



2013/14 has again been a busy year for Building Standards in Argyll and Bute although the statistics confirm that the economy of the area is still stagnant: 1260 Building Warrants at a build value of £53M and 1000 Completion Certificates were processed in the financial year. This is down on the previous year 12/13 where 1466 Building Warrants at a build value of £68M and 1100 Completion Certificates were processed. The economic position is obviously also making it more difficult for property owners to maintain their property and this has seen Building Standards dealing with an ever increasing amount of dangerous building work.

Against this backdrop we have again been actively involved with the Building Standards Division (BSD) of the Scottish Government and the Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) in implementing the national performance framework.

We have also successfully gone through the Customer Service Excellence process and are the first service within Argyll & Bute Council to attain the award.

We are aware however that we are only as good as our last customer's comment and we welcome any suggestions you have which will enhance our service further. Suggestions can be made [online](#) or by completing a form available from our area offices.

### Staff Changes

During the last quarter Building Standards have lost two key members of staff; Gary Stead, Team Leader in Mid Argyll after a prolonged absence has retired due to ill health and Stephen Quinn, Team Leader in Oban, has left to take up a position in Dubai. I'm sure you all join me in wishing Gary and Stephen well.

I can confirm that both posts have now been filled with Hugh Houston a Senior Building Standards Surveyor from East Dunbartonshire taking over as Team Leader in Oban and our own Tony Casci taking over as Team Leader in Mid Argyll. This internal appointment does as a result leave the Mid Argyll team still operating one surveyor down, however in the interim Katherine McKerrall who is currently completing her honours degree year in Building Surveying at Glasgow Caledonian University has been seconded to the Mid Argyll Building Standards team from Administration as a trainee Building Standards Surveyor.

In the interim I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our regular service users for their patience, support and assistance received during these difficult staffing times.

I can confirm that by proactively moving Building warrant applications to area offices which have more capacity performance has held up well and I'd like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all staff for their hard work in these difficult times.

### The 2013 Edition of the Technical Handbooks.

**Please remember that the handbooks are available, free of charge, in electronic format only.** They can be viewed or downloaded from the BSD [website](#).

### Quarterly Statistics

Argyll & Bute Council Building Standards Performance Statistics	Jan - Mar14	
	target	Actual
The percentage of requests for a building warrant responded to within 20 days.	80%	92.7%
The average time taken to respond to a request for a completion certificate.	3 days	1.7 days
The percentage of building warrants issued (or otherwise determined) within six days.	80%	93.3%
The percentage of completion certificates issued/ accepted (or otherwise determined) within three days.	80%	99.2%
The percentage of applicants providing feedback that were either satisfied or very satisfied with our service.	84%	94.1%



## Section 63, Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 - Improving existing non-domestic buildings

The Scottish Government Response to the consultation on the form of regulations for section 63, Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (CCSA) has been published on the [Scottish Government website](#).

The current focus is on developing the policy further by building aspects into the electronic register that holds energy performance certificates.

The section 63 regulations will now be finalised together with supporting guidance on the basis of the draft regulations. It is intended that both regulations and supporting guidance will be published in early 2015 and brought into force in autumn 2015. This will allow around seven months for property owners to prepare for the changes.

### e-Building Standards Update

Progress: The Scottish Government have recently confirmed that e-BS is now back on the national agenda with 2016 being given as date for national roll out. This system will be procured along with an updated Planning Portal to ensure synergy with both systems.

In the interim period A&B Building Standards will still look to progress with developing our own e-BS system which will allow us to ensure that appropriate procedures are well embedded to enable us to deal efficiently and professionally with e-applications.

The development of our I.T system and electronic forms have taken longer than we had originally envisaged, however I.T have confirmed that the customer facing side should now be fully operational. A requirement for additional hardware has been identified and once this has been procured and tested we will look to recommence our e-BS trial from the Helensburgh office.

To date we have enlisted nine 'volunteer agents' willing to trial the system in partnership with us. Additional participants will be welcome. Please [email me](#) for further details.

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Building Standards  
Express Building Warrant  
Assessment Service  
Minor Application



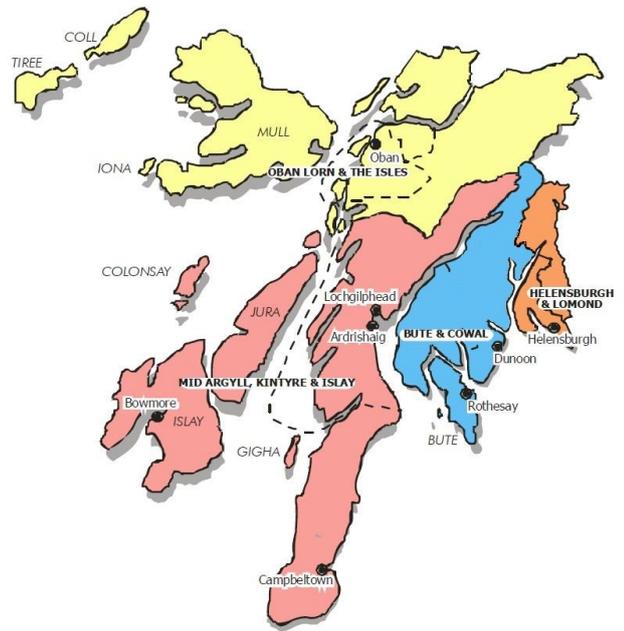
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### Compliance

- Construction Compliance and Notification Plans (CCNP's) are now issued with all Building Warrants. The plans specify stages of construction when Building Standards are to be notified to undertake an inspection.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to contact Building Standards to arrange an inspection.
- We record where an applicant fails to adhere to the CCNP
- We record the most common aspects of non-compliance found on site.
- We report quarterly to the BSD on the number of CCNPs completed
- To date, in a lot of cases, Building Standards are still not being notified that works have commenced on site. As a result CCNPs are not being completed.
- **Please ensure that if you are handing over the project to the applicant at approval stage they are made aware of the roles of the applicant or "relevant person".**

### Guidance

Our Customer Service Charter and our Guidance Notes were updated last year. The Customer Service Charter and several of our Guidance Notes are also available in Gaelic. These updated documents are available in hard copy from local area offices or alternatively [online](#). Feedback on these documents would be very welcome.

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## Did You Know?

- If you provide your e-mail address, we will e-mail any correspondence to speed up the process. Please ensure the e-mail address you provide is current, legible and spelled correctly.
- Only the Applicant or the Agent can fill in the completion certificate, not the building contractor, unless they are noted as agent on the application form!
- If you provide a certificate of design along with your application form, the fee is reduced by 10%. Please ensure you submit the correct fee!
- If you state on your application form that you will submit a certificate of construction, you will also get a fee reduction, in this instance it is 1%. You must submit the correct certificate on completion. If you don't, we won't accept your completion until we receive the fee that was deducted at the time of application.
- If you do not provide all the information needed to approve your warrant after 3 months, we may refuse it.
- A completion certificate will only be considered for a valid warrant.

For more information, please see our [website](#).

## CE Construction Products Regulations

With the coming into force of the [Construction Products Regulation \(CPR\)](#), new rules apply to construction products, which need to be tested using European standards to earn the CE mark.

The CE mark creates trust throughout the entire construction value chain across Europe, opening up new opportunities and simplifying procedures.

The European Commission has issued a short [video clip](#) showcasing CE mark for construction products.

## National Customer Survey

The first national customer survey undertaken by Pye Tait on behalf of the Building Standards Division closed on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

My understanding is that this survey will be an annual occurrence with the results published on the Scottish Government website. To ensure that the Government can target recent service users the Building warrant application form has now been altered to contain an 'opt out' option for those applicants/agents who do not wish to participate in future surveys.

## Customer Satisfaction

Argyll and Bute Council Building Standards will continue to seek your views on our local service as the views of our regular users are very important and assist us in focusing our service delivery. I would be grateful therefore if you could spend a few minutes completing our [on-line customer satisfaction survey](#).



[www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/building-standards](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/building-standards)

## CPD Events

On 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014 Argyll and Bute Council Building Standards held a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) event primarily designed for Building Standards Surveyors.

The event included presentations from Dr. Paul Baker from Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) on Air tightness testing with pressurisation test results and Colin Hird and Jim McGonigal from the Building Standards Division (BSD) of the Scottish Government on the Technical Standards, Section 2 Fire. Both presentations can be accessed on our [website](#).

I can also confirm that Argyll and Bute Council Building Standards plan to hold a further three CPD events later in the year; indicatively during September, December and February on the following topics:

- Building Regulations Including the Act
- Building Maintenance – Building Pathology.
- Building Technology from First Principles - including fire, structural engineering and building technology. It will concentrate on refurbishments and extensions in respect of support beams, loft conversions and roof trusses.

These events will be held in partnership with various bodies including the BSD and GCU and will be fully accredited CPD events.

I would be keen to offer these events to our regular users. The likely cost per event will be £30 per head and will include lunch. If these events would be of interest to you or you have any additional ideas for CPD topics please [contact me](#).



## Changes to Technical Standards 2013

As you are aware the 2013 Technical Handbooks were published in June 2013 setting out the review changes to building regulations and guidance that come into force on the 1st October last year. Minor changes to the handbooks have been made this month and these can be accessed on the Scottish Government [website](#).

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