Building Standards Self-assessment Tool for Verifiers

April 2021

Contents

Version	Date	Amendments Made
1.0	April 2021	Implementation

Introduction to using the self-assessment tool

The self-assessment tool is aimed at supporting verifiers in evaluating their approach to continuous improvement to meet their obligations under the Operating Framework for Building Standards Verifiers 2021.

The tool is intended to be a practical resource which requires no formal training or prerequisite knowledge in quality management systems.

The business areas can be assessed individually and in any order. The completed tool and evidence gathered is intended for internal use by the verifier to support their service review and business planning activities. It is intended to help verifiers develop targeted improvement actions which can be summarised in their continuous improvement plans. There is no expectation for the outcome to be submitted to Building Standards Division (BSD) of Scottish Government.

The tool enables verifiers to self-assess their service against eight business areas and take a holistic view of how they set out to resource, deliver, manage and develop their service.

Verifier performance is already assessed against the seven key performance outcomes within the Performance Framework for Verifiers 2021. The results from these performance returns can be used in conjunction with the tool to provide a basis for setting improvement plan actions and developing the verification function.

The eight business areas are listed below.

1. Improvement-focused leadership
2. Delivery of the verification service
3. Policies, planning and procedures
4. Workforce management and support
5. Impact on staff
6. Impact on partners and industry
7. Impact on customer experience
8. Key performance outcomes

This tool has been created based on an evidence search of existing national and international self-assessment methodologies in use across the public sector.

The tool highlights themes for each business area and uses the following key questions to prompt responses.

- How are you doing in respect of this area?
- How do you know this?
- What do you need to do better or differently?

How good is our leadership?

How good is our management?

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

What key outcomes have we achieved?

LEADERSHIP

Vision, values and aims

Leadership and direction

Managing change

Innovate and improve

DELIVERY OF THE VERIFICATION SERVICE

Delivering verification processes

Improving the quality of services

Financial management

Partnership working

Resource management

Information systems

POLICIES, PLANNING AND PROCEDURES

Policy and procedure review

Inclusion, fairness and equality

Risk management

Operational resilience

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Sufficient recruitment and retention

Deployment and teamwork

Skill development and staff support

Contingency and succession planning

IMPACT ON STAFF

Employee participation

Improving performance

IMPACT ON PARTNERS AND INDUSTRY

Collaboration

Sharing best practice

Influencing policy and practice

IMPACT ON CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Stakeholder engagement

Customer journey

KEY PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Robust data collection and reporting

Improvements in performance

Meeting legislative requirements

Lessons learned

What is our overall capacity for improvement?

Overall assessment of all business areas, in particular key outcomes, impact and leadership. Leadership and direction

The tool prompts verifiers to provide summary statements within each area to highlight where they perceive their service to be. The summary statements should reflect the following:

- what you aim to achieve

- what you do to achieve results

- how you do it

- how and when you review what you do

- what you do to refine the above and improve outcomes.

It's the responsibility of verifiers to be open and honest in their responses and to collaborate with relevant staff and stakeholders to gain a true reflection of their service.

This will provide opportunities to:

- review what progress has been made and what development and learning has happened

- provide assurance to customers, Ministers and the general public about continuous improvement of the quality of verification services

- highlight areas of good practice for sharing both internally and externally

- highlight areas for improvement and how these should be prioritised.

Verifiers completing the tool are encouraged to use information from different sources to triangulate evidence of the quality of service delivery, for example, direct observation, discussions with staff and customers and comparison against other verifiers. Relevant data from performance returns to BSD and other performance management systems can be used in conjunction with contextual information to build up a clear picture of the service as a whole.

The completed tool should focus on clear outcomes rather than just a list of activities e.g. "the service carries out employee 1 to 1s".

It's more informative to include a description of the impact of changes or improvement activities on the delivery of services or information on how potential impact is being monitored.

e.g. "employee 1 to 1s are carried out annually for 100% of staff and monitored so that training needs can be collated into a unit training plan. This has resulted in key skills in x, y, z being developed across the team. This has had a positive impact on customer satisfaction as demonstrated through our national survey rating improving by 20%".

Self-assessment context

Verifier name:

Please use the box below to highlight relevant contextual and background information about the organisation or provide a link to your up to date **Annual Verification Performance Report**.

For each of the following business areas, please provide a succinct narrative outlining how you perceive your service to be, how you know this and what you need to do better or differently.

The narrative should focus on the impact and outcomes on those accessing building standards services. This should include examples that demonstrate the impact of improvements made for those who use or deliver services. It can also include links to other evidence contained in wider strategies and supporting plans for the service.

BUSINESS AREA 1:
Improvement-focused leadership

Q. How are you doing in respect of improvement-focused leadership?

What? Look at how your leaders develop a strategic direction which motivates and inspires people to develop.

Why? How change is managed and communicated by leaders can directly impact the culture and overall capacity of the service to improve.

Provide summary statements to highlight where you think you are.

- How effective are initiatives aimed at developing your leaders?
- Can you demonstrate that the service is well led and has senior level support?
- Can you demonstrate that staff and stakeholders understand and value the service's purpose, values and aims?
- How do you enable staff to feel motivated, empowered and supported to contribute to quality improvement and development of the service?
- Can you demonstrate staff feeling confident and empowered with knowledge and skills to respond effectively to complaints and adverse events?
- How is an improvement culture encouraged within the service?
- What processes are in place to innovate and improve the service?
- Are customer experience outcomes considered when developing innovative improvement ideas?

Q. How do you know this?

- What evidence is there that there is a culture of continuous improvement embedded across the service?
- Can you show year-on-year trends of continuous improvement across all your Key Performance Outcome targets under the Performance Framework 2021?
- Can you demonstrate that employees have confidence in their leaders?
- Can you show examples of feedback from employees being used to improve the quality of services?

Q. What do you need to do better or differently?

- What are the key next steps or areas for improvement the service needs to take forward in improving quality and improvement-focused leadership?

Any further comments about improvement-focused leadership?

BUSINESS AREA 2:
Delivery of the verification service

Q. How are you doing in respect of your delivery of the verification service?

What? Gather information on how you deliver and improve the quality of your verification service.

Why? Continuous improvement is a critical success factor in raising the bar for compliance and consistency.

Provide summary statements to highlight where you think you are.

- How are recognised standards and agreed best practice taken into account and implemented, and how are outcomes measured?
- How do you engage with stakeholders to provide access to information and resources?
- How do you work with partners to ensure a smooth customer journey?
- Do you have embedded processes to drive improvement in your service?
- How effectively do you attract and manage investment back into your service?
- How do you ensure modern and effective design of services and systems in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders?
- How do you ensure service delivery and the systems to support it are effective today and will be effective in the future?
- How do you ensure you continuously review and learn from adverse events, complaints, audits, evaluations, data and feedback?
- How do you anticipate and manage advances in digital technology to ensure your systems are fit for purpose?

Q. How do you know this?

- To what extent do you carry out regular and rigorous assessments of your service and the systems that support it?
- What improvement data is collected and how are lessons learned from data analysis shared and who are they shared with?
- Can you demonstrate that you fully meet KPO5 (Maintain Financial Governance) under the Performance Framework 2021?
- Can you demonstrate that you fully meet KPO6 (eBuilding Standards) under the Performance Framework 2021?
- Can you demonstrate an embedded culture of continuous improvement in terms of your operational and financial efficiency?
- Can you show examples where technology has been developed to better respond to customer/user/employee needs?

Q. What do you need to do better or differently?

- What are the key next steps or areas for improvement the service needs to take forward in improving delivery of the verification service and the systems that support it?

Any further comments about delivery of the verification service?

BUSINESS AREA 3:
Policies, planning and procedures

Q. How are you doing in respect of policies, planning and procedures?

What? Look at how you manage business planning, developing procedures and managing risks across your service.

Why? Embedded business planning and risk management activities are essential to maintaining operational resilience to minimise disruptions to service delivery.

Provide summary statements to highlight where you think you are.

- How is the effectiveness and implementation of policies and procedures assessed and improved?

- How do you know if risks are appropriately identified, assessed, recorded and reviewed?

- What controls are in place to reduce impact of identified risks?

- How do you know if your business planning and governance arrangements provide assurances of delivering an effective verification service?

- How do you ensure you meet your obligations under the Operating Framework 2021?

Q. How do you know this?

- What evidence do you have that policies, planning and procedures are well documented and up to date?
- Can you show how business focus is embedded into your strategies and supporting plans?
- Can you demonstrate that you fully meet KPO7 (Annual Verification Performance Report) under the Performance Framework 2021?
- Can you demonstrate that processes are compliant with relevant legislation and embedded into practice?

Q. What do you need to do better or differently?

- What are the key next steps or areas for improvement the service needs to take forward in improving policies, planning and procedures?

Any further comments about policies, planning and procedures?

BUSINESS AREA 4:
Workforce management and support

Q. How are you doing in respect of workforce management and support?

What? Gather evidence of workforce planning, recruitment, training and team working across your service.

Why? Building an appropriately skilled workforce who can deliver high-quality verification services now and in the future is critical to ensuring your service is viable.

Provide summary statements to highlight where you think you are.

- How effective is your workforce planning and how sustainable is your workforce profile?

- How well does it demonstrate a flexible and responsive approach to succession planning and developing skills?

- How are resources allocated to respond to changes in service priorities and demands?

- How do you know if your processes for recruitment, induction, training and development are effective for all staff?

- Can you demonstrate that staff work together to solve problems and make improvements?

Q. How do you know this?

- What evidence is there of workforce planning and contingency arrangements?
- Do outsourced specialisms have robust service-level agreements in place?
- How are lessons learned to improve development of a sustainable workforce?
- Can you demonstrate that you meet or exceed your targets under KPO1 (Professional Expertise and Technical Processes) under the Performance Framework 2021?

Q. What do you need to do better or differently?

- What are the key next steps or areas for improvement the service needs to take forward in improving workforce management and support?

Any further comments about workforce management and support?

BUSINESS AREA 5:
Impact on staff

Q. How are you doing in respect of impact on staff?

What? Gather information on your employees' experience of how services are delivered and the level of involvement staff have in making improvements.

Why? If staff feel engaged, supported, motivated and valued then they are more likely to deliver high quality services to customers.

Provide summary statements to highlight where you think you are.

- How do you measure and monitor staff views over time to identify whether they feel engaged, supported, motivated and valued?
- How do you involve staff in planning and delivering the organisation's vision, values and aims?
- How do you ensure staff have all the information that they need?
- How do you ensure staff can access the resources and equipment they need?
- How do you use feedback from staff to drive improvement and how do you inform staff of changes made in response to their feedback?
- How do you support staff to improve their performance?

Q. How do you know this?

- What evidence do you have about how staff feel and is the evidence up to date?
- Can you demonstrate feedback from staff being used to improve the quality of services?

Q. What do you need to do better or differently?

- What are the key next steps or areas for improvement the service needs to take forward in improving the impact on staff?

Any further comments about impact on staff?

BUSINESS AREA 6:
Impact on partners and industry

Q. How are you doing in respect of impact on partners and industry?

What? Look at how you work alongside and engage with partners and industry (e.g. LABSS Executive and Consortia, local and national forums, local and central government, academia, professional bodies, industry groups and associations).

Why? Knowledge sharing across the industry promotes consistency in how building standards verification is undertaken. Working in partnership can improve adaptability to changing business environments.

Provide summary statements to highlight where you think you are.

- How do you engage with partners and industry about the services delivered?
- How do you assess whether partners and industry feel sufficiently engaged?
- How do you know whether partners and industry have confidence in your service?
- To what extent do you encourage and support innovation in partners and industry?
- How do you use feedback from partners and industry to drive improvement?
- How effective are processes in encouraging collaboration with stakeholders?
- How is learning and intelligence shared with external stakeholders?
- How effective are mechanisms for doing this?

Q. How do you know this?

- What evidence do you have about how partners and industry feel about your service?
- Can you demonstrate feedback from partners and industry being used to improve the quality of your service?
- What evidence is there of shared intelligence and how has been used to improve the service?
- To what extent do you influence wider policy and practice (local, national, international)?
- Can you demonstrate effective outcomes/improvement from collaboration with external stakeholders or partners?

Q. What do you need to do better or differently?

- What are the key next steps or areas for improvement the service needs to take forward in improving the impact on partners and industry?

Any further comments about impact on partners and industry?

BUSINESS AREA 7:
Impact on customer experience

Q. How are you doing in respect of impact on customer experience?

What? Gather information on your customers' experience of your services and the level of involvement customers have in making improvements (e.g. direct and indirect customer segments; agents; applicants; developers; contractors; householders and landlords).

Why? If you can design your service by responding to your customers' needs then it is more likely to be fit for purpose and cost effective.

Provide summary statements to highlight where you think you are.

- How do you identify and meet your customer needs?
- How do you clearly communicate, advise and openly engage with your customers?
- How do you ensure customers have all the information that they need?
- Is your Customer Charter up to date and relevant to your customer base?
- How do you work with customers when planning and making changes?
- How do you support customers to provide feedback on their experiences?
- What is done with feedback, how is it shared and who is it shared with?
- How is customer feedback used to drive improvement?

Q. How do you know this?

- What evidence do you have about the quality of services delivered to customers?

- Can you demonstrate that customers have confidence in your service?

- Can you show examples of feedback from customers being used to improve the quality of services?

- What evidence do you have that communications are tailored to different customer segments and that their customer journey is assessed from their perspective?

- Can you demonstrate that you fully meet KPO3 and KPO4 (Quality Customer Experience) under the Performance Framework 2021?

- Can you show how customer focus is embedded into your strategies and supporting plans?

Q. What do you need to do better or differently?

- What are the key next steps or areas for improvement the service needs to take forward to improve the impact on customer experience?

Any further comments about impact on customer experience?

BUSINESS AREA 8:
Key performance outcomes

Q. How are you doing in respect of achieving key performance outcomes?

What? Look at your strengths, good practice and the key challenges you face in fulfilment of statutory duties, adherence to national guidelines and meeting or exceeding your targets outlined in the Performance Framework for Verifiers 2021.

Why? Improvements in key performance outcomes can be used to demonstrate how well you are delivering your obligations under the Operating Framework 2021. Publishing up-to-date performance information gives stakeholders confidence that you have been transparent about your performance and the service you are offering.

Provide summary statements to highlight where you think you are.

- How does the service continually improve the quality of services and achieve the best possible outcomes for its stakeholders?
- How does the service measure its performance and make sure its data collection practices are accurate?
- How does the service address dips in performance levels?
- How are statutory requirements of relevant legislation, national standards and guidance taken into account and implemented?
- How do you compare to other verifiers?
- How are outcomes of quality improvement activity embedded and sustained?
- What challenges to cost effectiveness and efficiency have been identified and how are these being overcome?
- How is technology funded and utilised to support service improvements?
- How effectively is learning from adverse events, complaints and safety alerts spread throughout the service, including actions and improvements?

Q. How do you know this?

- What evidence is there of improved outcomes over time?
- Can you demonstrate that you exceed all the national targets in the Performance Framework 2021?
- What evidence is there of compliance with statutory responsibilities?
- Can you demonstrate examples of the impact of quality improvement activities?
- Can you demonstrate how the key performance outcomes detailed in the Performance Framework 2021 are embedded within the service's performance management activities?

Q. What do you need to do better or differently?

- What are the key next steps or areas for improvement the service needs to take forward to improve key outcomes and statutory compliance?
- How do you anticipate what the quality of services will be like in the future?
- What improvement targets/actions have been set for the service?

Any further comments about key performance outcomes?

Summary of improvement plan

Q. Having reflected on all eight areas, what are your overall key priorities for what you need to do better or differently?

(These should be taken forward as actions in your improvement plan and prioritised to improve the quality of services.)

1. Improvement-focused leadership

2. Delivery of the verification service

3. Policies, planning and procedures

4. Workforce management and support

5. Impact on staff

6. Impact on partners and industry

7. Impact on customer experience

8. Key performance outcomes

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