

## **Standard Life** **Partners in Expert Services – PTSG and Standard Life**



## Partners in Expert Services



Since Premier Technical Services Group PLC (PTSG) was formed in 2007, the 1,200-strong team has become one of the UK's leading suppliers to the facilities management industry, achieving year-on-year growth in each of its core market sectors: access and safety, electrical services, high level cleaning and training solutions.

With 29 multi-disciplinary service centres throughout the UK and 20,000 customers, PTSG counts a number of the industry's leading contractors among its partners. One such organisation is Standard Life plc – an investment company with headquarters in Edinburgh and operations around the globe.

Standard Life operates worldwide in 52 locations with 6,300 employees and around 4.5 million customers. Founded in Edinburgh in 1825, the company moved to its current headquarters at Standard Life House in Edinburgh's financial district, the Exchange, in 1996.

PTSG's relationship with Standard Life began in 2008 when the company acquired OCS's access and safety business. It's flourished ever since with both organisations working collaboratively to deliver a service that's consistently safe, innovative and value adding. It's led to Standard Life entrusting PTSG's operatives with additional services above and beyond its original contracted works. This includes emergency repairs and health and safety training. PTSG is responsible for providing and maintaining essential access and safety equipment which enables Standard Life and its supply chain partners to safely repair, renew and maintain all areas of its infrastructure. This can be testing due to the age and geographic locations of buildings that are situated in busy and accessibly challenging towns and city centres.

To overcome this, Standard Life and PTSG have created an innovation and problem-solving team that aims to ensure all buildings are maintained and repaired to tackle the inevitable decay and deterioration of the estate's fabric. Standard Life's team carries out inspections at regular intervals, coupled with prompt action to pre-empt or remedy potential problems.



This is seen as cost-effective because the time and money spent on routine care, regular surveys and minor repairs helps to protect their estate. Good maintenance also helps to ensure the health and safety of building users and the general public.

## The Contract

PTSG has carried out a range of fall arrest testing services for Standard Life on and within dozens of buildings throughout the UK since 2008. The work comprises the annual testing of thousands of Mansafe systems, eyebolts and cradles, but the team is also called in occasionally for the testing of interior fixings for displays when required. PTSG has a high staff retention record, so many of the same operatives have been attending Standard Life's sites since the partnership began in 2008. This has resulted in an extremely strong working relationship being developed.

The strength of the collaboration between the two organisations has allowed Standard Life and PTSG to work closely to develop innovative access solutions so that the buildings can be operated and maintained safely at all times.

## Partnership

Standard Life and PTSG are committed to partnership working and to that end they have adopted many of the guiding principles of BS11000 (now ISO44001) – the collaborative working standard. They believe the key elements in a successful relationship are trust and safe, first-time delivery, whilst always seeking new ways and approaches to business in an attempt to innovate and continually improve.

The teams have closely worked together and identified the key factors that help them to develop and manage a truly collaborative business relationship within their respective, and between both, organisations.

PTSG works closely with Standard Life's building management team, making sure its skilled and highly trained operatives are immediately available for a range of services, whether this be testing, training or emergency out-of-hours activity.

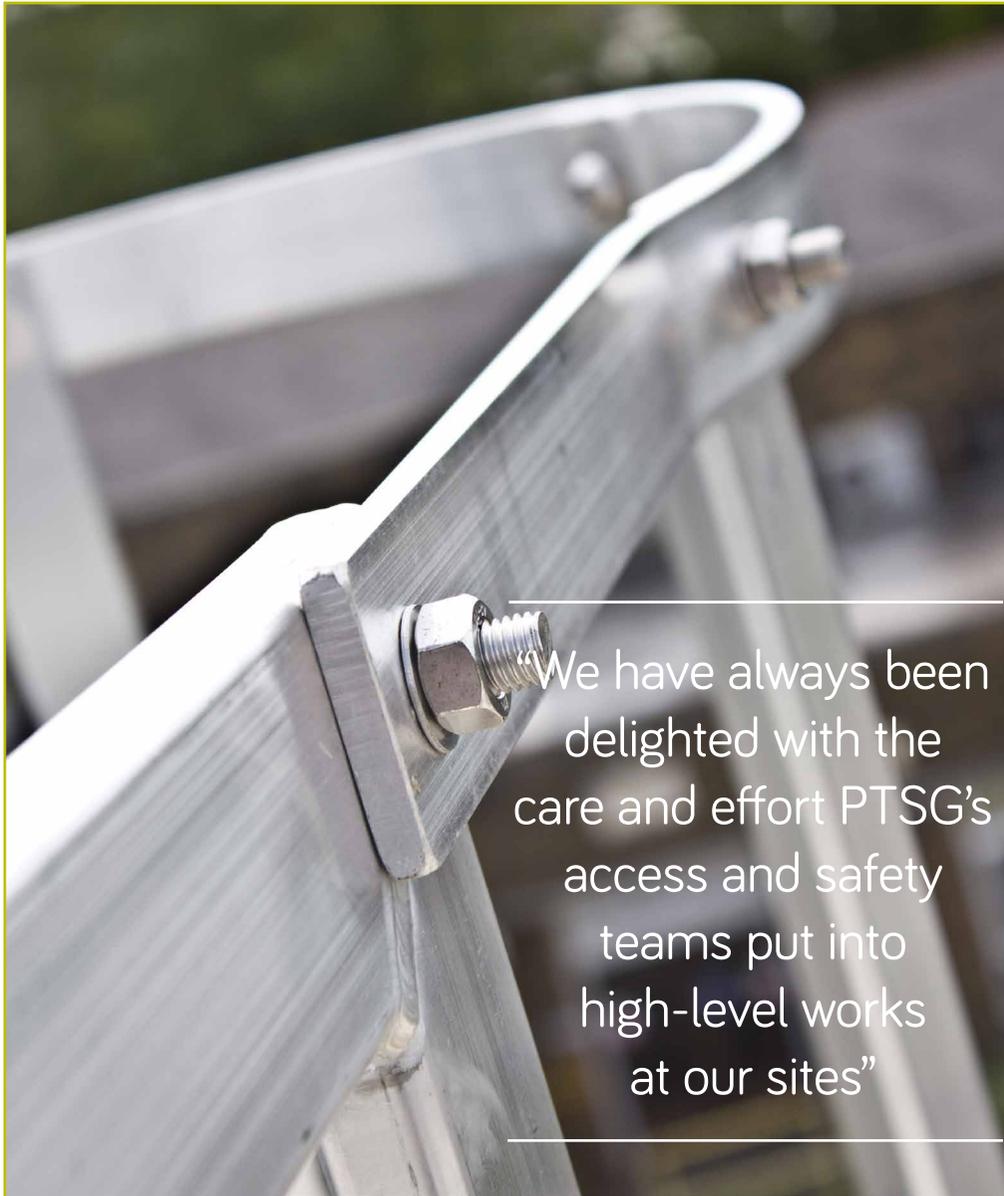
The teams work collaboratively on:

- Workflow planning;
- Surveying and recording;
- Assessment; and
- Planning programmes of maintenance and repair.

This has had the following benefits:

- Wider geographical reach with access given to more buildings
- A more integrated and co-ordinated approach on every assignment
- Financial savings and better use of existing resources
- Knowledge, best practice and information sharing on every building
- Sharing the risk, opportunities and rewards in new and untested projects
- Capacity to replicate success as the relationship develops
- Better co-ordination of Standard Life's and PTSG's activities
- Mutual support between organisations

## Partners in Expert Services



### Achievement

PTSG’s role is to put measures in place that will prevent people from falling from height – installing, testing and maintain fall arrest and access and safety systems.

Among the recent success is the work Standard Life and PTSG have done together at the company’s headquarters in Edinburgh. The historic architectural nature of Standard Life’s head office, however, poses a significant challenge for anyone working at height, as there are many areas within the building that are very difficult to access. Designing and installing access methods to safely navigate the building’s unique architecture as well as keeping operatives safe would, therefore, always be a difficult task.

A problem associated with this was that high-level cleaning could not be carried out. The building management team, under the stewardship of FM stalwarts, Dougie McLeod and David Gordon, set about addressing the problem.

PTSG was a natural choice to design and develop a bespoke access system for the building. Following much developing and trialling, a unique handrail system was designed that could navigate the varied terrain of the building’s roof whilst safely supporting a specialist team during cleans of the façade and high-level windows.

The development process involved close collaboration with several other parties, including council staff and architects, to ensure that the system was safe, functional and aesthetically pleasing. As the building is situated in a city that is world-renowned for its historical and beautiful architecture, a special powder coating was applied to the handrail to preserve the appearance of the building. The final stage of developing the system required a meeting with the owner of Standard Life, who flew in from Abu Dhabi to personally approve the solution before installation started.

Standard Life utilised the skills of the wider PTSG team to ensure that all load calculations were correct whilst simultaneously aiming to develop an innovative handrail system that met all of the exacting standards and requirements. This site has several unique architectural features, including parapets, domed roofs and mansard roofs, and was the first building to be completed in The Exchange area of Edinburgh, setting the tone for the rest of the district’s planning, design and style.

Each of these design features required a different, complex load bearing calculation. The final handrail system designed had to be able to fix onto a range of different roof gradients and building materials, and so a one-size-fits-all installation was completely unsuitable.

## Sustainability

The organisations have developed a strong relationship through continually assessing skills and capabilities to prove that PTSG remains a market leader in access and safety. All of the works completed across Standard Life's sites are delivered to create longevity. Making sure the outcomes of services are fit-for-purpose not only ensures the reputation of PTSG but also offers Standard Life cost-effective solutions.

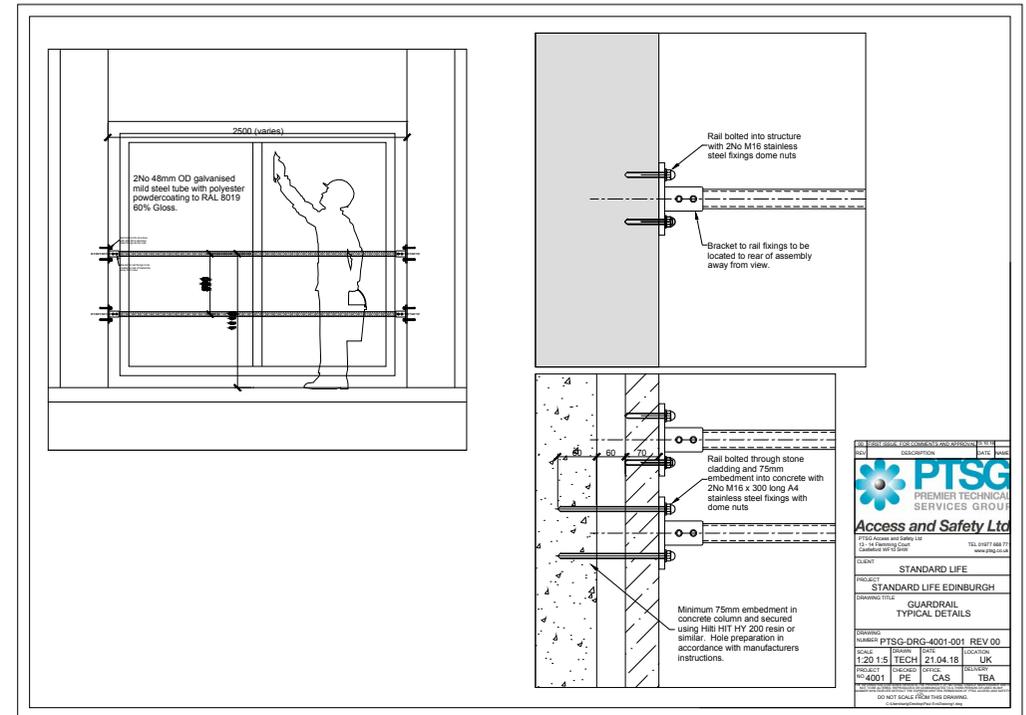
PTSG is accredited to several dozen professional organisations and boasts more than 100 individual accreditations covering all matters of health and safety, staff engagement, employability and sustainability. The company is well acquainted with ISO 26000 which covers voluntary guidance on social responsibility and is aimed at both public and private organisations. All end of lifecycle assets are recycled and older assets are reconditioned and reused where possible. Mobile communication and teleconferencing with clients is also very much viewed as a smarter way of working that reduces costs and has less environmental impact.

## Conclusion

Through successful delivery, PTSG has established itself as a trusted and expert supplier of niche specialist works to Standard Life – an organisation that expects the best standards in every facet of its work.

It is the Group's exemplary track record of delivering high-quality services and positive outcomes that has led to Standard Life putting trust in PTSG to find a solution to one of its most challenging access problems.

Dougie McLeod from Standard Life said of PTSG: "We have always been delighted with the care and effort PTSG's access and safety teams put into high-level works at our sites, but we have been particularly pleased with this most recent project.



"The pressure that comes with the challenges of this job has been greatly alleviated by our confidence in PTSG as a trustworthy and competent company that takes the time to understand our needs and the expectations of our customers."

Thanks to the innovative thinking and successful deployment of PTSG's teams, Standard Life is able to meet its customers' needs, keeping its assets running smoothly, safely and efficiently all year round.

The contract has proved to be an operational and economic success, reducing maintenance costs and ensuring daily operations are supported through the highest facilities management services – ensuring sustainability and safety in service delivery for Standard Life for many years to come.