



# The Building Standards **CUSTOMER CHARTER**

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## NATIONAL CUSTOMER CHARTER

### Purpose:

A National Customer Charter for Building Standards Verification provides information about the minimum standards of service that all local authority verifiers should meet. This gives customers the reassurance that a consistent, high quality service will be delivered together with access to remedial measures should performance standards not be met no matter which local authority provides the service.

### 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, and;
- Furthering the achievement of sustainable development.

### Our Vision/Values

To provide a professional and informative service to all our customers.

### Our Commitments:

Nationally all local authority verifiers will:

1. Seek to reduce the average time it takes for customers to obtain a building warrant
2. Ensure continuous improvement around the robustness of our verification assessments to ensure compliance
3. Meet and seek to exceed customer expectations
4. Provide a remedy for any customers adversely affected by a failure to meet agreed performance standards
5. Carry out local customer satisfaction surveys
6. Address feedback obtained through a National Customer Satisfaction Survey to improve the customer experience
7. Provide accurate financial data that is evidence-based
8. Engage with our peers and stakeholders through a National Forum that will identify and embed service improvements at a national level
9. Develop and adhere to a Balanced Scorecard approach outlining our objectives and targets
10. Fully adhere to the commitments outlined in this Charter including information regarding the escape route process for dissatisfied customers in relation to building warrant processing timescales.
11. Provide a consistent format for our continuous improvement plans

### Information

National information on verification performance can be found at the Scottish Government website. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Building/Building-standards>



## LOCAL CUSTOMER CHARTER

### Dundee City Council Building Standards Service

Our Charter underpins the aims of the National Customer Charter, it clearly sets out the standard of service customers can expect when using Dundee City Council as a Verifier and for other Building Standards Services.

The Charter will inform you:

- What we do;
- The level of service we hope to provide;
- The standards we aim to achieve, and;
- How to register a complaint if we fail to meet our aims.



## WHAT ARE BUILDING STANDARDS?

### The Building Standards System

The Building Standards system in Scotland is established by the Building (Scotland) Act 2003. The Act gives powers to Scottish Ministers to make Building Regulations and Procedure Regulations, Fee Regulations and other supporting legislation as necessary, to fulfil the purposes of the Act. The purposes include setting Building Standards and dealing with Dangerous and Defective buildings. The various regulations are made by the Scottish Ministers.

The purpose of the building standards system is to protect the public interest. The system, therefore, does not so much control building as set out the essential standards to be met when building takes place and only to the extent necessary to meet the building regulations. It is not intended to provide protection to a client in a contract with a builder.

## THE BUILDING STANDARDS SERVICE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DELIVERING

### Verification

As a sole verifier recently re appointed by Scottish Ministers the Building Standards Team is responsible for discharging the local authority's statutory duties in respect of the Building Scotland Act and associated legislation. Building Standards (formerly Building Control) in Dundee is a function of the City Development Department and has over 50 years experience in dealing with the interpretation and implementation of Building Regulations and associated matters.



## CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRE

### Location

The Building Standards Service is based in Dundee House, 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee. The Council provides a fully accessible Customer Contact Centre on the ground Floor.

### Pre-Application Discussion Information/Advice

- Pre-application and advice is encouraged to enable good quality submissions. However any advice given is provided without prejudice to the final assessment of your application;
- A duty surveyor is available during office hours at our customer contact centre and is able to advise and guide customers and stakeholders through the process of submitting a Building Warrant, the procedures in place and the factors which decide the determination of a Building Warrant and the acceptance of a Completion Certificate. It is recommended that an appointment is made with the Building Standards Surveyor responsible for the area to which your building is located.



## GENERAL SERVICE STANDARDS

### Telephone Answering

- We aim to answer all telephone enquiries within 15 seconds. If the Building Standards Surveyor dealing with your query is not available the duty surveyor will deal with your request or ensure that a message is relayed to the relevant surveyor.
- Call customers back when we say we will.
- Treat our customers with respect.
- Be helpful, attentive, polite and courteous when we speak to customers.

By letter, fax or e-mail

- Written requests for guidance on the need to obtain a warrant or general enquiry will generally receive a reply within 10 working days of receipt and may be subject to a charge if required in writing;
- Replies give the name and contact details of the sender and are written in plain language.

### Staff Quality

- We employ suitably experienced and professionally qualified Building Standards Surveyors;
- We will look clean and smart at all times.





## SUBMITTING A BUILDING WARRANT APPLICATION

### Content

The content of your application will be checked. However, it is the responsibility of you or an agent appointed by you to ensure that the warrant application is correctly submitted. Plans should be drawn to a recognised scale, e.g. 1:50, 1:100 etc and must include sufficient detail and information to allow a full technical check against the Building Regulations. A statutory fee must be submitted with your application for warrant.

### Forms

Application forms and information is available on our web site and can also be obtained from the customer contact centre at Dundee House 50 North Lindsay Street Dundee.

### Performance

- We will endeavour to dispatch application forms on the day of a request;
- We will endeavour to register an application within 24 hours of receipt, measured in working days;
- Receipt of your application should be acknowledged within 5 working days;
- If your application is deemed invalid you should be advised of the reasons for non-validity within 5 working days;
- An application which remains invalid beyond 42 days may be considered withdrawn;
- We will endeavour to allocate valid applications to a Building Standards Surveyor for plan assessment within 2 working days of receipt.

## ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS FOR A BUILDING WARRANT

### Plan Assessment

We endeavour to plan assess all valid applications for compliance with the Building Regulations within 15 working days. We can agree to fast track applications in order to avoid unnecessary delay for the following;

- Proposals that will have an important economic development potential;
- Proposals that are related to key sectors of the Councils economic strategy;
- Development that will improve personal health in the community, including facilities designed for the immediate needs of disabled people or people with other medical requirements. Written support from an Occupational Therapist or Doctor will normally be required in such cases;
- Major projects that will benefit the local community:
- The fast track warrant assessment service is also available for works with an estimated cost of £5,000 or less. Examples include, minor alterations, installation of roof lights or a new window, installation of patio or French doors.



Please note that the above list is not exhaustive and it is at the discretion of the Building Standards service to establish eligibility for a Building Warrant to qualify for the fast track service.

In most cases, we aim to provide you with a technical response, or issue the building warrant, as applicable, within 20 working days from receipt of your valid application. In some cases, applications for a building warrant will result in a “customer agreement” between you and building standards where the performance outcomes including the target first response period will be specifically agreed.

### Dissatisfaction with response times performance

Other than those applications covered by a customer agreement, if you have not received a technical response, or a building warrant, as applicable, within 35 working days from receipt of your valid application you have the right to request resolution to the matter. This may be done, in the first instance, by contacting our Building Standards Team Leader on 01382 433001.

You may also contact the Building Standards Division at **buildingstandards@scotland.gsi.gov.uk**  
or Tel: SG Central Enquiry Unit **08457 741 741** or **0131 556 8400**.

## FOLLOWING THE APPROVAL OF A BUILDING WARRANT

### Period of Validity

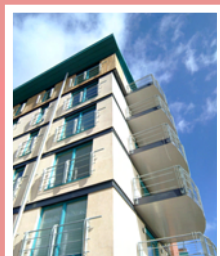
A building warrant is valid for a period of three years from the date of approval. It is the responsibility of the applicant/agent to ensure that the works are completed within this period. If the work is not completed within the 3 year period an application for an extension of time must be made by the applicant/agent prior to the warrant expiring.

### Reasonable Inquiry/Site Inspections

Along with your Building Warrant you will receive a number of documents and to assist you understand the post Building Warrant approval process we will provide you with an information pack - which attempts to clearly explain what you are expected to do following approval of the Building Warrant.

Included in the information pack is an inspection plan, this is provided to assist our customers achieve compliance with the Building Regulations, it is our aim to carry out targeted site inspections at risk assessed key stages of the works, identifying and bringing to your attention any obvious issues relating to meeting the requirements of the building standards.

Targeted inspections can be of particular benefit in aiding early identification of problems which may be more disruptive if identified at a later stage, or which may be covered up prior to possible identification by the Building



Standards Surveyor. It is the responsibility of the applicant/agent to inform Building Standards when the stages key stages of work are ready for inspection.

It is the responsibility of the applicant or an agent appointed by the applicant to agent to employ the services of a competent contractor and ensure the works are supervised and completed in accordance with the approved plans and the Building Regulations.

Inspections by Building Standards Surveyors can be very limited and

will not monitor all stages of building work. It should also be noted that Building Standards Surveyors cannot act as supervisors or clerks of works for an applicant.

### **Additional Site Inspections**

Certain issues may arise throughout the course of the works and to assist our customers in such cases you can request additional site inspections, you are reminded however that our Surveyors will only pass comment on particular issues pertaining to the Building Warrant application and compliance with the Building Regulations.

### **Availability of Plans on Site**

Your building warrant includes a full set of stamped approved plans and specifications. You should ensure that copies of these are retained on site during the works for use by the contractor and our Building Standards Surveyor.

### **Inspection Records**

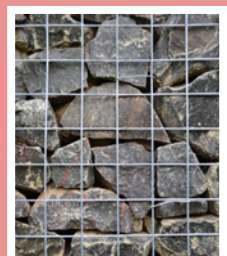
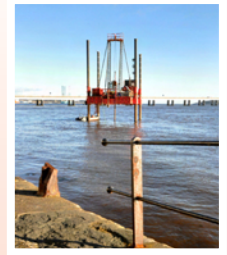
Records of site inspections will be kept and shall include:

- The dates of inspections;
- The name of the surveyor who carried out the inspection;
- The type of inspection;
- Whether or not the works were found to be in order;
- Any departures from the approved plans shall be notified to the applicant/agent.

### **Unsatisfactory Inspections**

There may occasions where the Building Standards Surveyor is not satisfied with the findings of the inspection. The normal course of action will be to bring this to the attention of the responsible person at the time the inspection.

The applicant and or agent will be notified of any significant defect/s identified during the inspection in order that they can rectify the situation. There may be occasions where the Building Standards Surveyor require to carry out a re inspection or seek some form of reassurance that the defect has been rectified.





## Completion of Works

On completion of works covered by a Building Warrant, the Completion Certificate Submission must be submitted on the prescribed form. This is a signed declaration by an applicant/agent that the works have been completed in accordance with the Building Regulations and approved plans.

Where the proposals include electrical works an appropriate Electrical Compliance Certificate must be signed by a competent electrician.

On receipt of a Completion Certificate Submission, we will proceed forthwith to consider the completion certificate and endeavour to notify the person who submitted the certificate of its acceptance or rejection within 14 days. (NB. certain repetitive works may be inspected by sample.)

If a Building Standards Surveyor, after making reasonable enquiry, accepts a Completion Certificate submitted by an applicant/agent, we will endeavour to confirm acceptance within 5 working days.

Where a Completion Certificate Submission has been rejected an applicant/agent shall be informed of the reasons why.

It is the responsibility of the applicant/agent to inform Building Standards when the works are ready for re-inspection.

An application for a Certificate of Completion shall only be considered where a Building Warrant is still valid.

It is an offence to occupy or use a new building, which does not have the benefit of an Accepted Completion Certificate Submission

## Amendments and/or Deviations from Approved Plans

The work should be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and specifications and it is your responsibility to check and ensure this occurs. Any deviation or change may result in failure to meet relevant standards and cause your Completion Certificate to be rejected. You should notify us of any change and ensure that appropriate consent is obtained. Such changes may necessitate a formal amendment to the warrant and this should be obtained by you prior to submission of your Completion Certificate. Please also note that any changes may result in revised Construction Compliance Plan.

## Extending a Building Warrant

The 3 year life period of a Building Warrant may be extended subject to;

- A written request being made within the 3 year life period of the Building Warrant or in special circumstances at the discretion of the Council;
- The payment of the statutory fee;
- Work on site having commenced.



## Letter of Comfort

It should be noted that this service is at the discretion of the council;

- We shall endeavour to respond to a written request for a non-statutory inspection (accompanied by the appropriate fee) with a "Letter of Comfort" within 10 working days of the written request;
- A qualified statement where appropriate should be provided within 10 working days following the inspection;
- All requested inspections incur a fee;
- On request you shall be advised of the fees charged for the "Letter of Comfort" process.

## Dangerous Buildings

Local authorities have powers under the Building (Scotland) Act to ensure that buildings are maintained in a safe condition for the benefit of the public in and around buildings. Where the local authority has been advised that a building is considered to be dangerous it we will endeavour to visit the property within 24 hours including weekends and public holidays.

Buildings, which pose an immediate danger, will be made safe or fenced off as soon as possible. Enforcement action shall be used where appropriate. If a building on inspection is not considered to be an immediate danger the owner of the building will be contacted and advised what steps to take to remove the danger.

Failure to take the appropriate steps to make the building safe within a prescribed timetable may result in enforcement action being taken against the owner.

## Complaints Procedure

Should the service we provide fall short of the standards set out in this charter and you wish to complain you can make your complaint by telephone, by letter, or in person. You may also register your complaint online using the Council's web site.

Visit: [www.dundee.gov.uk/cservices/compform.htm](http://www.dundee.gov.uk/cservices/compform.htm)

If you have a complaint about how we are delivering the Building Standards Service we will:

- Explain the complaint procedures to be followed;
- Acknowledge in writing written complaints within 5 working days advising how the complaint will be dealt with;
- Fully investigate all complaints and give written response advising what action the Council proposes to take.



## CUSTOMER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Treat our staff with fairness and respect
- Attend appointments at the agreed time
- Notify us of changes in your circumstances as soon as possible
- Provide information as soon as possible

How to contact us:

If you wish to discuss any issues regarding the Building Warrant process you can visit our Customer Contact Centre on the ground floor of Dundee House.

Office Hours:

**Monday to Friday 8.30 to 1700hrs**

If you wish to write to us we can be contacted at the following address:

The Building Standards Team  
Planning Division  
City Development Department  
Dundee City Council  
Floor 6, Dundee House  
50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee  
DD1 1LS

Alternatively e-mail, telephone or FAX us using the following contact details:

e-mail: **bs@dundeecity.gov.uk**

Tel: **01382 433102**

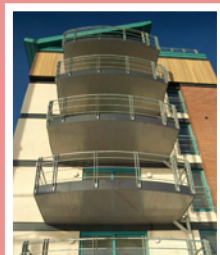
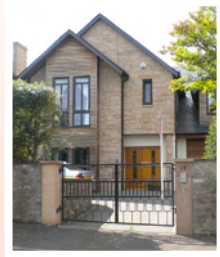


## OUR COMMITMENT

Dundee City Councils Building Standards Team is committed to the delivery of a high quality customer based service. Any comments on the service you have received during or after the Building Warrant process would be most appreciated.

Please forward any comments to:

The Team Leader  
Building Standards.  
Planning Division  
City Development Department  
Dundee City Council  
Floor 6, Dundee House  
50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee  
DD1 1LS



اگر آپ کو انگریزی سمجھنے میں مشکلات پیش آتی ہیں تو براۓ مہربانی نیچے دیئے گئے پتہ پر رابطہ کریں

Jeżeli masz trudności ze zrozumieniem języka angielskiego,  
proszę skontaktuj się z adresem poniżej

如閣下十分明白英語, 請與以下的地址聯絡。

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇੰਗਲਿਸ਼ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਕਠਿਨਾਈ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਪਤੇ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ:

Если у вас проблемы с пониманием английского языка, обратитесь  
по нижеуказанному адресу

If you have difficulties understanding English, please contact the address below.

Dundee Translation and Interpretation Service,  
Dundee City Council,  
Mitchell Street Centre,  
Top Floor,  
Mitchell Street,  
Dundee DD2 2LJ

Tel 01382 435825

Building Standards Team

November 2013



# The Building Standards Customer Charter