

Building Standards Newsletter

August 2013



Argyll & Bute Building Standards realise that the service we provide assists the construction industry to retain and create jobs and as a result we endeavour to provide the quickest and most professional verifier service we can. During the period April—June 2013 Argyll & Bute Building Standards approved warrants to a value of £22m. During this period of 2013 we exceeded all performance related target response times authority wide and maintained a high level of customer satisfaction. We are aware that we are only as good as our last customer comment received and 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.

Quarterly Statistics

Argyll & Bute Council Building Standards Performance Statistics	April -- June 13	
	target	Actual
The percentage of requests for a building warrant responded to within 20 days.	80%	97.3%
The average time taken to respond to a request for a completion certificate.	3 days	2 days
The percentage of building warrants issued (or otherwise determined) within six days.	80%	95.5%
The percentage of completion certificates issued/ accepted (or otherwise determined) within three days.	80%	99.3%
The percentage of applicants providing feedback that were either satisfied or very satisfied with our service.	84%	100%

Customer Service Excellence Award

On behalf of the Council, Building Standards have agreed to trial the attainment of the Government backed Customer Service Excellence Award. If successful we will be the first service within the Council to hold the award. The process is very stringent and time consuming and requires us to successfully complete a detailed assessment process which includes us gathering together and submitting a plethora of documentary evidence to an external examiner.

Upon receipt of our submission we will undergo a three day audit which will include hosting an event for our regular users/stakeholders where the external assessor can interview those present on their impressions of the service we offer. It will also include the assessor accompanying Building Standards Surveyors on site visits.

This audit is likely to take place in early November and I would be grateful if you could consider attending the regular users/stakeholders event. Once the date and venue has been arranged I will be back in touch.

User Forums

Building Standards have also arranged joint User Forums with Development Management in October 2013 and the dates and venues are as follows:

Monday 28th - Community Hall, Lochgilphead
Tuesday 29th - Victoria Halls, Helensburgh
Wednesday 30th - Corran Halls, Oban
Thursday 31st - Queens Hall, Dunoon

Meetings will commence at 2pm with tea & coffee available from 1.30pm.

New Initiatives

To further improve the level of service we provide we have also launched an [express building warrant assessment service for minor works](#) and we would also like to remind you of the pre-warrant enquiry/discussion service offered for major works. Please contact the nearest area office to the location of the project for further details.

Guidance

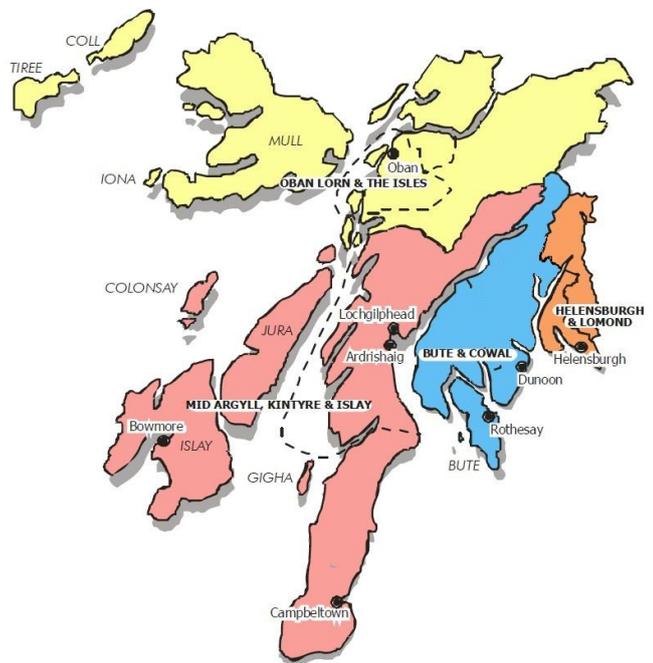
Our Customer Service Charter and our Guidance Notes have recently been updated. The Customer Service Charter and several of our Guidance Notes are in the process of being translated into Gaelic. These updated documents will soon be available in hard copy from local area offices or alternatively [online](#).



Realising our potential together

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 builder!
- 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 get a fee reduction. You must submit the correct certificate on completion. If you don't, we won't accept your completion until we receive the additional fee.
- 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.



Changes to Technical Standards 2013

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 this year.

The handbooks are available, free of charge, in electronic format only. They can be viewed or downloaded from the BSD website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Building/Building-standards>.

The changes introduced to the mandatory standards and associated guidance for 2013 involve Sections 0, 2, 3, 4 and 7 of the Technical Handbooks. Although the key changes should be apparent to readers and users of the building standards system, it is considered important and worthwhile to identify the relevant changes to the documents and as such the BSD have issued a summary document which can be downloaded from the BSD website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Building/Building-standards/publications/pubtech/th2013chsm>

In addition to the 2013 review amendments, the summary also includes details of building regulation and guidance changes made to the handbooks on 9th January 2013 for compliance with the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.

As part of our User Forums in October 2013, the presentation will include a section on the changes to the Technical Handbooks.

e-Building Standards

Progress: The development of the I.T system and electronic forms have taken longer than we had originally envisaged, however **we have now commenced our trial from the Helensburgh office**. The plan is that all Building Warrant applications, and associated amendments with a value of £40,000 or less, including the Completion Certificate submission will be handled as an electronic submission irrespective of which area office the application was lodged in and whether or not it was made in paper form or by electronic means.

To date we have enlisted nine 'volunteer agents' willing to trial the system in partnership with us and I would like to thank them for their support.

It is envisaged that the trial will last until December with the system then being rolled out across all area Building Standards offices in the New year.

Customer Satisfaction

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](#).

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