

## Building Warrant Fees

A number of changes are being introduced to the building standards system through the work of the Building Standards Futures Board Programme. This follows the recommendations made by the expert review panels on Compliance & Enforcement and Fire Safety, to strengthen the building standards system in Scotland. The changes to strengthen the system will require additional verification compliance capacity and financial resources for local authority verifiers over the coming years.

The increase in fees is part of a planned 3-year model to increase fees annually, dependent on the outcome from monitoring, reporting, and auditing of the application of increased building warrant fee income at local authority level in support of increased verification service capacity and will be subject to Ministerial approval.

The decision to increase fee levels followed a public consultation on building warrant fees in 2023. The consultation responses, had 65% of respondents supporting an increase in fees to strengthen the building

standards system in Scotland. The increased fee levels include an inflation uplift from 2017, as well as funding to support the introduction of the national Building Standards Hub (Hub). The Hub, which is being hosted within Fife Council will be launched on the 24 May 2024.



It is intended that the increase in fees will be used by local authorities to support and invest in their Building Standards Teams as necessary to meet revised Verification Operating and Performance Frameworks being introduced from 1st of April and to meet future increased inspection and other compliance workload.

## New Build Heat Standards 2024

Heating Scotland's homes and buildings is one of the biggest contributors to our carbon emissions. New measures due to be introduced will ensure new buildings will not contribute to emissions. People who buy new homes will know it's future-proofed against the need to switch heating systems in the future.

The New Build Heat Standard (NBHS) will affect the type of heating system that new-build homes and properties will be allowed to use. From April 2024, changes to building regulations will mean new homes and buildings will not be allowed to use direct emission (or polluting) heating systems like oil and gas boilers, and bioenergy. Instead, they will need to use climate-friendly alternatives like heat pumps and heat networks (also referred to as clean heating systems). Heat networks can be used regardless of their fuel source, including ones using direct emissions heat.



The NBHS applies to all new buildings and some conversions where a building warrant is applied for from 1 April 2024. The Standard only applies to systems used for heating and cooling and does not apply to industrial process heat.

A conversion is a particular change in occupation or use of a building, for example changing an office to a hotel or an attic into a bedroom. Building regulations define and treat conversions differently to alterations and extensions.

If you are converting an existing building, the NBHS will apply if:

- you have a direct emissions heating system in the building or area of the building you are converting, and
- it is 'reasonably practicable' to install a clean heating system – guidance on what is considered 'reasonably practicable' is provided in support of the new standard 6.11 within Section 6 (energy) of the 2024 Technical Handbooks.

There are exceptions where the NBHS will not apply. For more detail, see the Building Standards Technical Handbooks.



## Building Standards Hub

LABSS announced that on the 21st December 2023, Scottish Ministers, having approved the creation of a permanent Building Standards Hub and its funding from building warrant fees which are to be increased as of the 1st of April 2024, formally offered the role of hosting a pilot version of the Building Standards Hub to Fife Council.

The Building Standards Hub has been developed in order to deliver national advice, learning and development and a range of building standards system services to all of Scotland's local authority building standards teams and stakeholders in the construction sector. The hub will promote communication between authorities throughout the country, improving the overall quality of each individual service.

The move, towards a permanent Building Standards Hub, comes following the success of the pilot programme and the endorsements it has received demonstrated the viability and sustainability of Building Standards Hub for Scotland.

LABSS says it looks forward to the continued close working relationship that exists between the two organisations and the continued benefit that it will bring to local authority building standards teams supporting transformation and quality in building standards services across Scotland.

Work of the Building Standards Hub Pilot, supported by LABSS, the Building Standards Division, and Fife Council will continue through the work of the Delivery Model Development Group to deliver the permanent Building Standards Hub from the end of May 2024.

## Monthly Performance Figures

Monthly performance figures for Building Warrant applications received, processed and determined by the Building Standards Section over the last 9 months.

	2023	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Building Warrants Received		57	47	72	66	64	74	60	40	52
% of Building Warrant applications processed within 15 working days		100%	98%	98%	96%	100%	91%	90%	92%	100%
% of Building Warrant applications processed within 20 working days		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
and assessed within an average of		3 days	7 days	4 days	6 days	5 days	6 days	7 days	7 days	6 days
Building Warrants determined		51	61	80	35	77	62	63	46	32
% of Building Warrants determined within 6 days of receipt of all outstanding information		94%	90%	95%	94%	95%	94%	97%	93%	84%
Received Completion Certificate submissions		95	123	78	79	206	69	73	179	116
which were inspected within an average of		2 days	2 days	2 days	2 days	2 days	4 days	1 day	2 days	2 days
% of Completion Certificates determined within 3 days of final inspection		85%	56%	97%	96%	95%	100%	100%	99%	81%
Inspected Property complaints relating to enforcement		13	18	19	16	10	13	17	11	13
Enforcement notices issued in relation to unauthorised works or dangerous buildings		4	7	3	5	1	2	2	4	4