



This document has been written in response to requests made by various bodies involved with commissioning or accepting residential sound insulation test reports claiming to offer compliance with Technical Booklet G of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 [TBG].

The purpose of this information letter is to make clear what does, and more importantly, **what does not constitute**, an acceptable third party accredited sound test report that is valid to be accepted by Building Control in Northern Ireland.

Section B1.4 of TBG states *“The person carrying out the work should arrange for sound insulation testing to be carried out by a test body with appropriate third party accreditation. Test bodies conducting testing should preferably have UKAS accreditation (or European equivalent) for field measurements. The department also regards members of the ANC Registration Scheme as suitably qualified to carry out pre-completion testing.”*

The above statement makes it clear that appropriate third party accreditation is the pre-requisite to an acceptable test and is therefore exactly the same as the situation in the rest of the United Kingdom, e.g. under Approved Document E for England and Wales.

This statement also puts the onus on Building Control Officers to check that test reports presented to them have a Nationally recognised and traceable third party accreditation procedure in place.

A UKAS test report will have a unique UKAS number which can be checked on the UKAS website, confirming whether or not the test body is suitably accredited for appropriate ‘sound insulation testing in the field’. Section B1.4 of TBG refers to allowing a ‘European equivalent’. Where this occurs, the Building Control Body must be satisfied that the National Accreditation, from a body other than UKAS, specifically relates to Northern Ireland Technical Booklet G and also complies with the ISO 140 series of Standards which are unique to the Building Regulations in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Similarly, ANC Registration Scheme test reports will include a unique reference number and password for that particular test report which is logged within the ANC database specifically for recording sound insulation measurements. Building Control Officers can log into the ANC website, with the reference number and password, to confirm the test results and view, or print, the certificate for the tests. Both schemes conduct rigorous audits on the test bodies carrying out these field tests to ensure that their staff are suitably qualified and competent, that the test equipment is appropriate and carries traceable calibration, and that the very strict testing methodologies and procedures are being adhered to.

Unless a suitably accredited acoustic third party scheme is being used, no other test report should be deemed valid or acceptable.



In summary, the following statements can be made:

Sound Insulation Testing in Northern Ireland

The only assurance that Building Control Officers have that test reports are fully compliant with Technical Booklet G of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012, is where the test body has appropriate third party accreditation. It is our understanding that this is currently only provided by the routes of being an appropriate UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) Test Body (or European equivalent), or a Member of the ANC (Association of Noise Consultants) Registration Scheme. Both of these will also require that the tester has the appropriate activity / adaptation to cover testing and reporting in accordance with Technical Booklet G of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012.

Sound Insulation Testing Register (Ireland) (SITRI)

Being a member of SITRI (Sound Insulation Testing Register (Ireland)) provides assurance that testers are competent to perform sound insulation testing, but only within the jurisdiction of the Republic of Ireland, which works to different building codes and where tests are carried out to different standards. SITRI is not appropriate in Northern Ireland, nor any other part of the United Kingdom.

Certificate of Competence in Irish Building Acoustics Measurement (CCIBAM)

The main aim of CCIBAM is to train delegates to carry out and report upon sound insulation tests on walls and floors, in accordance with relevant standards and regulatory instruments in the Republic of Ireland. While the qualification provides the skills to undertake testing, in order to complete tests for the Irish Building Regulations 2014 Technical Guidance Document E, candidates will also need to be approved as a 'competent tester', with our understanding being that the only routes currently available are Sound Insulation Testing Register (Ireland), or by becoming an appropriate INAB (Irish National Accreditation Board) Test Body.

There is an equivalent course, the CCBAM, which provides training for testing under UK Building Regulations, and for which the same principle of the need for a test body to have appropriate third party accreditation applies.

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