

Welsh Housing Quality Standard: Immediate Changes

Introduction

The following information outlines **Immediate Changes** to the standard which need to be implemented either due to regulation updates or to bring further clarity and flexibility to landlords in achieving the standard. These changes will all be included in an updated standard which will be published next summer. However, in the absence of an updated standard the following changes need to be adhered to. This document replaces the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Frequently Asked Questions on the website.

Compliance Policy / Compliance Monitoring Report (CMR)

Description of change:

A change in the formatting of the Compliance Policies is being introduced. From October 2026 and annually from then onwards Landlords will need to submit a Compliance Monitoring Report (CMR) which reports on specific aspects of the standard.

The **CMR** will cover the following subjects and should be **submitted by 1st October** each year starting in October 2026:

1. Statements on the elements not measured
 - o To include actual evidence and examples of good practice
2. Tenant engagement activity
 - a. To include actual examples of activity
3. Digital Connectivity
 - a. To be framed around being tenant focussed
4. Landlord narrative to explain their fails in their data collection
5. Conditional Pass - Cost prohibitive activity
 - a. To include a table of costs
6. TEP Narrative for element 3b in WHQS
 - a. To include all work done to date and future work planned

Whilst this is a change from the previous Compliance Policy requirement, it is still considered good practice for an organisation to produce a Compliance Policy for their residents and stakeholders.

Carbon Monoxide alarms:

Description of change:

Landlords need to align with the following regulation immediately: [Approved Document J \(Combustion appliances and fuel storage systems\) 2010 edition incorporating 2010 and 2024 amendments \(WGC 004/2024\) | GOV.WALES](#)

When the standard is updated, it will contain additions to the text that will include **fixed-flued** combustion appliances and cookers and **LPG gas**. The Approved Document J widens the requirement to include **all spaces** where a fixed-flue combustion appliance is installed **including garages and loft spaces**, or in high-risk accommodation, that is, a bedroom or principal habitable room (e.g., living room) where a flue passes through.

Compliance with the relevant British Standard remains the same but a reference to **Part 1:2018** will be included within the revised Standard which outlines the necessary criteria for an alarm and includes the additional wording for **an integral sounder**. Further reference to guidance and recommendations on the installation will also be included within the revised Standard.

Digital Connectivity:

Description of change:

The standard no longer requires landlords to assess and report the number of homes do not have access to 30Mbps download speed fixed broadband and receive a 4G mobile signal within their Compliance Policy. Landlords will need to report against the new Digital Connectivity requirements within the new Compliance Monitoring Report (CMR). The new requirements will ask Landlords to report their understanding of the digital infrastructure within their housing stock and to actively address digital inclusion through meaningful engagement and targeted support for tenants.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS):

Description of change:

Landlords will not need to report national average HHSRS scores in relation to elements within the standard. The reference to national average HHSRS scores will be removed in the next version of the standard which will be published in summer of 2026.

A landlord has a legal obligation to fix Category 1 Hazards. Therefore, if you have a property with an outstanding Category 1 Hazard waiting to be fixed on the 31 of March, we expect you to report that score to us.

The current standard also states that landlords should note that the mere absence of a Category 1 hazard for dampness (Element 1b) does not constitute a pass, nor would dwellings with minor problems of dampness assessed as Category 2 hazards pass the standard. The standard is that the dwelling should be 'free from damp', including persistent condensation. This position remains in relation to Element 2b and will not be changing. Landlords will be required to report any Category 1 or Category 2 scores in relation to Damp.

Fire Safety:

Description of change: The updated fire detection requirements have not changed but the updated version of the standard which will be published next summer will contain additional text setting out a timeline for the achievement of element 2c (Homes must have an adequate fire detection and alarm system installed and maintained to the appropriate British Standard). As outlined in the Spotlight on: Fire Safety which was sent to all landlords March 2025.

However, there is a new timeline on reporting, and this is to take effect immediately.

Below is what we expect for the following years:

2024/25 – To pass 2c) Homes must contain:

- an adequate fire detection and alarm system which complied with the appropriate British Standard at the time of its installation.

2025/26 to 2029/30 - To pass 2c) Homes must contain:

- a smoke detector in all circulation areas on each storey that form part of the escape routes from the premises, such as hallways and landings

2030 onwards – To pass 2c) Homes must contain:

- A smoke detector in all circulation areas on each storey that form part of the escape routes from the premises, such as hallways and landings.
- A smoke detector in the principal habitable room used for general daytime living purposes (normally the living room/lounge).
- A heat detector installed in every kitchen (including open plan kitchen / living areas; smoke detectors should not be used in such rooms).

Strategic Long-Term Voids – Reporting

Description of change:

Properties that are void and have board/cabinet approval for disposal can be excluded from landlords reporting figures for WHQS from March 2026 onwards.

All other voids/vacant properties which are self-contained and wholly owned and managed by landlords need to be included within the WHQS reporting.

Introduction of a Replacement Reason Code: Element 3b)

Temporary Fail – Programmed with a TEP

Description of change:

A replacement reason code is being introduced to help with the potential conflict of achieving Element 3b (SAP 75) and 3a (SAP 92). The reason code is '**Temporary Fail – Programmed with a TEP**' and this will be replacing 'Temporary Fail – programmed within 5 years'. The reporting of 3b (SAP75) and this reason code will count towards the overall house assessment and will apply from 2030.

We recognise that in planning to achieve the targets set out in the standard there is an optimal path towards improving homes and that this may conflict with a plan to achieve SAP 75.

For example, the early installation of Solar PV will improve a home towards a SAP 75 target, but may conflict with an enveloping scheme, carried out at an appropriate time within the lifecycle of the roof of a house.

This new reason code will allow landlords who have a full Target Energy Pathway (TEP) in place to implement the measures at the correct time.

The TEP to develop a future programme of works for each home should take priority over the short-term SAP 75 target. Currently landlords are only able to defer achieving SAP 75 if a future programme of works is planned for the property by 2035.

WG will continuously review the WHQS reporting requirements to prioritise following an optimal path for improving homes.