

CIBSE Domestic Building Services Panel

Terms of Reference and Governance Framework



**Domestic Building
Services Panel**

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Purpose	To provide information on requirements and responsibilities of the CIBSE Domestic Building Services Panel
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The CIBSE Domestic Building Services Panel (DBSP) is constituted under the authority of the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE).
- 1.2. This document outlines the Terms of Reference (ToR) establishing its purpose, governance arrangements, financial framework, and operating procedures of the DBSP.
- 1.3. The DBSP operates in an advisory capacity and does not exercise regulatory, statutory, or enforcement powers.
- 1.4. This ToR shall be reviewed every three years, or earlier where required by CIBSE governance or strategic changes.

2. Strategic Context

- 2.1. Considering the UK's statutory commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and associated policy measures including the phase-out of fossil fuel heating during the 2030s, CIBSE's DBSP supports the domestic building services sector through the development and dissemination of authoritative, evidence-based technical guidance.
- 2.2. The DBSP supports CIBSE's charitable objectives through the advancement of education, technical knowledge and professional standards within the domestic building services sector.

3. Purpose and Objectives

The mission of CIBSE's DBSP is to promote and advance best practice in the survey, design, installation, commissioning, operation and maintenance of building services systems in dwellings across the UK, ensuring safety, efficiency, sustainability and technical integrity.

The panel shall:

- 3.1. Act solely in an advisory and technical capacity.
- 3.2. Promote awareness and adoption of best practice technical guidance for domestic building services.
- 3.3. Develop, commission, maintain and update technical publications, tools, and training materials related to domestic systems, including but not limited to space heating, domestic hot water, low and zero carbon technologies, system controls, low or zero-energy dwelling services, energy-efficient and healthy dwelling designs.
- 3.4. Provide technical interpretation of relevant legislation, standards and regulatory requirements for practitioners, without assuming statutory enforcement responsibility.
- 3.5. Identify emerging trends, technologies and regulatory developments affecting the domestic sector.
- 3.6. Contribute technical expertise to policy consultations where invited and aligned with CIBSE's charitable purpose.
- 3.7. Collaborate with CIBSE committees, specialist interest groups, external institutions, academia and industry.
- 3.8. Support research initiatives aimed at addressing knowledge gaps within the domestic sector.
- 3.9. Provide speakers for CIBSE events, seminars and training courses and, where appropriate, develop event programmes for panel members and interested parties, in collaboration with CIBSE regions and societies.

4. Governance

- 4.1. The DBSP operates under the auspices of CIBSE, with CIBSE's Domestic Sector Technical Manager acting as the primary contact.
- 4.2. The DBSP reports to and operates under the oversight of the CIBSE Knowledge Management Committee (KMC).
- 4.3. The DBSP has no separate legal status and does not constitute a separate legal entity.
- 4.4. The DBSP operates solely as a Panel of CIBSE and acts under the authority and governance framework of CIBSE.
- 4.5. All publications produced under the authority of the DBSP shall be subject to the standard CIBSE peer review process, which will be managed by the CIBSE Knowledge team.
- 4.6. All knowledge generation or publication proposals shall include a defined scope, deliverables, intended outcomes, timeline, budget and risk considerations (where applicable), and submitted for KMC approval.
- 4.7. All intellectual property rights, including copyright, database rights and related rights arising from work commissioned or produced under the authority or imprint of the DBSP shall vest exclusively in CIBSE, unless otherwise agreed in writing in advance. No member or subgroup shall acquire any proprietary interest in such intellectual property by virtue of participation in the DBSP. Contributors may be acknowledged but shall not retain ownership rights unless explicitly provided under contract.
- 4.8. Approval of a proposal (such as, but not limited to, revising an existing guide, developing a new guide, delivering training) shall require a quorum of the DBSP (Refer 9.3) and a simple majority vote of members present, unless otherwise specified.
- 4.9. Projects requiring funding shall be submitted to the KMC for approval where required under CIBSE governance procedures. A fixed fee approach set against agreed deliverables and timelines will be implemented. Any budget variance or cost overrun shall require formal approval in accordance with CIBSE financial controls.
- 4.10. Activities requiring funding from the DBSP's Designated Fund shall be discussed with the Panel. Where work is commissioned externally, competitive tendering will be applied in line with CIBSE procurement procedures, and Panel members will be advised accordingly.
- 4.11. The DBSP acts in an advisory capacity only. Responsibility for the implementation of guidance rests with the user. Neither the DBSP nor CIBSE shall be liable for any loss arising from reliance on published guidance.
- 4.12. All documents and information for the panel should be stored securely in CIBSE's SharePoint with appropriate access rights given to panel members.
- 4.13. GDPR must be adhered to for any data management and document sharing.

5. Financial Governance

- 5.1. All funds attributed to the activities of the DBSP, including revenue generated from publications, are the property of CIBSE and shall be held and administered by CIBSE within an internal Designated Fund.
- 5.2. Permitted expenditure may include but is not limited to the development and revision of technical guides, the development of training materials, and the commissioning of specialist services.
- 5.3. Revenue generated from CIBSE's DBSP publications shall be credited to the Designated Fund.
- 5.4. 10% of total annual revenue shall be allocated to CIBSE central funds, subject to periodic review.

- 5.5. Financial reporting relating to the Designated Fund shall be provided to the DBSP annually.
- 5.6. DBSP membership and the role of Chair do not carry entitlement to profit sharing or financial distribution from the Designated Fund.
- 5.7. The DBSP shall not enter into contracts or legally binding commitments on behalf of CIBSE unless authorised in writing by the CIBSE Technical Director or CIBSE Head of Knowledge and Digital.
- 5.8. The DBSP shall not commit CIBSE to any expenditure without prior authorisation from the CIBSE Technical Director.
- 5.9. The DBSP shall not commit CIBSE to any allocation of non-financial resources (e.g. staff time) unless such allocation of resources has been authorised by the CIBSE Technical Director. No panel member, including the Chair, has authority to bind CIBSE financially.
- 5.10. Competitive procurement procedures shall be used where proportionate and appropriate.
- 5.11. All expenditure, including approval of invoices and release of payments, must be formally signed off by the CIBSE Technical Director (or authorised delegate) prior to processing, in accordance with CIBSE financial controls and delegated authority limits.
- 5.12. While funds may be designated for use in support of the DBSP's activities, allocation and expenditure of such funds remain subject to CIBSE governance procedures and approval processes.
- 5.13. CIBSE shall administer the Designated Fund in good faith and in alignment with the DBSP's agreed remit and objectives; however, no individual member or subgroup shall have any personal entitlement or claim to such funds.

6. Membership and Appointments

- 6.1. The DBSP shall consist of representatives from CIBSE membership, societies, groups professional institutions, trade bodies and relevant organisations active within the domestic building services sector.
- 6.2. Members shall be appointed for an initial term of three years and may be reappointed for one further three-year term, subject to oversight by CIBSE's KMC.
- 6.3. Membership of the DBSP is voluntary and honorary. Appointment to the DBSP does not confer employment status, fiduciary authority, or entitlement to remuneration.
- 6.4. The Chair shall be appointed by the DBSP for a three-year term, which may be renewed no more than once, if the Chair and the Panel so agree, subject to approval from KMC. The Chair may choose to step down at any time and may continue as a member if criteria in 6.1 is met.
- 6.5. The Chair shall be an individual member of CIBSE. The Chair shall prepare and submit an annual report to the KMC.
- 6.6. The CIBSE Domestic Sector Technical Manager shall act as a Secretariat to the DBSP.
- 6.7. The DBSP may constitute a steering/working group, where approved by CIBSE's KMC. A steering/working group is a temporary working party established for a specific purpose and disbanded when that purpose is achieved. When setting up such a group, the DBSP shall define and approve both their membership and terms of reference, in consultation with the CIBSE Head of Knowledge and/or the CIBSE Technical Director, and a period of operation shall also be stated.
- 6.8. It is desirable that new members be added regularly to the panel to bring in new ideas and expertise; however, it is equally desirable to retain expertise.
- 6.9. Members of the DBSP may leave at any time or nominate a replacement by giving notice to the Chair.

- 6.10. When reviewing membership, the DBSP should take into consideration the:
 - 6.10.1. Willingness to get involved and commit the time to attend meetings and read technical documents.
 - 6.10.2. Positive contribution to meetings fairly and without bias.
 - 6.10.3. Commitment to the Panel and its purpose.
 - 6.10.4. Knowledge of legislation affecting the domestic building services sector and experience of using a range of national and international standards.
 - 6.10.5. Continuing contribution to the development of guidance and policy recommendation.
 - 6.10.6. Awareness of future trends and policy developments likely to affect the sector and their impact on various professions in the sector, and a degree of awareness of current research activity.
 - 6.10.7. Need for gradual change in the membership of the panel.
 - 6.10.8. Need for sectoral and technical contributions to the panel.
 - 6.10.9. Need to maintain continuity in the work of the panel.
- 6.11. Members of the DBSP may invite potential members to join the Panel, subject to Chairs' and CIBSE Technical Director's discretion.
- 6.12. Membership of the DBSP does not confer any legal, financial or beneficial interest in the assets, income, intellectual property or designated fund associated with DBSP activities.

7. Responsibilities of Members

Members shall:

- 7.1. Abide by these Terms of Reference.
- 7.2. Support the dissemination and promotion of DBSP publications, guidance and initiatives within their respective organisations, professional networks and communication channels, in order to advance technical awareness and adoption across the domestic building services sector, as appropriate and proportionate with their organisational policies.
- 7.3. Act in accordance with the [CIBSE Code of Conduct](#), [CIBSE Volunteer Handbook](#), and the [CIBSE Inclusivity Guidance](#) (as amended periodically). Members are appointed in a voluntary capacity and are expected to uphold the standards of professional conduct, behaviour, inclusivity and integrity set out in these documents in all their activities.
- 7.4. Declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.5. Maintain confidentiality of all unpublished materials, commercial information, draft documents, and personal data received during DBSP activities. Disclosure is prohibited unless authorised in writing by CIBSE. Members must comply with applicable data protection legislation and competition law.
- 7.6. Shall not make any public statements prior to publication without written approval from CIBSE.
- 7.7. Not derive personal financial benefit from the DBSP's Designated Fund unless formally contracted by CIBSE under an approved agreement.
- 7.8. Undertake participation (including the role of Chair) on a voluntary basis and shall not attract monetary compensation, honorarium or financial entitlement, unless expressly agreed under a separate written contract approved by CIBSE.
- 7.9. Be requested to step down from the Panel if they fail to adhere to the Code of Conduct or the Volunteer Handbook or this ToR.

8. Membership Benefits

- 8.1. Opportunity to contribute to the development of recognised technical guidance and best practice documentation shaping the UK domestic building services sector.
- 8.2. Participation in high-profile technical publications, consultations, and industry initiatives under the CIBSE brand, subject to authorship and acknowledgement policies.
- 8.3. Engagement in technical debate, policy discussions, and industry consultations relevant to domestic building services and net zero delivery.
- 8.4. Access to a forum comprising leading professional bodies, training providers, manufacturers, regulators, and sector specialists.
- 8.5. Early insight into emerging regulatory, technical and research developments affecting the domestic building services sector.
- 8.6. Opportunity to contribute to and participate in CIBSE events, seminars, and technical briefings.
- 8.7. Visibility through contribution to CIBSE publications and events.
- 8.8. DBSP members may, at the discretion of CIBSE and in accordance with prevailing institutional policy, be eligible for discounted access to DBSP publications. Such discounts do not constitute remuneration, financial benefit, or entitlement, and may be amended or withdrawn at any time.

9. Meetings

- 9.1. CIBSE seeks to limit the time and expense of meetings and to promote maximum participation by those located away from London. Wherever possible meetings will be arranged in hybrid format to offer the facility for remote participation.
- 9.2. The DBSP shall meet at least twice per calendar year, or more frequently as required.
- 9.3. A quorum shall consist of representation from at least four panel members (except where otherwise stated), which may include the Chair and excludes CIBSE staff.
- 9.4. Meetings shall commence with the confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting. The Chair shall decide whether the panel may consider any business which is not on the agenda for the meetings.
- 9.5. Decisions shall be made by a simple majority vote of members present. No decisions can be made unless the meeting has a quorum.
- 9.6. All decisions, voting outcomes, and actions must be recorded in the meeting minutes.
- 9.7. Decisions may be made outside of a formal meeting. This must be administered by or on behalf of the Chair, and majority approval via email must be sought. Such decisions must be recorded in the following meeting minutes.
- 9.8. Members shall declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest at the earliest opportunity. The Chair shall determine appropriate mitigation measures, which may include recusal from discussion, abstaining from voting, or the recording of the conflict in the minutes.
- 9.9. In the event of the Chair being absent from the meeting, the members present in attendance may choose one amongst them to act as Chair of the meeting.
- 9.10. The frequency of meetings of steering/working group shall be defined at the start of the work programme of the group.
- 9.11. The panel will adopt email as a primary method for communication to ensure timely and efficient information dissemination.