



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Welsh Government

Consultation – Summary of Responses and the
Government Response for the consultation on the
Building Inspector Competence Framework (BICoF)

October 2023

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd / This document is also available in Welsh
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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report provides a summary of the responses to the consultation published on 10 November 2022 in relation to the Building Inspector Competency Framework (BICoF). The BICoF describes the levels of competency that professionals must attain in order to register as a building inspector under the provisions of the Building Act 1984 as amended by the Building Safety Act 2022.
- 1.2. This report does not aim to capture in detail every point raised by respondents, though it should be noted that all comments have been duly considered whether they are noted here or not. The Welsh Government has provided a response to each group of questions, as grouped in the consultation.
- 1.3. The views reported in this summary are those expressed by the respondents to the consultation and do not necessarily reflect those of the Welsh Government.

2. Consultation Responses – Overview

- 2.1. There were 25 responses to the consultation. Respondents who completed the consultation response form were asked to assign their organisation to one of 12 types identified on the form (including a self-designated 'other' option). The table below shows the number of responses received from each sector.

Type of Organisation	Count
Builder / Developer	0
Designer / Engineer /Surveyor	2
Local Authority	6
Building Control Approved Inspector	1
AI Building Inspector	1
LA Building inspector	5
Architect	1
Manufacturer/supply chain	0
Construction professional	0
Professional body	4
Building Occupier/ Resident	0
Other interested party	5

3. Handling of responses

- 3.1. A standard response form was provided for ease of use, however, where respondents did not use the form, representations have been attributed to the most appropriate question.
- 3.2. Where respondents have not answered with the standard responses proposed but have clearly indicated a clear position in their answer, they

have been assigned that response in the statistical analysis. For example where a respondent used the phrase 'I support the proposal' their response was marked as yes. Where a clear response was not identifiable, answers were marked as 'no response' in the statistical analysis with the responses included in the summary of comments.

4. Consultation responses – Brief Summary and Government Responses

Consistency across the border

Question 1

- 4.1. Is consistency across administrations (i.e. England and Wales) important for your organisation?

Summary of responses

Yes	18	72.0%
No	3	12.0%
Unsure	1	4.0%
Not applicable	2	8.0%
No response	1	4.0%

- 4.2. A large majority of respondents indicated that consistency across administrations is important, particularly with the registration process as many organisations and professionals operate in both England and Wales. Additionally, a common theme in comments received was that differences between the systems may create confusion, with professionals needing to learn two separate but similar frameworks leading to mistakes, as well as creating additional financial and administrative implications of both registering and maintaining registration.

Question 2

- 4.3. What opportunities / barriers do you consider could emerge with the development of bespoke standards for those operating in Wales.

Summary of responses

- 4.4. The majority of respondents re-iterated the need for consistency as outlined in question 1, wanting unified standards that enable no barriers of movement to professionals.

Government Response

- 4.5. As there is clear support for consistency between Wales and England, we will continue to work closely with the Building Safety Regulator to align competency standards as much as possible whilst delivering a framework that is fit for purpose in Wales.

The registration classes

Class 1 Building Inspector (Associate/Assistant)

Question 3.1

- 4.6. Do you agree that this should be a registration class?

Summary of responses

Yes	10	40.0%
No	9	36.0%
Unsure	4	16.0%
Not applicable	1	4.0%
No response	1	4.0%

Question 3.2

- 4.7. Do you agree that associate/assistant is the correct title?

Summary of responses

Yes	3	12.0%
No	15	60.0%
Unsure	3	12.0%
Not applicable	2	8.0%
No response	2	8.0%

Question 3.3

- 4.8. If no, what do you think it should be?

Summary of responses

- 4.9. There was a mixed response to whether this should be a registration class, but most respondents disagreed with the proposed title.
- 4.10. Many respondents felt the role of Associate too ambiguous and could be interpreted in different ways and involve vastly different roles across the profession. Several respondents felt it would also not clarify competence levels as there is a significant gap between the proposed Associate and Assistant class.
- 4.11. Respondents suggested alternative titles with many referring to the titles in “the Recommendations on the Future Regulation of the Building Control

Sector and Profession in England” report (FoBC report) or “The Building Safety Competency Foundation (BSCF) model.”

Question 3.4

- 4.12. Is there anything missing from the registration class description? If yes, please tell us below.

Summary of responses

Yes	11	44.0%
No	6	24.0%
Unsure	4	16.0%
Not applicable	2	8.0%
No response	2	8.0%

- 4.13. A large majority agreed there was something missing from the class description with 6 disagreeing and the rest unsure. Issues were identified, both on the value of the class (as it confers status and competence) but also the need to ensure other professions/new starters could operate in the system.

Class 2 Building Inspector (Standard)

Question 4.1

- 4.14. Do you agree that this should be a registration class?

Summary of responses

Yes	15	60.0%
No	5	20.0%
Unsure	2	8.0%
Not applicable	1	4.0%
No response	2	8.0%

Question 4.2

- 4.15. Do you agree that Class 2 Building Inspector (Standard) is the correct title?

Summary of responses

Yes	5	20.0%
No	13	52.0%
Unsure	3	12.0%
Not applicable	2	8.0%
No response	2	8.0%

Question 4.3

- 4.16. If no, what do you think it should be?

Summary of responses

- 4.17. The majority of respondents agreed that it should be a registration class but disagreed with the proposed title.
- 4.18. Respondents considered the word 'standard' devalues the professionalism of the role and they put forward a number of different titles such as 'Registered Building Inspector' or 'General Surveyor/Practitioner.'
- 4.19. Some respondents recommended that the titles across different classes should be generalised with modifiers to reflect the level of competence, such as 'Complex Risk' or 'Managing.'

Question 4.4

- 4.20. Is there anything missing from the registration class description? If yes, please tell us below.

Summary of responses

Yes	13	52.0%
No	5	20.0%
Unsure	3	12.0%
Not applicable	2	8.0%
No response	2	8.0%

- 4.21. A majority of respondents felt there was something missing from the class description.
- 4.22. Many respondents felt the description too broad, with large gaps in competency between each class. Some respondents suggested the introduction of additional classes to allow clear pathways for progression through the competencies and that further detail would be needed within the descriptors to enable practical application.

Class 3 Registered Building Inspector (Complex/HRBs)

Question 5.1

- 4.23. Do you agree that this should be a registration class?

Summary of responses

Yes	20	80.0%
No	2	8.0%
Unsure	0	0.0%
Not applicable	1	4.0%
No response	2	8.0%

Question 5.2

- 4.24. Do you agree that Class 3 Registered Building Inspector (Complex/HRBs) is the correct title?

Summary of responses

Yes	4	16.0%
No	15	60.0%
Unsure	3	12.0%
Not applicable	1	4.0%
No response	2	8.0%

Question 5.3

- 4.25. If no, what do you think it should be?

Summary of responses

- 4.26. A large majority of respondents agreed that Class 3 should be a registration class, but a majority of respondents disagreed with the proposed title.
- 4.27. Many felt the title doesn't reflect the specialisation of the role and the title should contain the word 'Specialist', for example 'Specialist Building Control Surveyor', which would provide a more correct impression of capabilities.
- 4.28. Some, although agreeing with the title, felt the categories are too broad and don't distinguish between the different levels of skill and competency necessary.

Question 5.4

- 4.29. Is there anything missing from the registration class description? If yes, please tell us below.

Summary of responses

Yes	10	40.0%
No	7	28.0%
Unsure	4	16.0%
Not applicable	1	4.0%
No response	3	12.0%

- 4.30. Many respondents felt there was something missing as the current proposed banding is too narrow and does not accurately reflect the separation of roles and responsibilities that exist, or the differing delivery structures employed by various Building Control Bodies.

Class 4 Building Inspector (Manager)

Question 6.1

- 4.31. Do you agree that this should be a registration class?

Summary of responses

Yes	12	48.0%
No	8	32.0%
Unsure	2	8.0%
Not applicable	1	4.0%
No response	2	8.0%

Question 6.2

- 4.32. Do you agree that Class 4 Building Inspector (Manager) is the correct title?

Summary of responses

Yes	4	16.0%
No	13	52.0%
Unsure	4	16.0%
Not applicable	2	8.0%
No response	2	8.0%

Question 6.3

- 4.33. If no, what do you think it should be?

Summary of responses

- 4.34. Half of respondents that answered the question agreed that this should be a registration class, but just over half disagreed with the proposed title.
- 4.35. A common theme in responses was that Managers may not be operationally Building Inspectors and suggested that the registration class and also the title would not be suitable or applicable.
- 4.36. There were a variety of suggestions for alternate registration class titles including 'Director,' 'Senior management', 'Registered Managing Building Inspector' and 'Principle Inspector/Building Control Officer.'

Question 6.4

- 4.37. Is there anything missing from the registration class description? If yes, please tell us below.

Summary of responses

Yes	13	52.0%
No	6	24.0%
Unsure	2	8.0%
Not applicable	1	4.0%
No response	3	12.0%

- 4.38. Just over half of respondents agreed that there was something missing from the registration class description.
- 4.39. Some respondents stated that the scope of the role and framework appears limited and does not consider alternative building control structures. A small number of respondents stated that there are fully competent building control managers who have no formal qualifications to level 6 and suggested that the framework be updated to reflect equivalent experience rather than focusing purely on qualification.
- 4.40. Several respondents suggested that the class be separated into categories, which reflect the work managers actually undertake, the competence of the Building Inspectors they manage and their seniority within different organisations.

Question 7

- 4.41. Are there any registration classes which you feel are missing from the BICoF? If yes, please tell us what additional class(es) should be included and why.

Summary of responses

Yes	14	56.0%
No	4	16.0%
Unsure	3	12.0%
Not applicable	2	8.0%
No response	2	8.0%

- 4.42. The majority of respondents agreed that there are registration classes missing from the BICoF.
- 4.43. A majority of respondents advised that the classes are too broad and additional classes should be included for specialist roles and that differences in competence to work on different building types, such as Higher Risk Buildings (HRBs) and non-HRBs, should be recognised.
- 4.44. Several respondents also referred to alternate registration classes proposed in the FoBC report and LABCs Building Safety Competence Foundation model.

Government Response

- 4.45. One of the common themes across the responses to the different registration classes was that the proposed titles of each class were not considered to be correct, albeit there was generally support for the individual classes themselves. As a result the titles of each role have been revised and have made use of some of the suggestions received.

- 4.46. Another common theme was that the descriptions of each class were broad and not sufficiently delineated between the differing levels of competence. We will ensure that that the level of clarity about the scope of each registration class is improved for both registration and operational purposes such as restricted activities. Individual concerns such as who should register as a Class 4 Building Inspector (Technical Manager), its revised title, have been addressed within the revised BICoF.
- 4.47. Some of the concerns raised, such as the differing competency levels required for work on HRBs and complex buildings, will be addressed as part of the registration process and conditions on individual Building Inspector's registration, such as whether a given Registered Building Inspector is registered to work on HRBs.

Competency levels

Question 8.1

- 4.48. Considering the competence subject areas included in the BICoF at section 4. Do you agree that these are the correct areas to be included?

Summary of responses

Yes	12	48.0%
No	6	24.0%
Unsure	4	16.0%
Not applicable	2	8.0%
No response	1	4.0%

Question 8.2

- 4.49. Are there any competence subject areas that you believe should not be included in the BICoF? If yes, please tell us which and why they should be excluded.

Summary of responses

Yes	7	28.0%
No	11	44.0%
Unsure	4	16.0%
Not applicable	2	8.0%
No response	1	4.0%

- 4.50. Whilst half of respondents that answered the question agreed that the correct areas were included in the BICoF, a third of respondents thought that there were other competence subject areas that should be included.
- 4.51. Of the respondents that replied that some competency subject areas should not be included, a common theme was that the topics and competence areas are relevant, but the topics should be considered as levels of understanding, referring to the FoBC report. Two respondents also

suggested revising the Technology sections, specifically suggesting considering compliance utilising technical handbooks.

Question 8.3

- 4.52. Are there any competence subject areas which are currently missing from the BICoF? If yes, please tell us what is missing and why this should be included?

Summary of responses

Yes	8	32.0%
No	8	32.0%
Unsure	4	16.0%
Not applicable	3	12.0%
No response	2	8.0%

- 4.53. There was a mixed response to this question. Respondents made a number of suggested additions to the BICoF, including reference to areas of knowledge specified in the FoBC report, communication skills, Net Zero Carbon competency, fire safety law and people management skills.

Question 9.1

- 4.54. There are currently four competency levels used in the BICoF. Do you agree that the description of each level is clear? If no, please tell us what should be amended and why.

Summary of responses

Yes	10	40.0%
No	6	24.0%
Unsure	7	28.0%
Not applicable	1	4.0%
No response	1	4.0%

- 4.55. Respondents were almost equal in their response to this, with 10 stating the BICoF was clear, with 13 disagreeing or unsure.

- 4.56. Some respondents felt the competency levels could be misleading, or open to interpretation, and that the system seems disjointed, with concerns over how compliance with the competency levels could be recorded and evidenced. Several respondents also suggested the term 'level' be changed to avoid confusion between competency and qualification.

Question 9.2

- 4.57. Do you agree that the competence levels outlined in the Table of Minimum Competence Requirements at section 6 of the BICOF are correct for each registration category? If no, please tell us what should be amended and why.

Summary of responses

Yes	6	24.0%
No	12	48.0%
Unsure	5	20.0%
Not applicable	1	4.0%
No response	1	4.0%

- 4.58. Just under half of respondents disagreed that the competence levels outlined were correct for each registration category, whilst just under a third of respondents agreed. The remaining respondents were unsure.
- 4.59. Many respondents felt that additional categories and subcategories for some of the descriptors should be added, while some respondents felt there was little difference between Class 2 and 3. Several respondents pointed to the Building Inspector (Manager) class and suggested changes to the competence levels. Additionally there was suggestion that Ethics should be level 4 for all registration classes.

Question 10.1

- 4.60. Is building control currently a level 6/degree equivalent qualified profession? If no, what is it currently?

Summary of responses

Yes	2	8.0%
No	16	64.0%
Unsure	4	16.0%
Not applicable	2	8.0%
No response	1	4.0%

- 4.61. The majority of respondents stated that building control is not currently a level 6/degree equivalent qualified profession.
- 4.62. Respondents outlined many in the profession are working at this level and can demonstrate the required competencies and experience, but do not possess the formal qualification. Many respondents commented that there are currently a range of qualifications that can give access to a career in building control such as NVQs, ONC and HNCs/HNDs in related disciplines.

Question 10.2

- 4.63. Should building control be a level 6/degree equivalent qualified profession in the future? If no, what should it be?

Summary of responses

Yes	10	40.0%
No	9	36.0%
Unsure	3	12.0%
Not applicable	2	8.0%
No response	1	4.0%

- 4.64. Respondents were split fairly evenly as to whether building control should be a level 6/degree equivalent qualified profession in the future.
- 4.65. Some respondents feel there are various routes to competence such as vocational training, degree qualifications and professional memberships. In particular, several respondents commented that some in the profession will not hold an academic level 6 qualification but will have demonstrated the required level of competence to undertake their role. Several respondents gave similar views that a qualification did not ensure practical competence.

Question 10.3

- 4.66. If you believe that building control is not currently a level 6 profession but should be, what would be a reasonable and realistic timescale for transition to level 6?

Summary of responses

- 4.67. Respondents offered various timescales, ranging from 3 to 8 years, but felt that there would need to be a significant transition period for all building control professionals to achieve appropriate competence standards.

Government Response

- 4.68. Suggestions for additions to the competencies have been considered and a large number of revisions have been made, such as a greater inclusion of fire safety competence and technical handbooks.
- 4.69. The descriptions, and labelling, of the competency levels have been revised to reduce confusion with qualification levels, improve their clarity and link better with the registration classes and their minimum levels. We will consider producing guidance to further improve understanding around terminology used.
- 4.70. The table of minimum competence requirements has been reviewed following the responses received, with a focus on the Class 4 competence levels. Additionally, Ethics level 4 has been made the minimum across all registration classes.

- 4.71. It is noted that a large number of respondents felt that building control is not currently at level 6/degree equivalent qualified profession and there was a mixed response to whether it should be in future. The comments regarding alternatives to specific qualifications for the gaining, or proving, of competence have been reflected in changes to the BICoF, particularly for Class 4.

Protected characteristics

Question 11.1

- 4.72. Do you think any aspect of the BICoF will adversely impact on those with protected characteristics?

Summary of responses

Yes	8	32.0%
No	6	24.0%
Unsure	8	32.0%
Not applicable	2	8.0%
No response	1	4.0%

Question 11.2

- 4.73. If yes, please tell us which aspect of the BICoF you think will adversely impact those with protected characteristics.

Summary of responses – combined with Question 11.3

Question 11.3

- 4.74. For each aspect that you have identified, please tell us who you think will be adversely affected and how.

Summary of responses

- 4.75. Some respondents felt that some disabilities may preclude someone from undertaking the full range of activities however their competency level may be adequate.
- 4.76. Some respondents felt this was not a question they could provide an answer to. Some felt that there may be a particular risk of age discrimination, for example those who have worked within the industry and have considerable experience but not possess the formal qualifications required.

Government Response

- 4.77. We note concerns that requirements relating to the demonstration of competence could impact some people with certain protected characteristics, and we will work to ensure relevant legislation is complied with.

General questions

Question 12

- 4.78. We would like to know your views on the effects that the proposed policies would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English. What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Summary of responses

- 4.79. A majority of respondents felt that the proposed policies would have no effect on the Welsh Language, with some comments stating it could have a positive impact as it would create opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.

Question 13

- 4.80. Please also explain how you believe the proposed policies could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Summary of responses

- 4.81. The majority of respondents to the consultation did not answer this question. Of those that did, half had similar comments that the primary aim should be to provide a fit for purpose, adequately resourced, Building Control Service then examine how cost effective a Building Control Service in Welsh might be.

Question 14

- 4.82. We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

Summary of responses

- 4.83. Many respondents used this question to reiterate their points made in previous questions, for example highlighting the need for the Framework to allow for additional classes and the provision of sub-categorisations. Some respondents agreed in principle with the competency areas but felt the overall proposal lacks flexibility to allow it to be applied to different organisational structures.

Government Response

- 4.84. We are grateful for all the comments and suggestions provided and they have been all been considered and there have been many revisions to the proposed BICoF as a result. Comments regarding flexibility are understood and will be taken into account as the BICoF is finalised.
- 4.85. We will ensure that the Welsh Language Standards are complied with, including as the BICoF is finalised and published.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1. The Building Inspector Competency Framework (BICoF) will be finalised in line with the Government responses above and published in the Autumn.
- 5.2. Once introduced, Welsh Ministers will regularly review the BICoF and will update as required whilst considering the views of the profession and other stakeholders.