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Y Grŵp Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Education and Public Services Group

Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 Creating Beautiful Homes and Places

(WDQR 2021)

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QUALITY REQUIREMENTS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING¹

Preface

Housing is a key priority for Welsh Government and it is recognised that living well in a quality home brings a wide range of benefits to health, learning and prosperity supporting the government's wider agenda for improving outcomes in health and wellbeing and educational attainment as well as on poverty and decarbonisation.

"Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021" (WDQR 2021) "Creating Beautiful Homes and Places", sets out the minimum functional quality standards for new and rehabilitated general needs affordable homes. The Welsh Government encourages housing providers and their consultants to aim for standards beyond the minimum requirements specified here and to adopt a holistic view of quality, recognising the benefit that quality and culturally suitable homes will have on both physical and mental well-being for all.

Housing quality is as much about the value of the external spaces created as it is about the design of the homes. Homes and their environs should therefore focus on the role of placemaking, be visually attractive and be both environmentally and ecologically sustainable as a result of good design. They should be of high quality and be healthy to live in to meet community, family and individual needs.

The responsibility for producing well designed homes is in the hands of housing providers and the consultants they employ. Guidance can only provide the basic building blocks and therefore client organisations and members of the design team should exercise their responsibility and take a critical interest through referencing and achieving best practice. Housing providers and their consultants are encouraged to engage with the communities within which they are developing and to take account of tenant feedback on their lived experience from earlier schemes.

Where homes are being refurbished, providers should (if practicable and cost effective to do so) take all opportunities to meet the standard, but where this is not possible homes must have adequate space and facilities for everyday living.

The standard will be applied in full to all publicly-funded affordable housing schemes submitted to Welsh Government at "concept" stage for technical scrutiny from 01 October 2021.

New affordable homes delivered through planning agreements (under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) and planning conditions will only be required to meet the Appendix A and Appendix B "space requirements" for agreements entered into after 01 October 2021. We will keep this under regular review.

¹ "Affordable Housing" is defined in Technical Advice Note 2 "Planning and Affordable Housing"
<https://gov.wales/technical-advice-note-tan-2-planning-and-affordable-housing>

REQUIREMENTS

1. Homes should be of high quality, innovative and sustainable

This means;

- a) Homes should demonstrate that they represent value for money and “whole life cost” analysis should be a material consideration when assessing future maintenance costs against initial capital cost.
- b) Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) is a preferred delivery solution. This includes various construction methods and technologies that can either replace traditional methods (e.g. using innovative technological or digital advancements), or complement them (e.g. producing components for hybrid construction that reduce resource required on-site and/or speed up assembly). Further advice on MMC definitions can be found [here](#). Delivery of homes via MMC should be viewed as a technological “step change” and not merely the inclusion of elements of the construction that are already traditionally produced off-site. The Welsh Government MMC Strategy for Social Housing may be found [here](#).
- c) Adopt best practice in moving to a decarbonised and circular built environment by considering:
 - Assessing and reducing upfront and embodied carbon during the design and construction phases, and when undertaking refurbishment.
 - Evaluating the potential for reuse of existing buildings, specifying reused and recycled materials and ensuring that buildings can be adapted, reused or deconstructed and recovered materials re-used or recycled at end of life.
 - Maximising the efficient use of timber in construction to increase carbon storage in harvested wood products in Wales.
 - Minimising operational carbon by reducing operational energy demand and where appropriate, using on site renewables.
 - Ensuring there is sufficient provision for the collection of key recyclables and storage of food waste in homes.
 - Undertaking as-built assessment of whole life carbon and post occupancy evaluation of the building’s performance in relation to the design intent.
 - Once upfront, embodied and operational carbon are minimised, using robust offsetting schemes to move to net-zero whole life carbon.

(Refer to the UK Green Build Council’s “Net Zero Carbon Buildings: A Framework Definition” [here](#))

- d) New homes must meet energy and decarbonisation requirements which consists of:

Achieving EPC A (SAP92 or greater) through the minimum fabric standard set out in “Appendix E” – Elemental specification for the DER/TER, within the Building Regulations Approved Document Part L Wales 2020 and by not using fossil fuel fired boilers to provide domestic hot water and space heating. Alternative proposals will be acceptable where it can be demonstrated by independent certification that the building’s energy demand is reduced in accordance with the Energy Hierarchy for Planning in Welsh Government’s Planning Policy Wales.

- An assessment of overheating risk based on the CIBSE TM59 methodology (for ‘Category 1 buildings’), which demonstrates compliance with the CIBSE TM59 compliance criteria, for the following dwelling types:
 - Apartments/Flats.
 - Houses which do not have two or more parallel aspects to facilitate cross-ventilation.

2. Homes should be flexible, responsive to the changing needs of the occupants, meet the changing needs of a variety of households who will occupy the building over its life and be of sufficient size.

This means;

- a) Rooms are large enough to take all the furniture occupants can reasonably be expected to need.
- b) The approach to each home, including the point of access, stairs, lifts and circulation is designed to enable easy movement of furniture and belongings to rooms within the home.
- c) Homes have adequate and convenient internal and external storage. This should include dedicated space for the storage of bicycles to encourage sustainable travel.
- d) Homes meet the space standards in Appendix A and Appendix B.
- e) All houses have a shower (in addition to a bath) and are provided with adequate space on the ground floor with plumbing, electrical and mechanical ventilation connections to allow for the future installation of a barrier free shower facility suitable for use by a person in a wheelchair. Homes with occupancy of 6 or more have the barrier free shower facility installed.
- f) All flats and bungalows have a shower in addition to a bath and bungalows, ground floor flats and flats served by a lift have a bathroom designed so it is capable of adaptation for use by a person in a wheelchair.
- g) Considering how technology (such as mechanical ventilation with heat recovery and hybrid heating systems) might impact on space requirements.
- h) Homes should be designed to maintain the dignity of occupants and visitors by ensuring bathrooms and shower rooms (excluding en suite) do not open directly off habitable rooms or kitchens.
- i) Providing sufficient space for occupants to set up a home office in a suitable room to allow home working.
- j) Where practicable make internal walls non load bearing to enable future flexibility / adaptability.
- k) Consider providing space particularly in "one bedroom" homes in order for overnight stay.

- l) Consideration should be given to MMC techniques and innovation that can maximise flexibility for adaptations and allow homes to respond to occupants' needs over a building / occupant's lifetime.
- m) Gigabit ready broadband connectivity, for example fibre to the premises (FTTP) or gigabit wireless technologies, shall be provided to every home.
 - Consideration should be given to the installation of networks to all homes that offer a choice of internet service providers.
 - Where gigabit connectivity is not yet available as a minimum provide the physical infrastructure throughout the site and into the home to enable future installation without disruption.

3. Homes should be safe and secure.

This means;

- a) Developments are designed to comply fully with the "Secured by Design" (SBD) Gold standard. <https://www.securedbydesign.com/>
- b) Mixed tenure developments, not fully under the control of the housing provider must meet (as a minimum) the Security Standard elements of SBD.
- c) Kitchens and bathrooms are functional and help reduce the risk of accidents.
- d) Stairs are designed to minimise accidents and not create unnecessary inconvenience by allowing sufficient space for a future stair lift and to facilitate the movement of furniture between floors.
- e) Homes are provided with sufficient, well located and convenient electrical socket outlets.
- f) All family homes should have a private garden which is safe for small children to play in, convenient to use, of sufficient size and is easy to maintain. Consideration should also be given to the provision of private or communal amenity space to flats.
- g) Car parking provision is conveniently situated and reflects the location and anticipated levels of car ownership.
- h) Homes should be fitted with hard wired carbon monoxide detectors with battery back-up.
- i) In addition to mandatory fire safety requirements, all Homes should have a heat detector and alarm in the kitchen as part of the fire detection system. All detectors and alarms must have an integral stand-by supply which is tamper-proof and designed to last the lifetime of the fitting.

Appendix A

Homes should be of sufficient size to meet the needs of occupants, have a convenient layout for everyday living and have adequate circulation space.

Space requirements will be met where:

- The dwelling provides the Gross Internal (floor) Area (GIA) and built-in storage area set out in Appendix B.
- Accessibility requirements will be satisfied by designing dwellings to meet the Lifetime Homes Standards as published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/pages/revised-design-criteria.html>
- Homes are provided with adequate facilities for clothes washing, drying and a dedicated airing cupboard containing an appropriate source of heat.
- A dwelling with two or more bed spaces has at least one double (or twin) bedroom.
- Critical room dimensions meet intended purposes, in particular;
 - A single bedroom must have a floor area of at least 6.5m² and must be at least 2.1m wide.
 - A double or twin bedroom must have a floor area of at least 11.5m².
 - One double (or twin bedroom) must be at least 2.75m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom must be at least 2.55m wide.
- The minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3m for at least 75% of the GIA.
- Gross Internal (floor) Area (GIA) is measured to the internal finished surfaces of main containing walls on each floor, including private staircases, internal partitions, flues and ducts; it excludes external dustbin enclosures or stores, any porch open to the air or enclosed.
- The measurement of floor area of common access flats excludes the area of the communal stairs and circulation space.
- The measurement of floor areas of individual ground floor external access flats includes the area occupied by the staircase and entrance hall necessary to gain access to the first floor flat. The areas of the ground floor and upper floor flats (walk-up) shall be averaged in order to make comparisons against the minimum floor areas shown above.
- Space for mechanical and electrical installations should be provided in addition to the above general storage areas.
- The areas in the table are based on single or two storey homes and it is recognised that larger homes and homes over two storeys will have a proportionate increase in area.

Appendix B

Floor Areas

Home Designation	Home Type	Gross Internal (floor) Area (GIA) m ²	General Storage m ² (included in GIA)
7P4B	2 Storey House	114	3
6P4B	2 Storey House	110	3
5P3B	2 Storey House	93	2.5
4P3B	2 Storey House	88	2.5
4P2B	2 Storey House	83	2.5
3P2B	2 Storey House	74	2
3P2B	Bungalow	58	2
3P2B	Flat – Walk up	65	2
3P2B	Flat – Common access	58	2
2P1B	Flat – Walk up	53	1.5
2P1B	Flat – Common access	50	1.5

Provided that designs do not compromise the quality of homes intended to be delivered by this standard, a reduction of up to 5% of the above GIA may be applied.