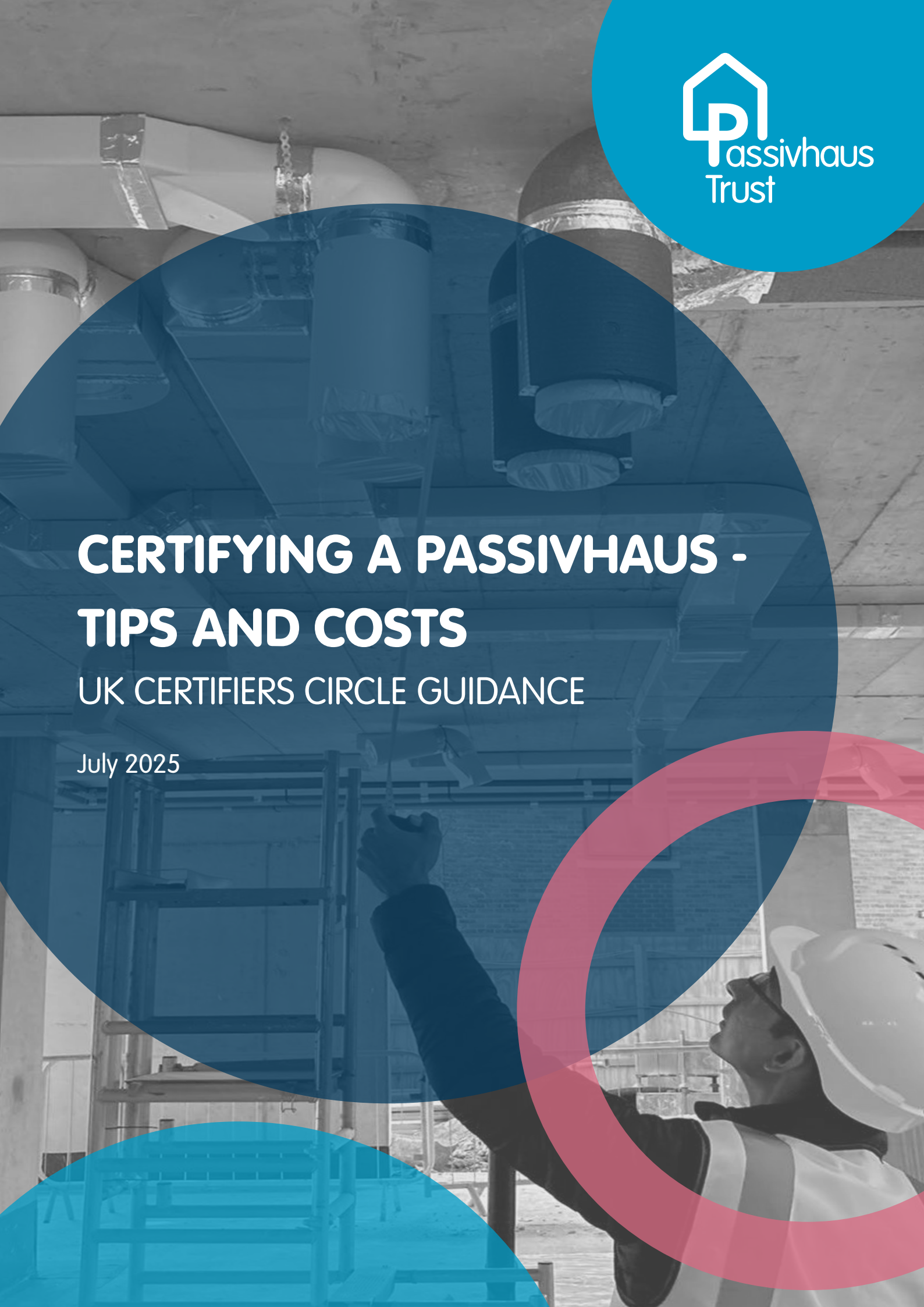


CERTIFYING A PASSIVHAUS - TIPS AND COSTS

UK CERTIFIERS CIRCLE GUIDANCE

July 2025



Certifying a Passivhaus - Tips and Costs

UK Certifiers Circle Guidance

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“ I was working as a physicist. I read that the construction industry had experimented with adding insulation to new buildings and that energy consumption had failed to reduce. This offended me – it was counter to the basic laws of physics. I knew that they must be doing something wrong. So I made it my mission to find out what, and to establish what was needed to do it right. ”

— Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Feist

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	2
Introduction to Passivhaus certification	4
Benefits and added value of certification	4
The risks of not certifying	4
Passivhaus certification costs	5
Factors influencing fees	5
Price indications by project type	5
Repeated unit types	5
Percentage of build costs	5
Tips for appointing a Certifier	6
Pre-application discussion	6
Certifier scope of services	6
Who can certify a Passivhaus?	6
UK Certifiers Circle	6

INTRODUCTION TO PASSIVHAUS CERTIFICATION

Certification to the Passivhaus standard is a formal and independent quality assurance process that assesses the project's design and construction to ensure it meets the standard's requirements for year-round comfort and energy efficiency.

Building certification to the Passivhaus, EnerPHit or PHI Low Energy Building standards involves a third party Passivhaus Certifier reviewing the technical design and construction information and PHPP calculation at key stages during the project. The Passivhaus Certifier may also help the designer navigate more technical or unusual aspects of modelling, and share experience of common issues from across a wide range of projects to help the design team prioritise design development. Certification is awarded on completion of the building or shortly after, at the "factory gate", following verification that all the criteria have been met.

Learn more in *How to Build a Passivhaus: Good Practice Guide* - chapter 5: <https://pht.guide/HowTo>.

The stringent quality assurance of Passivhaus certification, with its attention to detail and quality checking principles, is one of the core principles that means Passivhaus buildings reliably close the performance gap. A certified Passivhaus building not only meets theoretical energy standards, but also can be counted on to deliver real-world performance, comfort, and durability.

Learn more about the principles of Passivhaus at: <https://pht.guide/PHPrinciplesPrimer>.

BENEFITS AND ADDED VALUE OF CERTIFICATION

Passivhaus certification is independent and impartial, with the Certifier representing the best interests of the building and building owners, now and in the future. It provides a "golden thread" of input throughout the design and construction process.

For clients, it means they will:

- **Catch mistakes early** while they can still be remediated
- Benefit from the Certifier's **experience** from a wide range of other projects
- Have **confidence** that they will get what they are paying for.

THE RISKS OF NOT CERTIFYING

Opting out of certification can expose clients to significant long-term risks. Without the rigorous quality assurance process that certification provides, buildings are more likely to underperform – leading to higher energy bills, occupant discomfort, and costly post-completion rectifications. These avoidable issues can also result in reputational damage, especially for public or developer-led projects promoting low-energy claims. In many cases, failure to certify also correlates with higher build costs due to inefficiencies and lack of early coordination.

Certification provides a clear line of accountability and evidence that the building will deliver on its performance promises – without it, clients risk losing the opportunity to demonstrate leadership, future-proof their assets, and meet net zero targets with confidence.

Learn more about the risks of getting it wrong at <https://pht.guide/MisunderstandingPrimer>.

PASSIVHAUS CERTIFICATION COSTS

Costs of certification vary widely according to project type, need and context. Some influencing factors and an indication of broad price ranges for different kinds of projects are given below.

FACTORS INFLUENCING FEES

- **Complexity** — a school, hospital, or mixed-use building, for example, will cost more than a house.
- **Level of Certifier involvement** — i.e. more or less support.
- **Design changes/ development** — whether seen as changes or continued development of the design, design changes can result in additional checking and increased costs. Clear agreement on what constitutes a “change” is helpful to avoid crossed wires later in the process.
- **Quality of initial submission** — a clear, coordinated PHPP reduces review time and costs.
- **Quality of subsequent submissions** — including project documentation as well as PHPP¹.
- **Support from experienced consultants** — reduces Certifier time and iterations.

¹ To manage project documentation, projects may use the Passivhaus certification platform as an interface for uploading information and keeping track of progress, or a bespoke system may be set up. A Passivhaus Certifier will normally provide an evidence checklist on their appointment to the project. This should be referenced during the design stages, with information collated as the project develops.



PRICE INDICATIONS BY PROJECT TYPE

Fees are set by each Certifier on a project-by-project basis. The following are rough indications based on the UK current market and may not apply to other countries or markets. It cannot be guaranteed that Certifiers follow these estimates.

ONE-OFF HOMES

From £1,500 for basic certification up to £8,000 for comprehensive package of support and guidance² in addition to certification.

LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS

For large-scale Passivhaus projects or developments with repeated house types, certification fees are typically much more efficient — both in terms of cost per unit and process.

Here's a breakdown of how it usually works:

1. Repeated unit types

Where developments include repeating building types — whether as detached homes, terraces or block configurations — significant efficiencies can be achieved. Rather than assessing every building from scratch, the same PHPP model can be used, with only key variations such as orientation, shading, or boundary conditions needing to be adjusted. This reduces both the workload and certification cost per unit. For a typical low-rise development of detached and semi-detached buildings, where a small number of building types are repeated, each type can be certified once as a “model building.” All identical or near-identical buildings can then be treated as “typical buildings,” streamlining both design and certification.

An example of suggested costs is given below. This assumes: that the model and typical buildings are all certified in one go (a single project and not separate, individual certifications), that the same team (designer and Certifier) is working on all of them, that there are no variations on building assemblies, details, etc., and that documentation is submitted in a structured and systematic way.

Example: 100 homes using 5 repeated building (house) types → certify 5 “model” buildings, then apply those to the remaining buildings, with only minimal variations checked. In this instance certification for the first unit type is the most expensive — maybe in the region of £2,000–£3,500 per model type. Subsequent homes may incur only a nominal cost per unit — sometimes as low as £100–£300³ each, depending on the Certifier and project scale.

2. Percentage of build costs

For large and efficient projects (£10m+), the certification cost may fall to around 0.1%–0.3% of total build cost, especially where:

- There are **economies of scale**.
- A **single design team and contractor** are involved throughout.
- **QA is well-integrated** into site processes.

² Passivhaus Certifiers can provide support and guidance to the design team throughout the process; however, they cannot take on a design role themselves, as this would compromise their required impartiality. See *Passivhaus Certifier Scope of Services* (PHT, 2023) at <https://pht.guide/CertifierScopeofServices> for more details.

³ Excluding the cost of a Certified Passivhaus wall plaque (optional).

TIPS FOR APPOINTING A CERTIFIER

PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSION

For large or phased developments, Certifiers often welcome a **pre-application discussion**. This helps scope:

- Model units to be certified
- Sampling strategy for quality assurance
- Anticipated certification fees.

CERTIFIER SCOPE OF SERVICES

To support clients and design teams when engaging a Passivhaus Certifier, the Passivhaus Trust and UK Certifiers Circle provide a generic scope of services which can serve as a template. The scope of services and accompanying guidance offers an overview of the tasks and responsibilities typically involved in the certification process, and aims to help the project team to understand the essential components and expectations associated with achieving Passivhaus certification. Download at <https://pht.guide/CertifierScopeofServices>.

WHO CAN CERTIFY A PASSIVHAUS?

A Passivhaus building can only be certified by an accredited Passivhaus Certifier, on behalf of the Passive House Institute (PHI). Passivhaus Certifiers are individuals who have met minimum delivery experience requirements, successfully completed further training, and achieved accreditation by the PHI to certify Passivhaus buildings, EnerPHit retrofits and PHI Low Energy Buildings anywhere in the world, on their behalf and in accordance with their criteria.



Importantly, to be eligible to undertake the Certifier training, candidates must demonstrate substantial practical experience, typically having worked as a Passivhaus Designer or Consultant on multiple certified projects, including large-scale or complex buildings. This ensures that Certifiers possess not only theoretical knowledge but also a deep, hands-on understanding of the Passivhaus standard in real-world applications.

UK CERTIFIERS CIRCLE

The Passivhaus Trust chairs the UK Certifiers Circle. All accredited Passivhaus Certifiers working in the UK are invited to attend bi-monthly meetings to review UK specific topics, share best practice and pursue alignment of approach. The Passive House Institute attends all meetings to ensure consistency with the criteria, respond to queries and issues arising, and take forward collaboration on relevant topics. The UK Certifiers Circle, in partnership with the Passivhaus Trust, regularly publishes guidance to address UK technical matters, (including this paper). This can be found online at <https://pht.guide/UKCertifiersCircle>.

Details of Passivhaus Trust members & partners who are part of the UK Certifiers' Circle and offer Passivhaus certification services can be found on the [Passivhaus Trust website](#). The comprehensive list of all Passivhaus Certifiers worldwide is available on the [Passive House Institute's website](#).

The Passivhaus Trust is an independent, non-profit organisation that provides leadership in the UK for the adoption of the Passivhaus standard and methodology.

Passivhaus is the leading international low energy design standard, backed with over 30 years of building performance evidence. It is a tried & tested solution that enables a meaningful transition to net-zero now. Over 65,000 buildings have been certified to this standard worldwide. The Trust promotes Passivhaus as a robust way of providing high standards of occupant comfort and health AND slashing energy use and carbon emissions from buildings in the UK.

Please find us on LinkedIn, Instagram, Bluesky and other social media @PassivhausTrust. Keep up to date with all things Passivhaus by joining our mailing list.

www.passivhaustrust.org.uk



The UK Passive House Organisation

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