

Easy Read



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The Welsh Housing Quality Standard

Making social housing better in Wales - A guide for tenants



This document was written by **Welsh Government**. It is an easy read version of 'The Welsh Housing Quality Standard - maintaining and improving social housing in Wales'.

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How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 31**.



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Where the document says **we**, this means **Welsh Government**. For more information contact:

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Introduction



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We are the **Welsh Government**.



We wrote a document called the **Welsh Housing Quality Standard**. We will call it the **Standard** for short.



We want people who live in **social housing** to have good quality homes.

Social housing is homes that people can afford to rent with not much money.



The **Standard** is for **landlords** who own **social housing**. Social **landlords** are councils and housing associations.



Landlords own homes that other people rent and live in. **Landlords** must make sure their homes are in good condition.



The **Standard** tells **landlords** how to make their homes better. And safer.



This **guide** helps social **tenants** know what to expect from their **landlord**. It explains what the **Standard** says **landlords** must do.



A **tenant** is someone who rents their home. They pay their **landlord** every week or month.

About the Standard

The Standard lists 8 things a good quality home must have. It must:



1. Be in good condition.



2. Be safe and secure.



3. Not cost too much to heat. And not be bad for the **environment**.



The **environment** is where we live. It includes the land, the sea, the air, and everything that lives on and in it. For example, plants, animals, and fish.



4. Have an up to date kitchen.



5. Have an up to date bathroom.



6. Be comfortable. And suit the person living there.



7. Have a garden if possible.



8. Have nice outside space if possible.



If a home has all these 8 things, we say it has passed the **Standard**.



But we know some homes cannot pass every part of the **Standard**.



That is okay. So long as there is a good reason.



If a home does not pass a part of the **Standard**, **landlords** must tell us the reason.

How to pass the Standard



This section says what **landlords** must do and check so a home can pass the **Standard**.



There are other documents and guides too. They explain the checks for different things in more detail.



We have listed these other documents and guides in the **more information** section on page 27.



There is a tool for **landlords** called the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System](#). Click for more information.



It will help **landlords** check their homes. To make sure they are safe and good quality.

Homes must be in good condition

Walls



Walls must be in good condition. And not be weak or falling down.



Damp

There should be **no** damp in a home. Damp walls are bad for a home. And bad for a **tenant's** health.



Staircases

Staircases should be safe. And not have any damage that makes them dangerous.

Safety and security

Doors and windows



Secured By Design is a guide from the police about home security. [click here - Secured By Design](#) for more information.



This advice helps to make sure doors and windows are safe and secure.

Fire safety



Homes must have heat and smoke detectors that meet **British Standards**.



British Standards are quality rules that everyone must follow.



Tenants must have a safe and easy way to escape if there is a fire. This includes from flats and shared homes.



Landlords must check homes regularly for fire safety. And follow all fire safety laws.

Gas and heating safety



Homes must have **carbon monoxide detectors** that meet **British Standards**. **Carbon monoxide** is a gas. The detectors will make a noise if there is a gas leak.



Homes should have a safety check every year if they use:

- Gas. For example, a gas boiler.
- Oil. For example, an oil heater.
- Solid fuel. For example, a coal fire.



All safety checks must be done by a qualified person.



Landlords must give **Tenants** a copy of the safety checks.

Electrical safety



Any electrical items the **landlord** puts in a home should have a safety test every year. For example a cooker.



Homes should have an electrical safety check every 5 years or less. This is called an **Electrical Installation Condition Report**.



This safety check must be done by a professional.



Landlords must give **Tenants** a copy of this check.

Heating and the environment

Heating



The **Standard Assessment Procedure** is a check to see if homes have good quality heating.



The **Landlord** must follow the **Standard Assessment Procedure**.



They must make sure that heating a home does not cost too much money.



They must make sure that heating a home is not bad for the **environment**.



Homes must let air flow through them properly. Especially in kitchens and bathrooms.

Water



Homes should have fittings and appliances that stop water being wasted.



This can help **tenants** to keep their water bills down.



And it is good for the **environment**.



The **Landlord** must follow **The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999**. This is a law about using water.



They should put **water butts** in gardens if possible. Water butts collect rainwater. **Tenants** can use this water for their gardens.

Kitchens



Kitchens should be less than 16 years old. Unless they are in good condition.

New kitchens should be planned out properly. And safely. For example:



- There should be space for a cooker, a fridge and a washing machine. And other appliances if needed.



- Work surfaces should be big enough so they can be used properly. And safely.



- There should be enough storage in the kitchen. And in the rest of the home.



- There should be somewhere to store recycling. This can be inside or outside.



- There should be at least 6 double power sockets that are easy to reach.



- Kitchens must have a non-slip floor.



- There should be somewhere to wash, dry and air clothes. If there is nowhere to dry clothes, the landlord should provide a tumble dryer.

Bathrooms



Bathrooms and toilets should be less than 26 years old. Unless they are in good condition.



Bathrooms must have a non-slip floor.



Bathrooms should have a shower **and** a bath if possible. A shower can be over the bath.

Homes must be comfortable

Space



Homes should have enough space to live in comfortably.



There are rules about how much space is needed in a home. The **Landlord** should use **The Metric Handbook** to work out the space needed in a home.

Flooring



All rooms should have the right flooring when a new tenant moves in. And be in good condition.



For example, bathroom floors should not be too slippery.



The **Landlord** should check the flooring every time a **tenant** moves out.



If the flooring is not in good condition, they should change it before a new tenant moves in.

Noise



Walls and windows should be good quality.



So that normal noises do not bother **tenants** too much. For example, the noise from traffic outside.

Making homes suit the tenant



The **Landlord** should make sure a home suits the **tenants** living in it.



For example, some **tenants** need space for a bigger family. Or for praying.



And some **tenants** need extra storage for food because of their religion.



A home should suit a disabled **tenant's** needs. And an older **tenant's** needs.



Finding and getting into a home should be easy. Especially for the emergency services.

Gardens



Homes should have a garden. But it may not always be possible to have one.



Tenants should be able to get to the garden easily. And safely.



Gardens should have a path so they are safe to walk around.



Gardens need to be big enough for people to use comfortably.



The **Landlord** should provide a clothes drying line if possible. And there should be a path to it.



There should be some lockable storage outside. For example, to store bikes and garden equipment.

Nice outside spaces



The **Landlord** should try to create nice outside spaces. And they should be easy to look after.



Outside spaces should be wildlife friendly. For example, for birds and bees.



There should be plenty of plants and trees. And sunlight should be able to get through.



This is all good for the **environment**.



If you don't have your own garden, there should be enough secure storage outside for bikes, pushchairs or mobility scooters for all **tenants**.

What the landlord needs to do



By March 2033, all **social housing** must pass the **Standard**.

In the next 3 years the **landlord** should:



- Collect information about the quality of your homes.



- Find out what work is needed to pass the **Standard**.



- Find out how much the work will cost.



- Write a plan about what they are going to do. And include what they cannot do too.



They should let **tenants** have a say in the plans.



The plans should be good for the local community. For example, by creating new jobs.



The plans should be good for the **environment**.



The homes must keep passing the **Standard** every year.



The **landlord** should get someone to check their plans and homes often.



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They need to tell Welsh Government about how they have passed the **Standard**.



And about any parts they have not passed. And why.

More Information



The guides and documents in the section are not available in easy read.

Renting homes



To find out more about the law and renting homes, [click here - Renting Homes \(Wales\) Act 2016](#).

To find out more about making sure homes are comfortable to live in, [click here - The Renting Homes \(Fitness for Human Habitation\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2022](#).

To read a guide for **landlords** about renting good quality homes, [click here - Fitness of homes for human habitation: guidance for landlords](#).

Safety



To read the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System Operational Guidance](#), [click here](#).

To read a guide for **landlords** on the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System](#), [click here](#).

Security



To find out more about the police guide to keeping things safe [click here - Secured By Design](#) .



To find out more about safe bike storage, [click here](#).

Heating homes



To read the [Standard Assessment Procedure, click here](#).



To find out more about heating and protecting the environment, [click here](#).

Heating safety



To find out more about safe oil-fired appliances, [click here](#).

To find out more about safe solid fuel burning appliances, [click here](#).

Fire safety



To find out more about fire safety in flats, [click here](#).



To find out more about fire safety in special types of homes, [click here](#).



To find out more about fire safety where people sleep, [click here](#).



To find out more about managing fire safety in homes, [click here](#).



To find out more about fire safety and the law, [click here](#).



To find out more about outside walls and fire safety, [click here](#).

Space needed in homes



To find out more about having the right amount of space in a home, see **The Metric Handbook – Planning and Design Data**. Find out more [here](#).



You should also look at the **Unit Size and Layout Sections** of the **Housing Quality Indicator system**. Find out more [here](#).

Water



For more information about the law and water supply, [click here](#).



To read more about how to save water, [click here](#). And [click here](#).

Electricity



To learn more about minimum power sockets in a home, [click here](#).

Hard words

Environment

The environment is where we live. It includes the land, the sea, the air, and everything that lives on and in it. For example, plants, animals, and fish.

Landlord

Landlords own homes that other people rent and live in. Landlords must make sure their homes are in good condition.

Social housing

Social homes are affordable for people to rent with not much money.

Tenant

A tenant is someone who rents their home. They pay their landlord every week or month.