

The UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard Version 1 Launched

2 months ago



A transformative new era for the British construction and property sectors has begun with the official release of Version 1 of the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard.

The Standard, a free-to-access technical framework, provides the industry's first unified methodology for defining and verifying net zero claims. It was developed through a collaboration between the UK's leading built environment authorities, including RIBA, RICS, CIBSE, UKGBC, and BRE, among others.

Until now, the UK lacked a single, agreed-upon definition of a net zero building. This new voluntary code establishes a consistent set of rules, creating a level playing field and providing a robust defence against greenwashing.

Key Enhancements in Version 1

Building on the pilot version released in late 2024, Version 1 introduces critical technical updates based on extensive industry feedback. Notable additions include:

- **Sector-Specific Flexibility:** A new annex allows for "landlord-only" or "tenant-only" verification in the office sector, specifically for cases where whole-building data is unavailable.
- **Performance Tracking:** The "PC On Track" annex introduces optional checks at the practical completion stage to predict if a building will meet its carbon targets once fully operational.
- **Reduced Duplication:** The "Deeming to Satisfy" section allows evidence from established schemes like Passivhaus and NABERS UK to be used toward compliance, streamlining the assessment process.
- **Refined Carbon Limits:** Carbon targets have been adjusted following industry testing to ensure they

remain achievable while staying strictly within a 1.5°C global warming trajectory.

Industry Leadership Responds

Katie Clemence-Jackson, CEO of the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard, described the launch as a pivotal moment for the industry. She said: “The Standard will provide much-needed clarity and consistency, providing a robust definition for the industry to rally towards. With verification soon to become available, it’s only a matter of time before the first officially Net Zero Carbon Aligned Buildings are verified.”

Ellie Burkill, Chair of the Technical Steering Group, added that Version 1 maintains its grounding in “performance-based outcomes” while incorporating vital amendments that make the Standard more fit for purpose in real-world applications.

Verification Launching in Q2 2026

The next major milestone is the launch of formal verification, scheduled for Q2 2026. NZCBS Ltd. is currently working with Bureau Veritas to finalise the verification framework and appoint an administrator.

Once active, property owners and developers will be able to appoint independent verifiers to robustly certify their assets as Net Zero Carbon Aligned. A Verification Primer has been published alongside the new Standard to help teams prepare for the evidence requirements and costs associated with the process.

David Partridge, Chair of the Governance Board, credited hundreds of expert volunteers for reaching this stage and announced the launch of a Pathfinder Programme to continue gathering data on how the Standard is applied across the country.