);
- enforcement of the Building Regulations;
- enforcement of public safety issues, including dealing with dangerous buildings, and;
- advising on issues relating to access for the disabled.

To carry out these functions, Building Standards Officers have to scrutinise plans for proposed developments to ensure compliance with current Building Regulations. Site inspections may be carried out during the construction process and at completion, when, if the building complies with the regulations it is given a Completion Certificate.

### **2.2 Pre-application discussion**

Pre-application discussions will help clarify the extent and standard of information that requires to be contained within your application to ensure it can be registered and determined in the shortest possible time. Please remember, however, that pre-application advice is given on the basis of the information known at the time and it is not possible to highlight all potential issues without carrying out the full warrant process.

The Comhairle encourages developers to use the guidance and advice available from the Building Standards Technical Handbooks before making any application.

### **2.3 E-Building Standards**

In 2016 the Scottish Government created a web portal to support building standards and the planning service to allow submission of electronic applications on-line.

The introduction of the e-Building Standards digital verification service has been very successful and allows customers to submit applications for building warrant electronically to all local authority verifiers through the Scottish Government e-Building Standards online system.

To use this service go to the e-Building webpage at

### **3 APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND PROCESSING OF BUILDING WARRANTS**

The plans and specifications require to be sufficient to show full details of the proposals clearly and accurately.

#### **3.1 Validation and Acknowledgement**

Once applications are checked we will notify you to either acknowledge the application or advise you of any additional requirements.

##### **SERVICE STANDARD**

**We aim to respond to your application within 15 working days of your warrant being validated.**

#### **3.2 Completion Certificate Submission**

##### **SERVICE STANDARD**

**We will aim to respond to a completion certificate submission within 9 working days.**

#### **3.3 Checking of Application Status**

You can enquire to one of our offices as to the status of your applications or alternatively you can use our Public Access facility to check the status online on the Comhairle's website.

Note: Since the Cyber attack in November 2023 the Comhairle has not been able to publish Planning or Building Standards information on the Public Access service due to the lack of functioning IT systems. This is currently under review as we await restoration of our IT services, and it is hoped that the link to the Public Access facility will be available on our ebsite from January 2025.

## **4 CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS**

### **4.1 Local Customer Complaints Procedure**

The Comhairle is committed to delivering high quality best value services for the people of the Outer Hebrides. We would also be pleased to hear from you when you have received good service or have constructive suggestions on how the Building Standards Service could be improved. However, even in the best-run organisations things sometimes go wrong. If something does go wrong, or you are dissatisfied with our service please tell us.

- You can complain in person at any of our offices by phone, in writing, email via our complaints form [enquiries@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@cne-siar.gov.uk)

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the building standards service staff. We are committed to improving our service and dealing promptly with any failures.

When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

The Comhairle hopes the public will be satisfied with the Building Standards Service. However, if you have any suggestions, concerns or difficulties, we want to hear from you.

For more information on the Comhairle's complaint procedure please refer to the relevant pages on the Comhairle Website which can be found at:

<https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/have-your-say/complaints/>



## **4.2 LABSS Dispute Resolution Process**

There are situations where applicants may have concerns about decisions taken by the Building Standards section on a technical or procedural matter, but it would not be appropriate to register these concerns as a complaint. In these circumstances, in the first instance, the matter can be discussed with and reviewed by the Building Standards Manager who could, if necessary, contact the Building Standards Division to clarify the intent of the guidance and thereby seek to find agreement on a satisfactory way to resolve the issues raised.

If matters cannot be resolved by this means the LABSS\* Dispute Resolution Process could be invoked. Further information on this process can be found on the LABSS website following the link shown below.

[Advice on a Dispute Resolution Process | LABSS](#)

- \* Local Authority Building Standards Scotland, (LABSS), is a 'not-for-profit' membership organisation representing all local authority building standards verifiers in Scotland.

## 4.3 Appeals

### Appeal to Sheriff

The Act permits appeals to the Sheriff Court on the following matters:

- where Scottish Ministers refuse an application to relax or dispense with a provision of the building regulations;
- where a verifier refuses to grant or amend the terms of a warrant, including deemed refusals resulting when the verifier has not made a decision within the specified time limits;
- where a verifier refuses to extend the life of a limited-life building, including deemed refusals resulting when the verifier has not made a decision within the specified time limits;
- where a verifier rejects a completion certificate, including deemed rejections resulting when the verifier has not made a decision within the specified time limits
- where a verifier imposes continuing requirements
- where a verifier refuses to discharge or vary a continuing requirement
- where a local authority serves a notice (regarding building regulations compliance, continuing requirement enforcement, building warrant enforcement, defective or dangerous buildings).

#### Notes

1. An appeal must be made within 21 days of a decision being issued or of a notice being served. Where a verifier has not made a decision in relation to items 2, 3, 4, or 6 above, a decision is deemed to have been made by the period specified in the procedure regulations.
2. For item 2 above, the period after which a decision is deemed to have been made is three months from the date of receipt of an application for warrant or amendment of warrant if no first report is issued, or 9 months after the date of issue of the first report. These periods may be extended by agreement or by time taken to obtain relaxations or views.
3. For item 3 above, the period for a deemed decision is one month from the date of receipt of the application is specified, for item 4 above, 14 days from the date of submission is specified (excluding submissions without a warrant having been obtained) and for item 6 above, the period is one month from the date of receipt of the application.

## **5 HOW TO CONTACT US**

### **Building Standards (Lewis and Harris)**

Communities Department  
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar  
Sandwick Road Stornoway  
Isle of Lewis  
HS1 2BW  
Tel: 01851 822692  
Fax: 01851 705349

**e-mail:** [CNES\\_buildingstandards@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:CNES_buildingstandards@cne-siar.gov.uk)

### **Building Standards (Uist and Barra)**

Communities Department  
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