



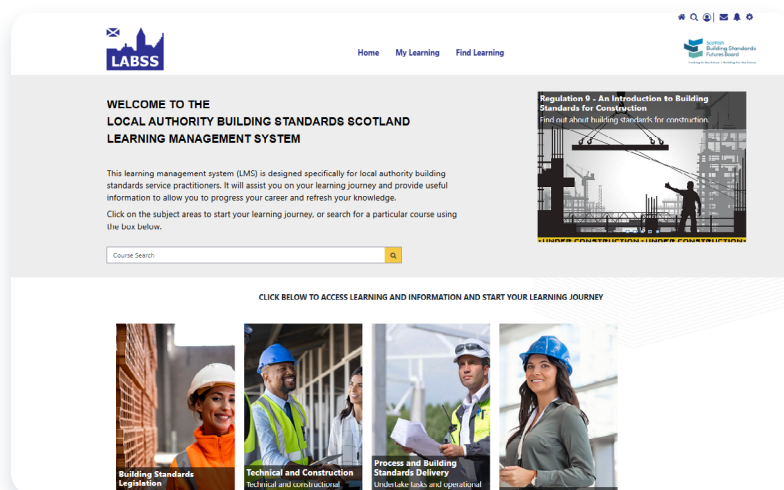
# Scottish Building Standards Hub

How do you tackle an industry-wide challenge to improve building safety standards, while retaining the knowledge and experience of an aging workforce and simultaneously attracting fresh new talent to the industry? This was the mammoth dilemma facing the Scottish Building Standards Hub, who needed to create a one-stop learning portal: an effective, user-friendly Learning Management System (LMS).

## An industry-wide focus

The building and construction industry has faced a difficult few years. Defects in the construction of Edinburgh school buildings and the high-profile tragedy resulting from the Grenfell Tower building failure acted as a catalyst for governments across the UK to make crucial improvements.

Following an extensive government-led review process in Scotland, the need potential to set up a 'national or central hub' capable of providing specialist/safety-critical expertise in the design of complex buildings was identified.

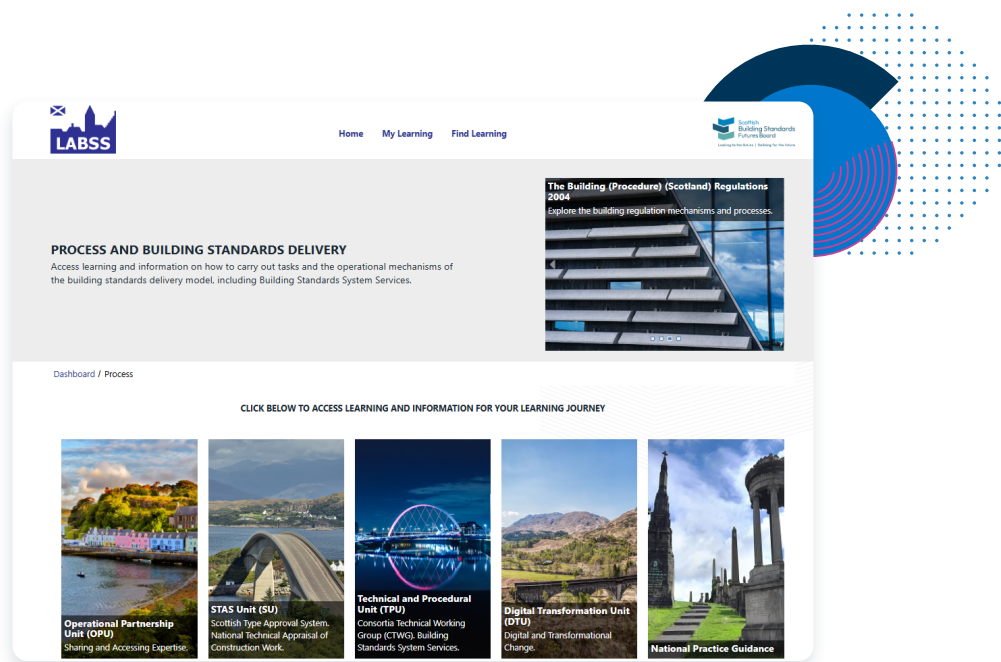


## A remit to transform standards

With a mission to support the transformation and raise the quality of building standards services across Scotland, the Scottish Building Standards Hub (SBSH) was established as an independent, stand-alone specialist unit hosted within Fife Council. Supporting 32 Scottish local authorities, it now plays a key role in delivering a range of services and activities to support members of Local Authority Building Standards, Scotland (LABSS) and Scottish Government, as well as the wider industry.

Key objectives for SBSH are to:

- Deliver excellent public service.
- Improve consistency.
- Increase capacity to deliver across all types of construction work.
- Provide resilience.
- Drive efficiencies
- Ensure investment in skills and new technology.

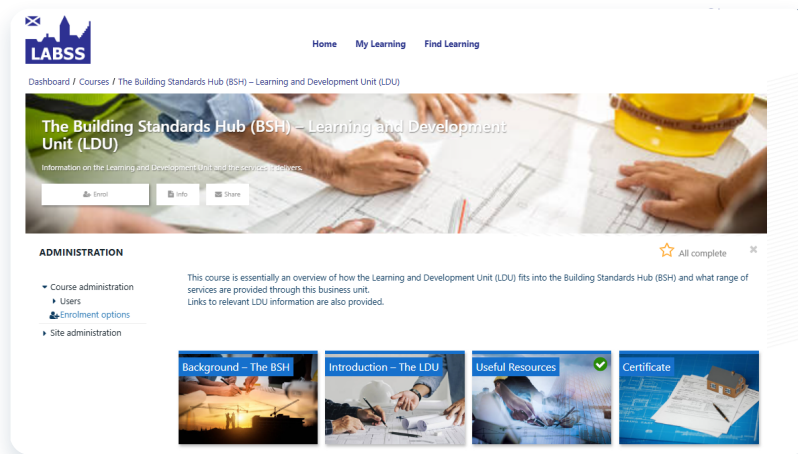


## Tackling a skills shortage

The sector had also reported an increase in the number of people taking earlier retirement since the Covid-19 pandemic – an additional complication, given the aging workforce which characterised the industry. The SBSH needed to retain people, skills and knowledge, at the same time as aiming to improve standards.

In England, meanwhile, new laws were passed in a bid to incorporate safety throughout the design, construction and occupation of buildings, adding assessment and rigour to the building control process.

The SBSH watched carefully as the English national competency framework was rolled out. Knowing it already faced a workforce challenge, its ambition was to create a more seamless process that would support building standards practitioners in Scotland in any future independent validation process – not only allowing the industry to retain its most experienced professionals, but also providing a key competency and skills framework to attract bright individuals towards a new career.



## SBSH LMS

The team consequently set about producing high-quality interactive digital modules that provided an interesting and user-friendly insight into the often dry, highly complex procedural regulation documents. From an LMS homepage, users can now access key subject topic tiles before drilling down into deeper modules or information.

With 41 modules covering technical and procedural training areas including fire safety, leadership and management, the new platform is currently being used by c.500 users across 32 Scottish local authorities.

Crucially, considering the audience may be accessing information while onsite via various devices, users can access the LMS with a single sign-on, using existing user profiles.

Other key features include:

- Searchable content: courses can be found by searching key terms.
- A user-friendly and highly interactive interface.
- High-level architecture consisting of a high tier, sub tiers, and a host of different courses beneath.

## A focus on learning and development

A key focus for SBSH in achieving this ambitious task was to bring consistency to learning and development. This would be accomplished through the creation of a central learning hub that would act as an authoritative one-stop-shop for all employees working for local authority building standards services in Scotland.

Working with Learning Pool, the SBSH set about creating a web-based LMS that would:

- Digitise and centralise all training material into a single, engaging and user-friendly system.
- Standardise learning and development, reducing inconsistencies across different authorities.

## Keeping pace with constant industry change

With frequent industry standards updates and the ongoing evolution of building materials, best-practice revisions and regulatory changes are common. The new LMS handles this potential issue with ease, allowing for timely updates that can be consistently accessed by all users following any changes.

## Facilitating future change

In readiness for the national practitioner validation and re-validation process, the SBSH operates and manages the national digitised Competency Assessment Scheme which allows skills attainment and gap analysis for building standards practitioners working for local authority building standards services in Scotland.

## Impact

The biggest impact the new LMS has had upon the SBSH is that it now provides a national platform that acts as a single, central hub where all digitised training can be contained. By developing high-quality interactive digitised training material, it gives new starters and longstanding practitioners alike access to consistent building standards learning tools and best-practice insights. Recent feedback includes:



“Simple to navigate and a user-friendly interface make the system easy and efficient to use.”



“I found the LMS useful and easy to use and the quality of content was good.”

## The future

One of the most exciting benefits of the LMS is that it is paving the way for a future learning experience. The LMS has created a solid foundation which the SBSH plans to use to further enhance this experience, including an exciting leadership development programme that will build upon the existing framework.



“Learning Pool have been particularly good in terms of the service they provide. You always know you can go to them and, regardless of the question, they’ll know exactly what is going on with all aspects of your project.” Russell Watson, Learning and Development Manager.

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