

# Building Standards Charter

**Aberdeenshire**  
COUNCIL



**Aberdeenshire Council**  
Environment and Infrastructure Services

Version 10.2, March 2024

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of Building Standards is to ensure a healthy and safe built environment throughout Aberdeenshire. This is primarily achieved by ensuring that building works comply with Building Regulations through the issue of Building Warrants and the inspection of completed works on site. The Regulations legislate for the Health, Safety and Welfare of people in and about buildings, the conservation of fuel and power, the provision of access and facilities for disabled people and for furthering the achievement of sustainable development.

The range of work covered by the Building Standards Service includes:

- Pre-application discussion, information/advice.
- Processing of Building Warrant applications.
- Inspection of Works in progress and at completion stage.
- Search out information relative to Building Warrant and Completion Certificates.
- Consultation and advice to the Licensing Section for public entertainment, Homes in Multiple Occupation, temporary structures and premises which require a Premises licence.
- Inspection of Dangerous and Defective Buildings and Structures.

## 2. The purpose of the Building Standards Charter

The Building Standards Customer Charter provides information about the standards of service that all verifiers should meet. This gives customers the reassurance that a consistent, high-quality service will be delivered no matter which verifier provides the service.

It is divided into two parts:

- Part 1: The National Charter; and
- Part 2: The Local Charter.

## 3. Part 1: The National Charter

### 3.1 Our National 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.

### 3.2 Our National Vision / Values

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

### 3.3 Our National Commitments

**Nationally all verifiers will:**

1. Seek to minimise the time it takes for customers to obtain a building warrant or amendment to a building warrant.
2. Ensure continuous improvement around the robustness of verification assessments to ensure compliance.
3. Meet and seek to exceed customer expectations.
4. Carry out local customer satisfaction research, such as surveys, focus groups etc.
5. Address feedback obtained through local and national customer satisfaction research (including a National Customer Satisfaction Survey) to improve the customer experience.
6. Provide information on local formal complaints procedures, the Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) Dispute Resolution Process, and the Building Standards Division (BSD) Customer Performance Reporting Service, and refer customers as appropriate.
7. Dispute Resolution Process, and the BSD Customer Performance Reporting Service, and refer customers as appropriate.
8. Provide accurate financial data that is evidence-based.
9. Engage and participate in partnership working at local and national level to identify and embed service improvements at a national level.
10. Adhere to a national annual performance report outlining our objectives, targets and performance.
11. Fully adhere to the commitments outlined in this Charter, including information on customer dissatisfaction in relation to building warrant processing timescales, processes and technical interpretation.
12. Use a consistent format for continuous improvement plans.

### 3.4 Our Targets

- 95% of first reports (for building warrants and amendments) issued within 20 days – all first reports (including building warrants and amendments issued without a first report).
- 90% of building warrants and amendments issued within 10 days from receipt of all satisfactory information – all building warrants and amendments (not including building warrants and amendments issued without a first report).



### 3.5 Information

National information on the verification performance framework can be found at the Scottish Government website [www.scotland.gov.uk/bsd](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/bsd)

## 4. Part 2: The Local Charter

The charter sets out the customer service standards that you can expect when you interact with Aberdeenshire 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.

### 4.1 Our Local Vision



From mountain to sea

## Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland

### The best area

Helping to create and sustain the best quality of life for all through:

- happy, healthy, confident people
- safe, friendly and lively communities
- an enterprising and adaptable economy
- our special environment and diverse culture

### The best council

Aiming to provide excellent services for all by:

- involving, responding and enabling
- finding new and more efficient ways of doing things
- providing elected leadership for our area
- working with our partners in the North East and beyond
- always looking to the future

#### **In contributing to the vision, Building Standards will:**

- manage Aberdeenshire's unique environment in the interests of current and future generations
- manage construction
- provide advice, information and support to our customers in all areas of work.

## 4.2 Our Local Commitments

1. Pre-application discussions, which may involve other parties, are welcomed to encourage high quality Building Warrant applications to allow them to be dealt with efficiently.
2. Building Standards Surveyors are available for advice and consultation and are contactable via email, phone and MS Teams for virtual meetings (see page 10 for all contact details) during office hours, 9:00am – 5:00pm.
3. We have adopted a hybrid workSTYLE and meetings can be arranged virtually or in person at our local offices. Booking is essential for meetings as Building Standards Surveyors will co-ordinate arrangements and not all offices are open to the public and Building Standard Surveyors can be out on site. Email and telephone enquiries are welcomed and will be responded to during office hours.
4. You will be seen by a staff member within 5 minutes of your appointment time for onsite and virtual appointments.
5. If you need to visit us either virtually or face to face and are unable to do so, please contact us to make alternative arrangements.
6. We will acknowledge your enquiry within 3 working days of receipt and provide a full response as quickly as possible no later than 10 working days for written correspondence.
7. Telephone calls will be answered quickly, normally within twelve rings. Whilst every effort will be made to respond to your query, if the Building Standards Surveyor dealing with your application or area is not available it may be necessary to leave a message and have the Surveyor ring you back, by the end of the next working day.
8. We will treat you politely and not discriminate because of race, religion, age, gender, sexuality, or disability.
9. Provide somewhere for you to discuss your query in private if you would prefer.
10. Provide you with a named Building Standards Surveyor and direct contact details.
11. Ensure our responses are written following the principles of plain English and address all issues raised.
12. You will find the reception area clean, tidy, and accessible.
13. Our staff always wear identification badges.



## 5. Submitting a Building Warrant Application

It is the applicant's or agent's responsibility to make sure that an application is submitted and completed correctly, and that the appropriate [fee](#) has been paid, to avoid any delay with the application. Use of the national Building Standards [Portal](#) for all submissions is encouraged where you can follow the checklist style process for submitting an application. Building Standards Surveyors are also available to give assistance on how to submit an application.

### **When a Building Warrant Application is submitted to us, we will:**

- Provide you with a technical response, or issue your Building Warrant as applicable, within 20 working days from receipt of your valid application.
- Provide a [Fast Assessment Service](#) for minor domestic Building Warrant applications.

### **When a Letter of Comfort is requested, we will:**

- Process requests for non-statutory "Letters of Comfort" in respect of earlier Building Warrant applications where no Certificate of Completion exists, or minor unauthorised works undertaken without the benefit of a Building Warrant

### **Once a Building Warrant Application is approved, we will:**

- Issue your Building Warrant approval letter
- Issue a Construction Certification & Notification Plan which includes details of the stages of work that we require to be notified and ready for inspection
- Issue a checklist to assist the completion of larger projects

## 6. 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, we will assess the property within 4 hours.

- 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, on inspection, a building 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.

## 7. Performance Standards and Targets

Standard	Target
Visitors with an appointment will be seen by staff member within 5 minutes of their appointment time	90%
Telephone calls will be answered within 12 rings	90%
Telephone messages and voicemail will be returned by the end of the next working day	90%
Acknowledge receipt of an enquiry within 3 days	90%
Respond to written correspondence within 10 working days	90%
Maintain an overall customer satisfaction rate of 90%	90%
Provide a technical response or issue your Building Warrant within 20 working days	95%
Issue Building Warrant or amendment within 10 days from receipt of receiving all satisfactory information	90%
Time taken from notification of a dangerous building report to assessment by a member of staff - 4 hours	100%
Maintain an overall national customer satisfaction rate above 7.5, on a scale from 1 (Not at all satisfied) to 10 (Completely satisfied)	> 7.5

## 8. Keeping our Customers Informed

### Building Warrants online

The online Building Standards [Register](#) allows users to access details of building warrant applications registered since 1st May 2005. The register contains details of the nature and location of building warrant applications. Further detail can be obtained from our [local offices](#).



## 9. Customer feedback / Complaints

Our aim is to provide all customers with a good quality customer service that gets things right first time. We value your feedback and the [National customer satisfaction survey for Building Standards](#) provides access to our national customer satisfaction survey. This gives you the opportunity to tell us how we dealt with your Building Warrant and / or Completion Certificate.

Problems can normally be resolved informally by simply contacting us. However, Building Standards is a complex procedure and individuals may consider that their application has not been dealt with effectively or efficiently. Aberdeenshire Council is committed to continually improving the services which it provides to the people of Aberdeenshire and has adopted a nationally agreed 2 stage complaints procedure for all Council Services.

### **Have your say:**

A copy of the leaflet entitled "Have your say" can be obtained from each of the main Service Centres, Area Offices and [online](#). The leaflet or [online](#) information sets out the steps that you can take if you wish to make a complaint relating to the standard of service that you have received, or alternatively have any ideas or comments that you wish to suggest in order that we can improve our services as well as compliments.

### **Complaints procedure:**

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by e-mail, via our [website](#) or in writing. We have a two-stage complaints procedure. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if the matter needs a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

### **Guide to our Complaints Procedure:**

#### *Stage 1: frontline resolution*

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within five working days if we can. If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.

#### *Stage 2: investigation*

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they are complex or need detailed investigation. We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days. We will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than 20 working days unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.

### **The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO):**

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it. We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.

**Dissatisfaction with Initial Response Time:**

If after 35 working days from receipt of your valid application, you have not received a technical response then you have the right to request resolution to the matter. This can be done by contacting Building Standards Team Managers directly. You may also report the issue to the Building Standards Division at [Buildingstandards@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Buildingstandards@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

**Future Steps:**

We aim to continually improve the Building Standards Service within Aberdeenshire Council using a range of continuous improvement initiatives. As part of our ongoing commitment to improving services to our customers we aim to:

- Monitor and report on performance of the service on a quarterly basis
- Publish Building Standards customer briefings on a range of topics
- Continue Agent focus groups comprised of a number of frequent users of the Service to discuss initiatives and service delivery
- Update the Building Standards Charter as required
- Build on our existing customer feedback surveys to help inform service changes

## 10. How to Contact Us

**Opening Hours:** Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5.00pm except for Public Holidays.

**Email Address:** Email your enquiry to [BuildingStandards@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:BuildingStandards@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 01467 534333

**Website:** <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/Building-Standards/>

Building Standards operate 6 area teams which cover Aberdeenshire. If you would like to arrange a meeting with us, please telephone: 01467 534333 to book a suitable time slot for a virtual or face to face meeting. Please let us know in advance if you have any special requirements that we need to take into consideration.



- Aboyne\*\*: Bellwood Road, Aboyne, AB34 5HQ
- Banff: Town House, Low Street, Banff, AB45 1AY
- Ellon\*\*: 45 Bridge Street, Ellon, AB41 9AA
- Inverurie: Gordon House, Blackhall Road, Inverurie, AB51 3WA
- Peterhead: Buchan House, St Peter Street, Peterhead, AB42 1QF
- Stonehaven: Viewmount, Arduthie Road, Stonehaven, AB39 2DQ

**\*\*not open to the public**

If you need information from this document in an alternative language or in a Large Print, Easy Read, Braille or BSL, please telephone [contact us](#).