

Building regulation changes from 1 July 2026

If you intend to carry out building work either as a client, a designer or a contractor these changes apply to you. This also includes homeowners.

The changes apply to both higher-risk buildings (HRBs) and non-higher risk buildings, including works carried out under a competent person scheme.

From 1 July 2026, changes to building regulations in Wales will introduce a new building safety regime affecting how building work is designed, approved and carried out on site.

What is changing

New responsibilities and duties are being introduced for all persons involved in the carrying out of controlled building work. They apply regardless of what building regulation application route is taken (building control approval with full plans, building notices, regularisations, initial notices, competent persons schemes)

From 1st July 2026 all building projects will be subject to a new duty holder system. This means that:

- clients, designers and contractors all have clear legal responsibilities to ensure compliance is achieved
- all duty holders will need to provide written confirmation statements relating to their appointments and to compliance.

Every project regardless of how small must have a client, an appointed principal contractor and an appointed principal designer. Appointments must be in writing and signed.

If you are a domestic client (householder) you must defer your duties as a duty holder to another person who you believe is competent to act on your behalf, unless you are fully satisfied that you have the necessary competence to undertake a duty holder role yourself and have signed a written statement to that effect, which must be submitted to Cyngor Gwynedd before works start on site. Cyngor Gwynedd recommends that you seek professional advice before making that decision.

Competence

The building regulations now require that only those that can demonstrate competence should be appointed to undertake design and construction work. To achieve this, the building regulations place a duty upon everyone involved in the project from inception through to practical completion (including the domestic client/householder) to ensure they only appoint competent people.

Only by appointing competent people can the client and their appointed duty holders be satisfied that building regulation compliance will be achieved.

Greater emphasis on compliance before submitting your application

For Building control applications with full plans, duty holders will now need to:

- be satisfied that there is an adequate design package in place when the application is submitted, and ensure designs are compliant or near to compliant. Poor submissions may result in applications not being registered
- be satisfied that the proposals are building regulation compliant before work begins on site
- provide accurate up to date information to building control and keep all duty holders informed throughout the project
- maintain good records of decisions and any changes that occur in design and construction

Poorly prepared or incomplete submissions may lead to delays, or even rejection of the application in its entirety.

Changes to starting and commencing building work

The new regulations have introduced 2 stages for starting work on site: starting work and commencing work.

On small projects they may be one and the same stage, but for larger projects they will be different.

You must notify Cyngor Gwynedd when you intend to start work and also when you consider the works are at a stage that satisfy the commencement criteria as defined in the building regulations.

At the time of submitting your building regulation application you must fully understand what constitutes a commencement of building works. This information is required at the time of submitting your application. Refer to Regulation 46B of the building regulations 2010 (as amended) for what constitutes a commencement.

Building Control may reject your application if they disagree with your commencement statement, so it is important that you get this right.

Stronger enforcement powers for local authorities

From July 2026 councils will have additional powers to:

- issue compliance notices requiring issues to be corrected
- issue stop notices to halt unsafe or non-compliant work
- take enforcement action over a longer period
- stop work on site if the building work is at a stage that has yet to be approved as part of the plan assessment.

Transitional arrangements

These new regulations will not apply where:

- the application was deposited correctly before the 1st July 2026, unless that application is a full plans application that subsequently rejected, or
- building works have started before the 1st July 2026

Completion Compliance Statements

Building regulations now require that upon completion of building works all duty holders; client, principal contractor and principal designer must issue a signed compliance statement to Cyngor Gwynedd Control confirming that the works they were responsible for are to the best of their knowledge compliant with building regulations.

This statement can be done separately or combined and must be given to Cyngor Gwynedd within 5 days of when you consider the building work to be complete and requires inspection and sign off by Cyngor Gwynedd.