



The Building Standards service aims to ensure that buildings in Argyll and Bute comply with the Building Regulations. We do this by: providing a customer focussed service for the processing of Building Warrant applications; the inspection of construction work relating to Building Warrants in accordance with Construction Compliance and Notification Plans; and verification of Completion Certificate submissions. In addition, we are responsible for enforcement relating to unauthorised works and dangerous buildings.

Other services offered include: Pre-Warrant discussions; Fast Track applications for minor works; an outreach service for people with specific service needs or who have difficulty reaching our offices; a search and/or copy application process for existing documentation; and Section 50 Licensing certificates.

Within Argyll and Bute Building Warrant applications and fees received in 2015/16 suggest that there is still little confidence in the building industry going forward in the short term; however an increase in planning applications received does suggest that the outlook will be brighter.

Looking Forward

Our key objective for the coming year will be to continue to align our service delivery with the performance framework developed by the Scottish Government and supported by local authorities to improve the quality, compliance, consistency and predictability of verification activities with the introduction of e-Building Standards both locally and nationally.

eBuilding Standards Update

Our in-house eBuilding Standards system is now up and running and available to all users.

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/login-or-register

Feedback on its ease of use and ideas to further improve our system is very welcome.

Scottish Government e-Building Standards Update

The national expansion into Building Standards is planned for summer 2016 however the 'go live' date has been delayed from June to August 2016

Guidance

We continue to update our suite of guidance notes, publishing them in English and Gaelic. These guidance notes are available in hard copy from local area offices or alternatively can be accessed [online](#).

Feedback on these documents is always very welcome.



Customer Service Excellence (CSE)

Our second year rolling audit took place on 24th November where we were audited on a further 19 out of the 57 criteria. We still wait the auditor's formal report however we have been informed that we have been awarded compliance plus in a further two criteria. Currently then we hold full compliance on the 57 criteria with compliance plus in **five** of the criteria.

Staff Update

On the plus side we are happy to announce that we have appointed new staff to the Mid Argyll team: Katherine McKerral joins us 'officially' as an assistant Building Standards Surveyor after successfully attaining a first class Honours degree in Building Surveying from Glasgow Caledonian University and Emma Wilson joins us from East Dunbartonshire Council as a fully qualified and experienced Building Standards Surveyor as a direct replacement for Ian Mobberley who retired earlier in the year.

On the downside Garreth Garrett, Building Standards Team Leader in Bute and Cowal is currently on sick leave with a broken ankle.



Martin Matheson and all his team at Building Standards wish our regular users a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Realising our potential together

CPD Events

We have recently agreed a programme of CPD events in partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University as follows:

Day 1—23rd February 2016

Day 2—23rd March 2016

SUDS—9th March 2016

All events will provide 7 hours of formal CPD with certificates and are scheduled to be delivered in the conference suite of the new Helensburgh and Lomond Civic centre, Helensburgh. These events are offered to our regular users at £50 per day (including lunch) for days 1 and 2. The SUDS event on 9th March however will cost £110, to mirror the cost of the similar event being held in Glasgow.

A brief overview of the events is that Day 1 will cover Sections 1 - Structure and 2 - Fire of the Domestic Handbooks with a focus on attic conversions; and Day 2 will cover Building Pathology, updated Section 6 - Energy and Section 3 - Environment good detailing practice, materials, finishes and alternative solutions to the accredited details.

The SUDS seminar will cover a brief introduction of common system types, details of design and differences between system's success and failure.

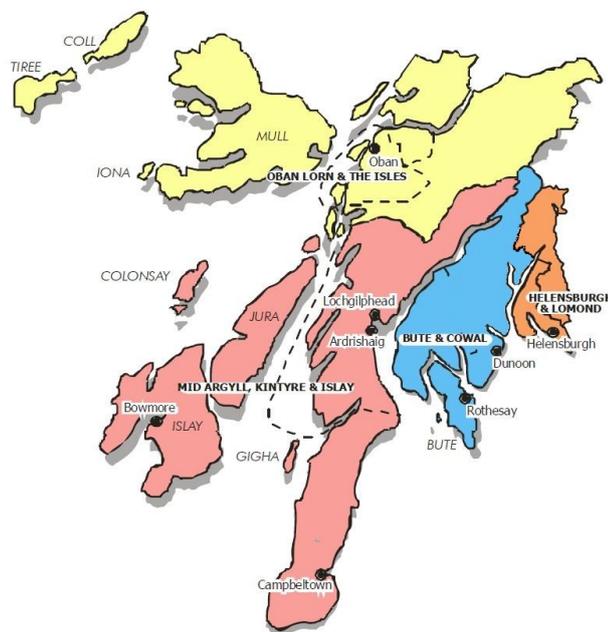
The seminars will be delivered by members of Glasgow Caledonian University lecturing staff.

If you are interested in attending our proposed CPD events or you have any additional ideas for CPD topics please contact the [Building Standards Manager](#).

Quarterly Statistics

We can confirm that by continuing to proactively move Building Warrant applications to area offices which have more capacity, performance has held up well and the Building Standards Manager would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all his staff for their hard work.

Argyll & Bute Council Building Standards Performance Statistics	July - Sept15	
	target	Actual
The percentage of requests for a building warrant responded to within 20 days.	80%	92.4%
The average time taken to respond to a request for a completion certificate.	3 days	1.9 days
The percentage of building warrants issued (or otherwise determined) within six days.	80%	93.9%
The percentage of completion certificates issued/ accepted (or otherwise determined) within three days.	80%	98%
The percentage of applicants providing feedback that were either satisfied or very satisfied with our service.	84%	100%



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".**

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](#).

Realising our potential together

News from the Building Standards Division of the Scottish Government

A gentle reminder that as from the 1st October 2015 the new Technical Standards came in to force and these can be viewed and/or downloaded from the Scottish Government's [website](#).

Consultation

The consultation on the proposed amendment to the Building Regulations to introduce a new building classification for huts and bothies is now live on the Scottish Government website. This can be accessed at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/11/2670>. BSD are inviting written responses to the consultation by 12 February 2016.

Research

Evaluation of the performance of Local Authorities in their role as building standards verifiers

BSD has commissioned Pye Tait Consulting to evaluate the performance of Local Authority verifiers under the Performance Framework. This will inform a report to be published next year. The report will help to inform the decision process of appointment of verifiers from 2017 onwards by Scottish Ministers. Pye Tait are collecting views from stakeholders via an online survey. The results from the survey will be used to understand the extent to which you think verifiers are competent, accountable to the public, and whether you believe they act in an impartial and objective way. They would also like to know how well you believe verifiers perform in granting building warrants, undertaking inspections, delivering quality customer service and working efficiently.

The online survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete (depending on the level of additional feedback you wish to give) and we would urge you to participate. Your feedback will be treated confidentially by Pye Tait Consulting and reported anonymously under the Data Protection Act 1998 and Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct.

The survey can be accessed via the following link: www.pyetait.com/evaluationofverifiers

National Customer Survey 2014-15 to support the verification framework

The performance framework was launched on 1 May 2012 and was implemented from 1 October 2012. The framework has a range of qualitative and quantitative national KPOs which are being used to

drive forward consistency and predictability of service for all users of the building standards system in Scotland. This survey is undertaken annually and is linked to the performance framework reporting year 1 April – 31 March. Pye Tait Consulting have been commissioned to run the survey for 2014-15.

Investigate the impact of the introduction of Construction Compliance and Notification Plans (CCNPs) on building standards compliance levels (previously reasonable inquiry)

BSD has commissioned Building Research Establishment (BRE) to undertake the above project. The project will investigate the levels of site inspection, performance testing and other compliance intervention measures currently being undertaken by local authority verifiers across Scotland under reasonable inquiry. It will also investigate the impact of Construction Compliance and Notification Plans (CCNPs) on compliance levels since they were introduced in October 2012.

The primary focus of research will be the site inspection, noise and air-tightness testing interventions. It will consider the different domestic and non-domestic work types set out in the performance framework reporting regime.

Website development

BSD are making changes to the gov.scot website over the next few months and are looking for participants to take part in user testing. This might involve being part of a focus group, a one-to-one or telephone interview. Your feedback will help them improve the site. If you are interested in taking part, please leave your contact details via this short survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/govscot>

Digitising Building Standards from Summer 2016

Over the coming months BSD will provide details of what is going to change, when the changes will happen and what these changes will mean to you as an applicant or agent. Please keep checking the eDevelopment.scot news tab on the current [ePlanning portal](#) for updates.

