

The Highland Council

Comhairle Na Gaidhealtachd

**Building Standards Customer
Charter**

2026/27



Document Record

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1.1		
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1.3		

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1 Introduction

The purpose of the Building Standards system in Scotland is to protect public interest by ensuring that buildings are safe, healthy, sustainable and accessible for people to use and occupy. The system sets minimum standards that must be met when building work is undertaken or when a building is converted, in accordance with the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 and associated regulations.

The Building Standards system assesses proposals for building work to ensure compliance with the Building Regulations and undertakes inspections during construction to verify that work is being carried out in accordance with approved plans and relevant standards. Responsibility for the quality and management of construction work remains with those carrying out the work and their contractual arrangements.

Verification is the statutory function responsible for processing building warrant applications, undertaking reasonable inquiry during construction and accepting completion certificate submissions. Verifiers are appointed by Scottish Ministers to provide an independent, consistent, accountable and transparent service.

The Highland Council was appointed by Scottish Ministers in May 2023 as the verifier for the Highland area for the six-year period ending in April 2029. The Council is responsible for providing an independent and impartial assessment of applications for building warrants, amendments to warrants and completion certificates. In addition, the Council carries out enforcement duties under the Building (Scotland) Act 2003, including dealing with unauthorised building work and defective or dangerous buildings. The service also provides responses to consultations and issues certificates in support of licensing functions.

2 Purpose of the Customer Charter

The Building Standards Customer Charter sets out the standards of service that customers can expect from verifiers across Scotland. It provides assurance that a professional, independent, consistent and high-quality service will be delivered regardless of which verifier provides the service.

The Charter is divided into two parts:

Part 1: National Charter

- National aims
- National vision and values
- National commitments
- National performance targets

Part 2: Local Charter

- Information about The Highland Council Building Standards Service
- Local service delivery standards
- Customer commitments
- Performance monitoring arrangements
- Complaints procedures
- Contact information



Photo by Ewen Weatherspoon

3. National Charter

National Aims

The Building Standards system in Scotland exists to protect the public interest through the effective application of building regulations and verification procedures.

The principal aims of the system are to:

- Secure the health, safety, welfare and convenience of people in and around buildings, and others who may be affected by buildings or matters connected with buildings.
- Contribute to the conservation of fuel and power.
- Support the achievement of sustainable development.

Through the granting of building warrants and acceptance of completion certificates, verifiers play a key role in ensuring compliance with these objectives.

National Vision and Values

Our Vision: To deliver a professional, consistent and customer-focused Building Standards Verification Service that protects the public interest and supports quality development across Scotland.

Our Values: All verifiers are committed to:

- Professionalism
- Integrity and impartiality
- Consistency of approach
- Transparency and accountability
- Continuous improvement
- Customer focus
- Collaborative working

National Commitments

All verifiers in Scotland are committed to:

1. Minimising the time taken for customers to obtain building warrants and amendments to warrants.
2. Continuously improving the quality and robustness of verification assessments to support compliance with building regulations.
3. Meeting, and where possible exceeding, customer expectations.
4. Undertaking local customer satisfaction research through surveys, focus groups and other engagement activities.
5. Using customer feedback from local and national surveys to improve service delivery and enhance the customer experience.
6. Providing information on local complaints procedures, the LABSS Dispute Resolution Process and the Building Standards Division (BSD) Verifier Performance Reporting Service, referring customers where appropriate.
7. Maintaining accurate, transparent and evidence-based financial information.
8. Working collaboratively with local and national partners to identify, develop and implement service improvements.
9. Supporting and working closely with the Scottish Building Standards Hub (SBSH).
10. Contributing to and complying with the national Annual Performance Reporting framework.
11. Fully adhering to the commitments set out within this Customer Charter, including reporting customer concerns relating to processing timescales, procedures and technical interpretation.
12. Using a consistent approach to service improvement planning and performance reporting.

National Key Performance Outcomes (KPOs)

KPO	Objective	Performance Targets
KPO1 Efficient Processing of Applications		
KPO1 (a)	Monitor the time taken to issue building warrants and amendments to warrants.	No current performance target.
KPO1 (b)	Minimise the time taken to issue first reports	95% of first responses for building warrant and amendment applications issued within 20 working days.
KPO1 (c)	Minimise the time taken to determine building warrant and amendment applications.	90% of building warrants and amendments issued within 10 working days of receiving all satisfactory information.

KPO2 Compliance During Construction	Improve the quality and effectiveness of compliance assessment throughout the construction process.	Performance measures and targets will be developed as part of future reviews of KPO2.
KPO3 Commitment to the Customer Charter	Promote transparency, accountability and customer awareness.	The Customer Charter will be prominently published on verifier websites and subject to regular review, including version control arrangements. 95% of Building Standards Division requests for information relating to the Verifier Performance Reporting Service will receive a response within five working days.
KPO4 Understanding and Responding to Customer Experience	Measure customer satisfaction and use feedback to drive continuous improvement.	Achieve and maintain an overall average customer satisfaction rating of at least 7.5 out of 10.
KPO5 Financial Governance	Maintain effective financial management and sustainability.	Building Standards verification fee income should cover the indicative cost of providing the verification service, including staffing costs and an appropriate overhead allowance.
KPO6 Commitment to eBuilding Standards	Promote digital service delivery and maximise the use of electronic processes.	Information relating to eBuilding Standards will be published prominently on verifier websites. At least 75% of key Building Standards processes should be undertaken electronically.
KPO7 Annual Performance Reporting	Demonstrate transparency, accountability and continuous improvement through published performance information.	The Annual Performance Report will be prominently published on the verifier's website and subject to regular review and version control. The report will contain performance information against all relevant KPOs and associated targets for the previous reporting year.

National Performance Information

Information relating to the National Verification Performance Framework is available on the Scottish Government Building Standards website [Scottish Government website](#)

Performance against these national targets is reported annually through each verifier's Annual Performance Report, which is publicly available online [Annual Performance Report](#). These reports provide information on service performance, customer satisfaction, continuous improvement activities and progress against national objectives.

Photo by Ewen Weatherspoon



The Highland Council Local Charter

Who Are We?

The Highland Council Building Standards Service is responsible for delivering the statutory Building Standards Verification Service throughout the Highlands. The service comprises 35 professional posts and operates through a network of seven area offices supported by a central management team. Area offices are located in:

- Dingwall, serving Ross-shire
- Fort William, serving Lochaber
- Golspie, serving Sutherland and Easter Ross
- Inverness, serving Inverness, Nairn and surrounding areas
- Kingussie, serving Badenoch and Strathspey
- Broadford, serving Skye and Lochalsh
- Wick, serving Caithness

The service is led by the Building Standards Manager, who is responsible for the strategic direction, operational management and continuous improvement of the Building Standards Service across Highland.

The Building Standards Manager is supported by two Building Standards Team Leaders who oversee verification activities, including warrant approval and reasonable inquiry functions. Responsibility for non-verification activities, including enforcement, licensing consultations and dangerous and defective building functions, is shared across the management team.

Each area office is managed by a Principal Building Standards Surveyor who is responsible for:

- Allocating workloads and resources
- Performance monitoring and quality assurance
- Supporting staff development and competency
- Attendance and wellbeing management
- Managing day-to-day operational activities
- Leading enforcement investigations and responses to dangerous and defective building incidents

This part of the Charter sets out the customer service standards that you can expect when you interact with Highland Council's Building Standards Service. It also explains how to give customer feedback which helps to shape and improve our services as well as what to do if things go wrong and you wish to make a complaint.



What Do We Do?

The Highland Council is appointed by Scottish Ministers as the Building Standards Verifier for the Highland area for the period 2023 to 2029.

Our primary statutory functions are to:

- Assess and determine building warrant applications and amendments.
- Undertake reasonable inquiry during construction.
- Accept completion certificate submissions where satisfied that relevant standards have been met.
- Enforce building standards legislation where unauthorised work has taken place.
- Investigate and respond to defective and dangerous building incidents.

Services provided:

We will:

- a) Provide an online service for submitting building warrant applications, amendments and completion certificates through the Scottish Government's [eDevelopment portal](#)
- b) Encourage pre-application discussions and provide advice to support a smoother and more efficient application process.

- c) Make Building Standards Surveyors available during normal office hours to provide guidance and assistance. A Duty Surveyor service is available for general enquiries.
- d) Seek to prioritise low-risk applications, accessibility improvement projects, demolitions and developments of strategic importance where resources permit.
- e) Provide responses to consultations from licensing and other regulatory services.
- f) Issue certificates required under licensing legislation where appropriate.
- g) Investigate unauthorised building work and take enforcement action where necessary.
- h) Provide a 24-hour emergency response service for dangerous building incidents.

Our commitment to you:

We are committed to providing a professional, accessible and customer-focused service.

We will:

- a) Contact customers where practicable to arrange inspections associated with Construction Compliance and Notification Plans (CCNPs) and completion certificate verification.
- b) Ensure our officers identify themselves and explain the purpose of their visit when attending site.
- c) Treat all customers with courtesy, fairness and respect.
- d) Provide clear, accurate and consistent advice through telephone, email, written correspondence and face-to-face meetings.
- e) Maintain an online [Public Register](#) where customers can view applications and monitor progress.
- f) Strive to provide a consistent interpretation of legislation and guidance.
- g) Deliver services fairly and without discrimination.
- h) Agree communication arrangements and timescales for complex applications where appropriate.
- i) Listen to customer feedback and use it to improve our services.
- j) Explain the reasons for decisions and procedural changes whenever possible.
- k) Continually review and improve our service to meet customer expectations and national performance standards.

How We Measure Ourselves:

We monitor and report our performance against national Key Performance Outcomes (KPOs) and local service standards.

We will:

- a) Publish performance information on the Council's website. [council's web pages](#)
- b) Aim to issue first technical assessments and reports within nationally agreed timescales.
- c) Monitor performance against building warrant processing times and completion certificate acceptance targets.
- d) Undertake inspections in accordance with Construction Compliance and Notification Plans.
- e) Measure customer satisfaction through surveys and feedback exercises. [here](#)
- f) Submit quarterly performance information to the Scottish Government.
- g) Publish an [Annual Performance Report](#) detailing service performance, improvement actions and achievement against national targets.

Developing Our Future Workforce

The Highland Council is committed to investing in the future of the Building Standards profession through Graduate Apprenticeship and trainee development programmes. Since 2018, the service has recruited and developed a significant number of Graduate Apprentices and trainee surveyors, helping to address national skills shortages, support succession planning and ensure a resilient and sustainable workforce for the future.

Complaints Procedure:

We welcome feedback and use it to improve our services.

If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received, you should first contact the officer dealing with your application, or the Building Standards Manager, who will seek to resolve the issue.

If you remain dissatisfied, you may submit a complaint online through The Highland Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. [How to make a complaint - Highland Council](#)

Where appropriate, customers may also utilise the LABSS Dispute Resolution Process or contact the Scottish Government Building Standards Division regarding matters relating to verifier performance buildingstandards@gov.scot or phone: **0300 244 4000**

How to contact us:

Opening Hours

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

Telephone

01349 886606

Email

buildingstandards@highland.gov.uk

Website

www.highland.gov.uk

Online Applications

www.edevelopment.scot

