

SDR 162/2015

8 October 2015

Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) as at 31 March 2015

This annual Statistical Release presents information from the annual data collection introduced in July 2012 to measure the progress made by social landlords (local authorities and registered social landlords) in achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) for all their stock. The WHQS is the Welsh Government standard of housing quality. The release covers compliance with the standard as at 31 March 2015 and also provides information on compliance with the WHQS by individual component type and comparisons with the previous year. Further details can be found in the Key Quality Information section along with definitions in the Glossary towards the end of this release.

The WHQS was first introduced in 2002 and aims to ensure that all dwellings are of good quality and suitable for the needs of existing and future residents. The Welsh Government set a target for all social landlords to improve their housing stock to meet the WHQS as soon as possible, but in any event by 2020.

This information is used to assess the number of social housing dwellings which are compliant with the WHQS at 31 March 2015 and to monitor progress towards the Welsh Government commitment to bringing all existing social housing up to WHQS by 2020. It is also used to assess the effectiveness of current policy, particularly progress against the Welsh Government's [National Housing Strategy](#) and [Programme for Government 2011-2016](#) objectives and for future policy development.

Summary

- The number of social housing dwellings that are compliant with the WHQS (including acceptable fails) continues to increase. At 31 March 2015, 72 per cent of social housing dwellings (159,317 dwellings) were compliant with the WHQS (including acceptable fails) compared to 67 per cent a year earlier.
- Levels of WHQS compliance continue to be higher for registered social landlords (RSLs), with 87 per cent of RSL dwellings achieving WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2015 compared to 48 per cent of local authority dwellings.
- The components that continued to show the highest level of WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) for all social landlords were 'Mains powered smoke detectors' and 'Windows', whilst 'Energy rating (SAP \geq 65)' and 'Gardens and external storage' had the lowest compliance at 31 March 2015.

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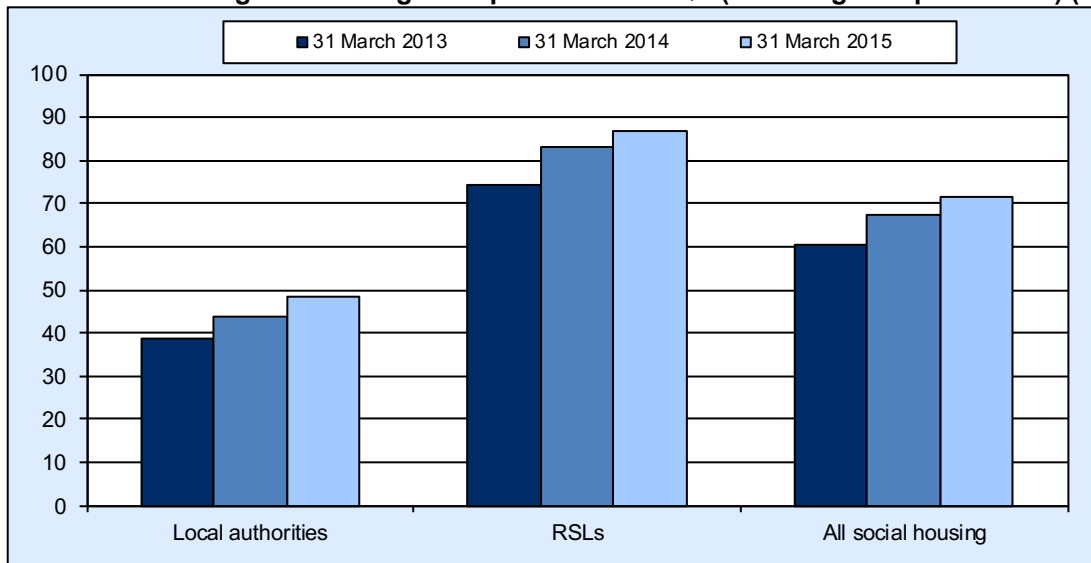
1. WHQS compliance

Full compliance refers to dwellings where the WHQS standard is achieved for all individual elements. However there can be situations where achieving the standard for an individual element is not possible. Such situations may include the cost or timing of the work, resident's choosing not to have the work done or where there are physical constraints to the work. In these instances the landlords may record one or more element as acceptable fails. Where a dwelling contains one or more acceptable fails but all other elements are compliant, the dwelling is deemed to be compliant subject to acceptable fails.

For the purpose of this release the main focus will be on dwellings that are either fully compliant or compliant subject to acceptable fails. For simplicity the combination of these categories will be known throughout the release as WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails).

- As at 31 March 2015 there were a total of 222,648 social landlord dwellings^{1,2} in Wales, of these 72 per cent (159,317 dwellings) were compliant with the WHQS (including acceptable fails). This compares with 67 per cent a year earlier and represents a 4 percentage point increase since 31 March 2014 (Chart 1 & Table 1).

Chart 1 - Percentage of dwellings compliant with WHQS (including acceptable fails) (a) (b) (c)



Source: Annual WHQS returns

(a) For a component to be considered as compliant it should meet the requirements stated in the "Revised Guidance for Social Landlords on Interpretation and Achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard July 2008".

(b) In order to be included as fully WHQS compliant, properties must meet the standard for all individual elements apart from those under Category 6 'Located in attractive and safe environments' which cannot be easily measured on a consistent basis. Compliant properties should also include any properties where a particular element of the standard is not applicable and hence not assessed.

(c) An Acceptable Fail is only possible on individual elements and not the dwelling as a whole. Further detail on acceptable fails are available in the 'Key Quality Information' section.

- As was the case in the three previous years, at the end of March 2015 a greater percentage of registered social landlord (RSL) dwellings achieved WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) than local authority dwellings though the gap had reduced slightly compared with the previous year. In March 2013, WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) was 36 percentage points higher for RSLs than local authorities. This rose to 39 percentage points higher by March 2014 but the gap had closed slightly to 38 percentage points by the end of March 2015 when 87 per cent of all RSL dwellings were WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails) compared with 48 per cent of local authority dwellings.
- Of the 11 local authorities who retained their housing stock, only 4 stated that all their stock was compliant with the WHQS (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2015 which is the same number as in the previous year.
- Of the 58 RSLs that responded over two thirds (41 RSLs) reported that all their stock had achieved WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2015, with 6 further RSLs reporting that

¹ For the purposes of this data collection social housing dwellings assessed include all self-contained properties, including bedsits, under the headings of general needs, sheltered, other supported, and extra care.

² Based on 58 (95 per cent) RSLs only. 3 RSLs did not provide any information. More detail is provided in the Key Quality information section of this release.

they would achieve compliance during 2015. This is 9 more than the number of RSLs who reported they had achieved WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2013 and 3 more than at 31 March 2014.

Table 1 – Progress made by social landlords towards compliance with WHQS as at 31 March (a) (b)

		31 March 2013	31 March 2014	31 March 2015
WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails) (c)	Local authority dwellings	38.8	43.6	48.3
	Registered social landlord dwellings	74.5	83.0	86.7
	All social housing	60.3	67.4	71.6
Fully compliant	Local authority dwellings	32.5	36.7	40.3
	Registered social landlord dwellings	53.4	58.3	64.5
	All social housing	45.1	49.8	55.0
Not compliant	Local authority dwellings	61.2	56.4	51.7
	Registered social landlord dwellings	25.5	17.0	13.3
	All social housing	39.7	32.6	28.4

Source: Annual WHQS returns

(a) For a component to be considered as compliant it should meet the requirements stated in the “Revised Guidance for Social Landlords on Interpretation and Achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard July 2008”.

(b) The information shown for local authorities is based on the 11 local authorities who still retained stock as at 31 March 2012 and 2013. Information shown for registered social landlords (RSLs) is based on responses received from 57 RSLs in 2012, 58 in 2013, 59 in 2014 and 58 in 2015. In 2013, 4 RSLs did not provide any information, in 2014 2 RSLs did not provide any information and in 2015 3 RSLs did not provide any information. These represent less than 1 per cent of all RSL stock. The RSL stock numbers have been adjusted accordingly.

(c) An Acceptable Fail is only possible on individual elements and not the dwelling as a whole. Further detail on acceptable fails are available in the 'Key Quality Information' section.

- The percentage of social housing dwellings not compliant with WHQS has continued to fall, with 28 per cent of all social housing not compliant at the end of March 2015, down from 33 per cent a year earlier. However more than half (52 per cent) of local authority dwellings were still not compliant at 31 March 2015 compared with 13 per cent of RSL dwellings.
- The percentage of non compliant RSL dwellings has decreased by 4 percentage points since March 2014 whilst the percentage of local authority non compliant dwellings has decreased by 5 percentage points over the same period.

2. Acceptable fails³

- The percentage of all social housing dwellings that were compliant (including acceptable fails) had increased to 72 per cent by 31 March 2015 (Table 1). Unlike previous years however, this increase was due to an increase in the number and percentage of dwellings that were fully WHQS compliant rather than to any increase in the number of dwellings with at least one WHQS element allocated as an acceptable fail.
- Both the number and percentage of compliant dwellings with at least one acceptable fail had been increasing each year and by 31 March 2014 more than a quarter contained at least one acceptable fail. At 31 March 2015 however the number of dwellings with at least one acceptable fail had dropped by 6 per cent compared with the previous year to 36,913 dwellings which represented 23 per cent of the 159,317 dwellings which were WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails).
- RSLs continue to have a higher proportion of compliant dwellings (including acceptable fails) that contain at least one acceptable fail than local authority compliant dwellings.

³ Some local authorities and RSLs were unable to provide any information on acceptable fails. Further details are available in the Key Quality Information section.

3. Reasons for Acceptable Fails

Since 2012-13, information has been collected on the reasons for the 'acceptable fails' as reported by local authorities and RSLs. A dwelling may contain one or more elements which are classified as an 'acceptable fail' under the WHQS guidance and therefore there may be several reasons why the property containing those elements might then be regarded as an acceptable fail for the purposes of the WHQS data collection. In these cases, the social landlord data providers were asked to record the main reason for that 'acceptable fail' according to the hierarchical order below;

1. Resident Choice
 2. Physical Constraint
 3. Timing of Remedy
 4. Cost of Remedy
- The most common reasons for acceptable fails remain unchanged from last year. At 31 March 2015, across all social housing, the most common main reason given for an acceptable fail was 'Timing of Remedy' occurring in 45 per cent of compliant dwellings that contained at least one acceptable fail, followed by 'Resident's Choice' which occurred in 29 per cent of dwellings. 'Cost of Remedy' and 'Physical constraint' were the least common reasons for acceptable fails (Table 2).

Table 2 - Number of dwellings WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails), by main reason for acceptable fails as at 31 March 2015 (a) (b) (c)

	Local authority dwellings	Registered social landlord dwellings (d)	Number/Per cent
			All social housing
Dwellings compliant subject to acceptable fails by reasons for acceptable fails:			
Residents Choice	3,772	6,750	10,522
Physical Constraint	27	5,568	5,595
Timing of Remedy	2,329	14,182	16,511
Cost of Remedy	910	3,375	4,285
Total dwellings compliant subject to acceptable fails	7,038	29,875	36,913
Percentage of dwellings compliant subject to acceptable fails by reasons for acceptable fails:			
Residents Choice	54	23	29
Physical Constraint	-	19	15
Timing of Remedy	33	47	45
Cost of Remedy	13	11	12

Source: Annual WHQS returns

(a) For a component to be considered as compliant it should meet the requirements stated in the "Revised Guidance for Social Landlords on Interpretation and Achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard July 2008".

(b) The information shown for local authorities is based on the 11 local authorities who still retained stock as at 31 March 2014. The information shown for registered social landlords (RSLs) is based on responses received from 58 RSLs only. 3 RSLs did not provide any information for their organisation however these represent less than 1 per cent of all RSL stock. The RSL stock numbers have been adjusted accordingly.

(c) An Acceptable Fail is only possible on individual elements and not the dwelling as a whole. Further detail on acceptable fails are available in the 'Key Quality Information' section.

(d) 1 LA could not record any acceptable fails data.

- There was considerable variation between the local authorities and the RSLs in reasons given for 'acceptable fails'. For local authority compliant dwellings 'Residents Choice' was the main reason given for over half of all 'acceptable fails' (54 per cent) whilst for RSL compliant dwellings this reason only accounted for 23 per cent. Similarly whilst 'Timing of Remedy' accounted for 47 per cent of all 'acceptable fails' in RSL compliant dwellings it was only given as the reason for a third of local authority 'acceptable fails'.
- The 'Cost of Remedy' accounted for 13 per cent of 'acceptable fails' in local authority compliant dwellings but was only given as the main reason for 11 per cent of RSL compliant dwellings whilst there were less than 1 per cent of cases where local authorities reported 'Physical Constraint' as the reason for the 'acceptable fail' compared with 19 per cent for RSLs.
- The variation between the local authorities and RSLs in the reasons given for 'acceptable fails' may be related to differing stock profiles with local authorities generally having older, unimproved stock where, for example, the sizes of kitchens may be smaller. The variation could also be related

to the stage the landlord is at in their WHQS programme of work with differences between those landlords at the beginning of their programme and those at the end.

4. Compliance against components

Social landlords were also asked to provide an assessment of compliance with the WHQS in relation to ten components, listed in table 3 below. To be compliant with a component, a property must meet the standard for each element that applies to that component (see Annex 1).

Whilst it is generally expected that compliance will improve over time, compliance levels can actually fall. Two possible reasons for this are the change in the quality of the source data and the deterioration of the housing stock. Some landlords have informed us that due to more recent stock condition surveys and improved estimation processes the accuracy of the data they provide is improving. In some cases this will result in previous estimates being higher than current estimates. Dwellings can also fall out of compliance as they age and deteriorate and for some components the rate of deterioration may be more rapid than the planned work improvement programmes.

Table 3 - Compliance of all social landlords with WHQS (including acceptable fails) by component as percentage of dwellings as at 31 March each year (a) (b) (c) (d)

	WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails) for given component		
	2013	2014	2015
Roofs and associated components	90.2	90.7	89.6
Window s	96.4	96.7	96.9
External Doors	92.2	95.5	95.2
Kitchens	76.8	82.2	87.2
Bathrooms	76.7	81.6	87.8
Energy rating (SAP ≥ 65)	77.8	85.6	84.9
Central heating systems	88.1	91.6	96.0
Electrical systems	86.1	88.8	90.7
Mains powered smoke detectors	95.4	96.5	97.7
Gardens and external storage up to and including the boundary of the property	82.5	86.6	85.6

Source: Annual WHQS returns

- (a) For a component to be considered as compliant it should meet the requirements stated in the “Revised Guidance for Social Landlords on Interpretation and Achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard July 2008”.
- (b) Based on information from the 11 local authorities who still retained stock as at 31 March 2014 and information from 58 RSLs only. 3 RSLs did not provide any information for their organisation, however these represent less than 1 per cent of all RSL stock. The RSL stock numbers have been adjusted accordingly.
- (c) The compliance numbers shown in Table 3 will generally be higher than in Table 1, as properties may comply with a subset of the elements without necessarily complying with them all.
- (d) An Acceptable Fail is only possible on individual elements and not the dwelling as a whole. Further detail on acceptable fails are available in the 'Key Quality Information' section.
- The two components that showed the highest percentage of WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2015 were ‘Mains powered smoke detectors’ and ‘Windows’ at 98 per cent and 97 per cent respectively. These two components were also those with the highest percentage of WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) in 2013 and in 2014. This may be because these components are relatively easy or cost effective to apply.
 - In the previous two years the components with the lowest levels of WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) were ‘Bathrooms’ and ‘Kitchens’. At 31 March 2015, however, the two components with the lowest levels of WHQS compliance were ‘Energy rating (SAP ≥ 65)’ and ‘Gardens and external storage’ at 85 per cent and 86 per cent respectively. The low levels of compliance for these two components may be due to a change in the methodology used for assessing ‘Energy rating (SAP>65)’ by some local authorities and higher failure rates for ‘Gardens and external storage’

following external surveys. Another reason may be the different stages that landlords are at in their programme of work (Table 3).

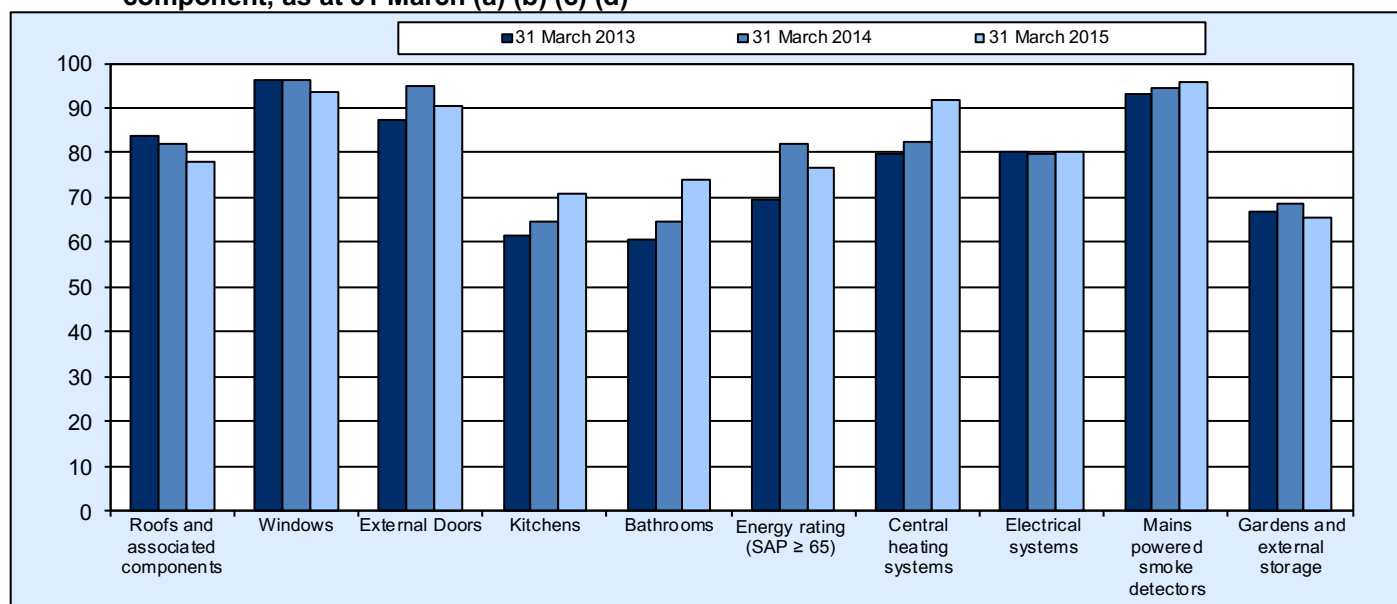
- It is also noticeable that the gap between the highest and lowest levels of compliance for components is reducing on an annual basis. In March 2013 there was a difference of 20 percentage points compared to 13 percentage points in March 2015.

5. Compliance against components by social landlord

5.1 Local authorities

- At 31 March 2015, for local authorities 'Mains powered smoke detectors' was the component showing the highest percentage of dwellings that were WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails) (96 per cent), followed by 'Windows' (94 per cent) and 'Central heating systems' (92 per cent) (Chart 2).
- 'Gardens and external storage' was the component showing the lowest level of WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) for local authority dwellings at 31 March 2015 (65 per cent) followed by 'Kitchens' (71 per cent) and 'Bathrooms' (74 per cent).
- The percentage of local authority dwellings percentage compliant for 'Gardens and external storage' increased slightly between 2013 and 2014 before decreasing again to 65 per cent at 31 March 2015. The percentage for Kitchens' however has been increasing each year, from 61 per cent at 31 March 2013 to 71 per cent at 31 March 2015.

Chart 2 - Percentage of local authority dwellings WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails) by component, as at 31 March (a) (b) (c) (d)



Source: Annual WHQS returns

(a) For a component to be considered as compliant it should meet the requirements stated in the "Revised Guidance for Social Landlords on Interpretation and Achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard July 2008".

(b) Includes only those properties meeting the standard, including acceptable fails, for each individual element apart from those under Category 6 'Located in attractive and safe environments' which cannot be easily measured on a consistent basis.

(c) Compliant properties should also include any properties where a particular element of the standard is not applicable and hence not assessed.

(d) The compliance numbers shown will generally be higher than those in Table 1, as properties may comply with a subset of the elements, without necessarily complying with them all.

- The components showing the largest percentage point increases in compliance for local authority dwellings between 2013 and 2014 was 'Energy Rating (SAP ≥ 65)' (increasing by 13 percentage points) and 'External Doors' (increasing by 7 percentage points). Between 2014 and 2015, 'Central heating Systems' and 'Bathrooms' were the two components showing the largest increases with both increasing by 9 percentage points.

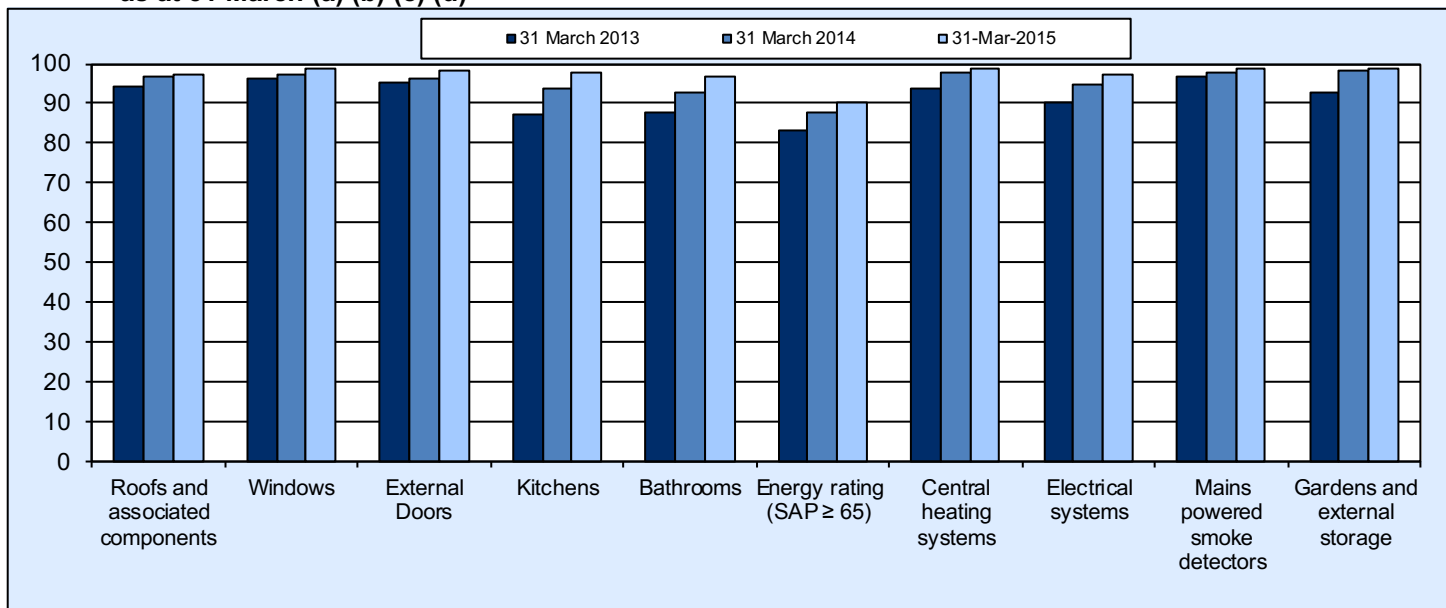
- Only one component, 'Roofs and associated components' showed a decrease in compliance for local authority dwellings between 2013 and 2014. At 31 March 2015 however there were 5 components which showed a decrease compared with the previous year ranging from a drop of 6 percentage points for 'Energy rating (SAP ≥ 65)' to a drop of 2 percentage points for 'Windows'.

As previously explained the fall in compliance may be due to improvements in data quality or deterioration of housing stock.

5.2 Registered social landlords

- For RSLs, 'Windows', 'Gardens and external storage', 'Mains powered smoke detectors' and 'Central Heating Systems' were the 4 components showing the highest percentage (99 per cent) of dwellings that were WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2015. There were also high levels of compliance recorded for 'Kitchens' and 'External Doors' at 98 per cent (Chart 3).
- RSLs had higher rates of WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) than local authorities for all components of WHQS. The largest differences in levels of compliance for components between RSLs and local authorities were for 'Gardens and External Storage' followed by 'Kitchens'.
- At 31 March 2015, 'Energy rating (SAP ≥ 65)' continued to be the component with the lowest level of WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) for RSL dwellings for the third year in a row with 90 per cent of dwellings compliant.

Chart 3 - Percentage of RSL dwellings WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails) by component, as at 31 March (a) (b) (c) (d)



Source: Annual WHQS returns

(a) For a component to be considered as compliant it should meet the requirements stated in the "Revised Guidance for Social Landlords on Interpretation and Achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard July 2008".

(b) Includes only those properties meeting the standard, including acceptable fails, for each individual element apart from those under Category 6 'Located in attractive and safe environments' which cannot be easily measured on a consistent basis.

(c) Compliant properties should also include any properties where a particular element of the standard is not applicable and hence not assessed.

(d) The compliance numbers shown will generally be higher than those in Table 1, as properties may comply with a subset of the elements, without necessarily complying with them all.

- Between 2014 and 2015 the components showing the largest increase in compliance were 'Kitchens' and 'Bathrooms' both increasing by 4 percentage points. Whilst all components recorded increases in compliance between 2014 and 2015, these increases were smaller than between 2013 and 2014 for most components.
- 'Gardens and external storage' and 'Roofs and associated' were the components with the smallest percentage point increases in compliance for RSLs between 2014 and 2015, increasing by less than 1 percentage point each. Unlike the local authority dwellings, there was no reduction in compliance for any individual components compared with the previous year (Chart 3).

6 - Properties are located in attractive and safe environments

The information shown in this release does not include any assessments made for the elements covered under Part 6 which is the environment standard of the WHQS and states that 'All dwellings should be located in attractive and safe environments to which residents can relate and in which they can be proud to live'. This is because these elements are considered to be difficult to measure on a consistent basis. Local authorities and RSLs were however asked to state whether or not they have a strategy or policy in place for complying with Part 6. Of the 11 authorities who retained stock at 31 March 2014, 8 reported that they had a strategy or policy in place as did 44 of the 58 RSLs who provided a response.

Key Quality Information

1. In addition to the information below, further information can be found in the [Housing Statistics Quality Report](#) which is available on our website.

Policy and Operational Context

2. In 2001 the Welsh Government set out their long-term vision for housing in Wales entitled “Better Homes for People in Wales”. The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (the Standard) was introduced in 2002, with revised guidance issued in 2008, to implement this vision. The Standard was developed to provide a common target standard for all housing in Wales, but will primarily be used to assess the social housing provided by local authorities and housing associations (social landlords). The Welsh Government expected all social landlords in Wales to adopt the standard to devise realistic programmes for bringing all their homes up to it as soon as possible, but in any event by 2020 at the latest and to maintain into the future.
3. To achieve the standard, all social landlords are expected to:
 - Have up to date information on the condition of their stock gathered via a rolling programme of stock condition surveys
 - Work to a comprehensive strategy for planned maintenance and improvement based on this information and taking into account the views and aspirations of its tenants, with the aim of keeping all homes in compliance, as far as practicable, with the standard.
4. The WHQS measures 41 individual elements within the following seven categories:
 - In a good state of repair
 - Safe and secure
 - Adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated
 - Contain up-to-date kitchens and bathrooms
 - Well managed (for rented housing)
 - Located in attractive and safe environments
 - As far as possible suit the specific requirements of the household (e.g. specific disabilities).
5. The information shown in this release does not cover all of the 41 individual elements as social landlords were not required to report on Part 6⁴ of the WHQS (Located in attractive and safe environments) which was regarded as too difficult to measure consistently. A full list of the individual elements and which category of the WHQS they fall under is provided in Annex 1.
6. Revised Guidance was issued for social landlords in 2008. This is available at the following link: <http://gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/housing-quality/welsh-standard/?lang=en>
7. The [National Housing Strategy](#) includes an objective for all households in Wales to have the opportunity to live in good quality homes. The [Programme for Government 2011-2016](#) which is the current government programme, is also committed to continued implementation and monitoring of the WHQS. There is both an outcome and a tracking indicator within the Programme for Government relating to the WHQS, these are: ‘Percentage of social housing meeting the WHQS’ and ‘Number of houses brought up to WHQS’.
8. The [White Paper for Better Lives and Communities](#) published in May 2012 includes the proposal to ‘Improve the quality of existing homes, including their energy efficiency, through the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and other mechanisms’.
9. The [Housing \(Wales\) Act](#) became law on 17 September 2014. The Housing Act aims to improve housing standards, increase affordability, enhance our communities and help prevent the difficulties and lack of opportunities often encountered by vulnerable people.

⁴ Part 6 is the environment standard of the WHQS – ‘Located in attractive and safe environments’ and compliance with this cannot be easily measured on a consistent basis.

Data Source and Coverage

10. In July 2012 a new annual data collection was introduced to regularly monitor the progress made by all social landlords (local authorities and registered social landlords) in achieving the WHQS for all their stock. Landlords were asked to provide information on the number of dwellings within their stock which complied with the standard as a whole (excluding any assessments under Part 6⁵). As well as information on the number of dwellings that complied subject to 'acceptable fails'.
11. Information is collected annually via Excel spreadsheets which are downloaded from the Afon file transfer website which provides a secure method for users to submit data.
12. Copies of the current WHQS data collection form are available at the following link:
<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/social-housing-quality-welsh-housing-quality-standard-data-collection/?lang=en>
13. Further information on the data processing cycle can also be found in the [Housing Statistics Quality Report](#).
14. Data were collected from all 11 local authorities that retained stock as at 31 March 2015 and from 58 of the 61 Welsh Registered Social Landlords including Abbeyfield societies, Almshouse Charities and Co-ownership societies. The 3 RSLs who did not provide a completed data collection return were all very small organisations which in total represent less than 1 per cent (22 dwellings) of all RSL stock. The RSL stock numbers have been adjusted accordingly. The collection achieved a 95 per cent response rate.
15. For the local authorities, Powys were unable to provide any information on acceptable fails for this year's data collection.
16. For the purposes of this data collection "stock to be assessed" is defined as all self-contained properties, including bedsits, under the headings of general needs, sheltered, other supported and extra care as provided in the annual stock return for 2014-15 for each social landlord.
17. The proportion of social housing stock managed by registered social landlords will have been influenced by the large scale voluntary transfers of local authority stock as shown below. All transfers covered 100 per cent of the local authority housing stock.

Local authority	Date of transfer	Registered social landlord
Bridgend	12 September 2003	Valleys to Coast
Rhondda Cynon Taf	10 December 2007	RCT Homes
Monmouthshire	17 January 2008	Monmouthshire Housing
Torfaen	01 April 2008	Bron Afon Community Housing
Conwy	29 September 2008	Cartrefi Conwy
Newport	09 March 2009	Newport City Homes
Merthyr Tydfil	20 March 2009	Merthyr Valleys Homes
Ceredigion	30 November 2009	Tai Ceredigion
Gwynedd	12 April 2010	Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd
Blaenau Gwent	26 July 2010	Tai Calon Community Housing
Neath Port Talbot	05 March 2011	NPT Homes

Measuring WHQS compliance

18. Landlords were asked to provide information on the number of dwellings within their stock which complied with the standard as a whole as at 31 March 2015 (excluding any assessments under category 6). As well as information on the number of dwellings that complied subject to acceptable

⁵ Part 6 is the environment standard of the WHQS - 'Located in attractive and safe environments' and compliance with this cannot be easily measured on a consistent basis.

fails. Social landlords were asked to include only those properties meeting all of the elements of the WHQS apart from the environmental standards (as outlined in Part 6 of the [2008 WHQS revised guidance](#)) in Table 1 of the data collection return. In Table 2 of the data collection return social landlords were asked for the number of properties complying with 10 components. Thus the compliance numbers in Table 2 will generally be higher than those given in Table 1, as properties may comply with a subset of the elements without necessarily complying with them all.

19. The WHQS is an interpretive standard and there are many situations where full compliance with the standard on individual components has not been possible for social landlords due to the cost effectiveness of the work (for example making structural changes to the home to increase internal space), where residents exercise choice (for example where they don't want a bath and a shower in their bathroom) or where there are physical constraints to the work. In these cases landlords were instructed to record an 'Acceptable Fail' against that individual component. An 'Acceptable Fail' is only possible on individual elements and not the dwelling as a whole.
20. As part of this year's data collection the individual social landlords were asked to provide the reasons for any 'acceptable fails' recorded. A property may contain one or more elements which are classified as an 'acceptable fail' under the WHQS guidance. As a result there may be several reasons why the property containing those elements might then be regarded as an 'acceptable fail' for the purposes of the WHQS data collection. The data providers were asked therefore to record the main reason for that 'acceptable fail' according to the hierarchical order shown below:

1. Resident Choice
2. Physical Constraint
3. Timing of Remedy
4. Cost of Remedy

Users and Uses

21. The collection was introduced to monitor the progress made by local authorities and RSLs in achieving the WHQS standard for all their stock.
22. More generally the information is used for:
 - Monitoring housing trends
 - Policy development
 - Advice to Ministers
 - Informing debate in the National Assembly for Wales and beyond
 - Geographic profiling, comparisons and benchmarking.
23. There will be a variety of users of these statistics including national and local government, researchers, academics and students. For further information on the users and uses please refer to the [Housing Statistics Quality Report](#).

Quality

24. Official Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political reference.
25. Welsh housing statistics adhere to the Welsh Government's [Statistical Quality Management Strategy](#), and this is in line with the European Statistical System's six dimensions of quality, as listed in Principle 4 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Further detail on how these are adhered to can be found in the [Housing Statistics Quality Report](#), which covers the general principles and processes leading up to the production of our housing statistics. The report covers various topics including definitions, coverage, timeliness, relevance and comparability.
26. More detailed quality information relating specifically to additional affordable housing, which is not included in the quality report, is given below.

Symbols

27. The following symbols may have been used in this release:

- negligible (less than half the final digit shown)
- . not applicable
- .. not available
- ~ not yet available
- * disclosive or not sufficiently robust for publication
- p provisional
- r revised

Comparability

Housing Health and Safety Rating System

28. The WHQS was first introduced in 2002. In 2004 The Housing Act changed the way in which landlords assessed the standard and safety of their dwellings. The Act replaced the Fitness Standard with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) which assesses twenty nine categories of housing hazard and provides a rating for each hazard. It does not provide a single rating for the dwelling as a whole or, in the case of multiple occupied dwellings, for the building as a whole. A hazard rating is expressed through a numerical score which falls within a band. There are 10 bands. Scores in Bands A to C are Category 1 Hazards. Scores in Bands D to J are Category 2 Hazards. From 2004 onwards landlords were required to include HHSRS in their inspection process and stock condition surveys. Any element categorised with a HHSRS Category 1 Hazard would automatically result in the dwelling 'Failing' the WHQS.

SAP Rating

29. SAP is the Government's 'Standard Assessment Procedure' for energy rating of dwellings. SAP provides a simple means of reliably estimating the energy efficiency performance of dwellings. SAP ratings are expressed on a scale of 1 to 100, the higher the number the better the rating. The current version, SAP 2009, is adopted by the government as part of the UK national methodology for calculation of the energy performance of buildings and is used to demonstrate compliance with building regulations for dwellings - Part L (England and Wales). For the purposes of comparability however, social landlords were asked to use the SAP 2005 method when assessing the annual energy consumption for the space and water heating for a dwelling. A minimum rating of 65 out of 100 must be achieved to meet the WHQS standard.

Accuracy

30. We undertake a series of validation steps to ensure that the data is correct and consistent. The data collection forms were pre-populated with the latest stock figures already provided by individual social landlords as part of the social housing stock data collection. This ensured that the stock figures used in this collection were the most recent and accurate and were consistent with the stock information previously published for each landlord. Any queries regarding the stock numbers were resolved and revisions made to the stock numbers where required. A recent report (Altair, May 2014) made some comment on the consistency of reporting from landlords (see WHQS Evaluation below).

Revisions

31. Revised data is marked with an (r) in the statistical release.

32. We follow the Welsh Government's statistical revisions policy, details of which are available at: <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/about/statement-of-compliance/revisions-errors-postponements/?lang=en>

33. This release contains the final data as at 31 March 2015. However, sometimes local authorities and RSLs submit revised data in future years. If this happens, we will update the information in the following year's statistical release.

Accessibility

34. A full set of data including information by individual local authority and individual RSL are available to download from our StatsWales interactive website at the following link:
<https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Housing/Social-Housing-Quality>.

Coherence with Other Statistics

Living in Wales (LiW)

35. The [Living in Wales survey](#) was a household survey for Wales commissioned by the Welsh Government. The survey comprised a household survey for each year from 2004 to 2008 with additional property surveys in 2004 and 2008. The Living in Wales property survey involved qualified surveyors visiting some 2,700 addresses that had participated in the Living in Wales household survey. It was Living in Wales (LiW) property survey which provided the first national measure of the WHQS.

WHQS monitoring report 2011 (Pilot)

36. In early 2010, the Welsh Government established a task and finish group involving representatives from landlords and other stakeholders to develop a collaborative approach to monitoring the progress made by local authorities and housing associations in meeting the WHQS for their existing homes. A methodology that was considered sufficiently robust but also uncomplicated was agreed and a pilot exercise was carried out during the summer of 2010 with social landlords asked to complete monitoring returns and submit them to the Welsh Government in September 2010.
37. The monitoring return was designed to establish the level of compliance with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for the key components in each year from 2009/10 until the date the Standard has been achieved. The key components were:
Roofs & Associated Components, Windows, External Doors, Kitchens, Bathrooms, Energy Rating, Central Heating Systems, Electrical Systems, Mains Powered Smoke Detectors and External Work. Compliance was also assessed against All Components.
38. Social landlords were invited to enter the results from their stock condition information in tabular format and the data collected was entered into a spreadsheet by Welsh Government officials and analysed. The analysis identified the number and the percentage of homes which complied with the Standard by component for each social landlord. It also identified the number and type of homes owned, details on 'acceptable fails' where these have been included in the returns, details of any environmental statements and information on the wider impacts of work to meet the Standard (for example health impacts, crime, poverty, employment and training). The results of this pilot exercise were published in March 2011 and are available at the following link:
<http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/121011housingwhqsreviseden.pdf>
39. The task and finish group was revived in September 2011 to look at ways of monitoring the progress made by social landlords on a regular annual basis. This resulted in the introduction of the new annual data collection exercise which began in July 2012.

Wales Audit Office Report 2012

40. The Wales Audit Office (WAO) also examined the progress that has been made in improving peoples' homes and living environments in line with the WHQS and in delivering wider regeneration benefits. The WAO gathered the views of residents in homes owned by housing associations about the general quality of their homes and about work that may have been undertaken to bring their home and wider living environment up to the Standard. The WAO also interviewed a selection of landlords as part of its study. The results were published in a report in January 2012 which is available at the following link:
<http://www.audit.wales/publication/progress-delivering-welsh-housing-quality-standard>

Public Accounts Committee Report 2012

41. In September 2012 the National Assembly for Wales Public Accounts Committee published a report on 'Progress in delivering the Welsh Housing Quality Standard'. The report sets out a number of recommendations for the Welsh Government in relation to the WHQS which included enabling the

“introduction of independent, external verification of landlords’ reported compliance with the WHQS” and developing guidance to “ensure landlords” data collection highlights the reasons for acceptable fail classifications’. The report is available at the following link:

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IIId=2219>

WHQS Evaluation

42. Many landlords are now reporting achievement or are close to achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). Landlords are spending large sums of their own money on WHQS works and need to satisfy themselves (through independent validation) of their progress in achieving WHQS. Welsh Government need to know (and be satisfied with) the extent and methods that landlords are using to validate WHQS progress. The need for independent validation of WHQS progress has also been highlighted by the Auditor General and the National Assembly for Wales Public Accounts Committee.
43. Research to investigate the type and extent of the independent evaluation work carried out by social landlords was let on 11 June 2013 to Altair Consultants. The aim of the research was to assess:
- How landlords judge and communicate that they are implementing or have met the Standard in accordance with guidance on interpretation of WHQS published in July 2008;
 - The extent of external independent verification of compliance with the WHQS amongst landlords; and
 - The extent to which community benefits have been achieved by WHQS improvement programmes.
44. The social research report by Altair called the ‘Welsh Housing Quality Standard: Verification of progress in achieving the Standard’ was published on 13 May 2014. The research report highlighted some limitations with the WHQS data currently collected and published due to inconsistency on the part of landlords in the interpretation of the guidance and in the methods used for collecting monitoring information.

The Report contains six recommendations and 15 actions. Some recommendations are addressed to all social landlords in Wales and some to the Welsh Government

45. One of the recommendations for the Welsh Government was to ‘consider splitting the results to reflect the three landlord types: Local Authority, LSVT Housing Association and Traditional Housing Association.’ Whilst this release does not currently provide any separate analysis for all 3 different landlord types, detailed data are available on the Stats Wales website both at an individual landlord level and by each of the 3 landlord types.
46. The Welsh Government have agreed to the recommendations made in the report and have endorsed those made to Social Landlords. To address these recommendations, the Welsh Government is currently working with the sector to agree an action plan. A copy of the full report and a summary of findings are available at the following link:
<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/welsh-housing-quality-standard-verification-progress-achieving-standard/?lang=en>

Related Statistics for Other UK Countries

47. England:

In July 2000 a 10-year target was set with the aim of bringing all social housing in England up to a decent standard by 2010 or other renegotiated deadline. The Decent Homes Standard arose from the UK Government’s Housing Green Paper – ‘Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All’ and the standard was first published in England in April 2002. The Decent Homes Standard incorporates four main criteria:

a.

The

dwelling meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing
Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those containing one or more hazards assessed as serious (‘Category 1’) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

b. The dwelling is in a reasonable state of repair
Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those where either one or more of the key building components are old and because of their condition, need replacing or major repair; or two or more of the other building components are old and because of their condition, need replacing or major repair.

c. The dwelling has modern facilities and services; and
Dwelling which fail to meet this criterion are those which lack three or more of the following facilities:

- a kitchen which is 20 years old or less;
- a kitchen with adequate space and layout;
- a bathroom which is 30 years old or less;
- an appropriately located bathroom and WC;
- adequate external noise insulation; and
- adequate size and layout of common entrance areas for blocks of flats.

d. The dwelling provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort
This criterion requires dwellings to have both effective insulation and efficient heating.

48. The national baseline was set at 1 April 2001 using data from the 2001 English House Condition Survey (EHCS). Progress up to 2011 has been monitored nationally on a regular basis through the same survey.
49. The latest information is available in the 'English Housing Survey: 2013-14 Headline Report' available at the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2013-to-2014-headline-report>
50. **Scotland:**
The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) was introduced in February 2004 and is the Scottish Government's principal measure of housing quality in Scotland. The SHQS is a set of five broad housing criteria which must all be met if the property is to pass SHQS. These criteria in turn consist of 55 elements and nine sub-elements against which properties need to be measured. In the case of the social housing sector (local authority landlords and Registered Social Landlords), Scottish Government has set a policy target for those landlords to bring their stock up to every element of the Standard (where applicable) by April 2015.
51. The monitoring of social landlords' performance towards meeting the SHQS is the responsibility of the Scottish Housing Regulator. The Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) is the official, national measure of SHQS progress towards the April 2015 deadline for social landlords. Private owners and private landlords are currently under no obligation to bring their properties up to a standard which meets the SHQS. However the same data is collected and reported for all dwellings to allow comparison across the housing stock.
52. The SHQS is an aggregation of the results from about 60 different programme modules aggregated into 5 higher-level classifications which in turn provide a single pass/fail classification for all dwellings. The 5 higher-level criteria are that the dwelling must be:
- Above the statutory Tolerable Standard;
 - Free from serious disrepair;
 - Energy efficient;
 - With modern facilities and services;
 - Healthy, safe and secure.
53. The latest information is available in Chapter 5 of the report "Scottish House Conditions Survey: Key Findings 2013' available at the following link:
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/12/6903>
54. **Northern Ireland:**
The Decent Homes Standard was introduced in June 2004 to promote measurable improvements to

housing in Northern Ireland. As in England the Decent Homes Standard incorporates four main criteria:

- The statutory minimum fitness standard for housing;
- Repair;
- Modern facilities and services; and
- Thermal comfort.

Any property that does not meet all four criteria is deemed to have failed the standard.

55. In April 2006 the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) replaced the Housing Fitness Standard in England & Wales. Under HHSRS criteria, to be defined as decent, a home should be free of Category 1 hazards. Subsequently current NI decent homes standard is not comparable with England & Wales due to the different fitness standard applied. The Decent Homes standard in Northern Ireland is tracked via the House Condition Survey. The 2011 House Condition survey in Northern Ireland found that 11.4 per cent of dwellings failed the Decent Homes Standard in Northern Ireland. Since 2001 there has been a steady decrease in the level of Non Decent Homes with an exception to 2006 where there was an increase from 20.8 per cent in 2004 to 23.0 per cent. Further information is available at the following links:

http://www.nihe.gov.uk/decent_homes_standard

http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/corporate/housing_research/house_condition_survey.htm

<https://www.dsdni.gov.uk/decent-homes-standard>

Glossary

Acceptable Fails

An acceptable fail is only possible on individual elements and not the dwelling as a whole. An acceptable fail may only be used in one or a combination of the following situations:

- cost of remedy
- timing of remedy
- residents' choice
- physical constraint

Bathrooms

Bathrooms in a property should include a shower as well as a bath and be safe, convenient, adequately ventilated and include the appropriate fittings and flooring.

Central heating systems

The heating system to a dwelling must be appropriately sized and be reasonably economic to run and programmable, so that a resident can control the temperature and timing.

Electrical systems

The electrical installation must be safe with the appropriate number of conveniently located fittings.

Energy rating (SAP ≥ 65)

The annual energy consumption for the space and water heating for a dwelling must be estimated using the Government's Standard Assessment Procedure for Energy Rating of Dwellings 2005 (SAP2005) method. A minimum rating of 65 out of 100 must be achieved.

External doors

The external doors to a dwelling should be safe, secure, with adequate thermal performance and adequately draught proofed. In a block of flats all the separate flats should be considered compliant/non-compliant according to the assessment of the communal doors of the block as a whole, alongside the assessment required of individual doors to each property within the block.

Gardens and external storage up to and including the boundary of the property

The external and communal areas around a dwelling should be an attractive and safe environment. Achievement of this standard should exclude any assessment of elements under Part 6 of the standard as outlined in [the WHQS 2008 revised guidance](#).

Kitchens

Kitchens should be safe, convenient, adequately ventilated and include the appropriate space, fittings, storage, electrical sockets and flooring.

Mains powered smoke detectors

Dwellings must have suitably located, mains powered (with back up power source such as a sealed lithium battery) smoke alarm on each floor of a dwelling.

Reasons for acceptable fails

Below are examples of the different reasons that may be given for acceptable fails.

Residents' choice:

A property may contain more than one element that acceptably fails WHQS e.g. where a resident has refused a new bathroom, but also the resident has accepted a new kitchen and the kitchen is too small to fully meet WHQS. In this case, using the hierarchy above, the main reason for the property containing an 'acceptable fail' should be recorded as 'resident choice'.

Timing of remedy:

The roof of a property may need structural repairs planned within 2 years time and also needs the loft insulation upgrading to comply with the energy efficiency target of SAP 65. Although the loft insulation could be provided in advance of repairing the roof, and then renewed again following the structural works, it would not be cost-effective to provide the insulation twice. In this case the reason for recording

the roof insulation as an acceptable fail would be both 'cost of remedy' and 'timing of remedy', but using the hierarchy above, the main reason should be recorded as 'timing of remedy'

Physical constraint:

A steeply sloping rear garden may make it difficult, at reasonable cost, to provide a level area of 10 m² due to the physical constraint. Again using the hierarchy the main reason should be recorded as 'physical constraint' not 'cost of remedy'

Cost of remedy:

This could be where a solid walled dwelling would benefit from external wall insulation in order to bring the energy rating above SAP 65 and where this is practical, but not cost effective due to the high cost and where other grant support is not available.

Roofs and associated components

The roof structure, coverings, fascias, soffits, bargeboards and chimney to a dwelling should be free from disrepair and in good condition. In respect of the roof for a block of flats, all the separate flats should be considered compliant/non-compliant according to the assessment of the communal roof of the block as a whole.

Windows

The windows to a dwelling should be safe, secure, with adequate thermal performance and adequately draught proofed.

In a block of flats all the separate flats should be considered compliant/non-compliant according to the assessment of the communal windows of the block as a whole, alongside the assessment required of individual windows of each property within the block.

Annex 1 - List of WHQS elements

WHQS Element	Individual component (see key below)
Part 1. In a good state of repair 1 (a). Is the dwelling structurally stable and free from disrepair? 1 (b) Is the dwelling free from damp?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10 All components total only
Part 2. Safe and secure 2 (a). Is the staircase and balustrade safe? 2 (b) Is there adequate space for kitchen appliances? 2 (c) Is the work surface sufficient for safe food preparation?. 2 (d) Is the cupboard storage convenient and adequate? 2 (e) Is the number of convenient power sockets in the kitchen sufficient? 2 (f) Is the flooring in the kitchen and bathroom safe and suitable for use? 2 (g) Is there an external fire escape? 2 (h) Are there adequate fire alarms and equipment? 2 (i) Do rooms used for sleeping have escape routes not passing through another room? 2 (j) Are mains powered smoke detectors on each floor? 2 (k) Are window locks without automatic locking action in rooms used for sleeping? 2 (l) Is the gas, solid fuel or oil service and safety certificate up to date, and have all heating installations and appliances been certified safe by an appropriately qualified person as required by law? 2 (m) Have electrical lighting and power installations been checked and certified safe by an appropriately qualified person? 2 (n) Do external doors and windows give a reasonable level of physical security? 2 (o) Is the rear garden easy to maintain, reasonably private, safe and suitable for young children to play in?	All components total 4 4 4 4 5 All components total only All components total only All components total only 9 2 7 8 2, 3 10
Part 3. Adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated 3 (a) Is the heating system reasonably economical and capable of heating the dwelling to a reasonable level? 3 (b) Are external doors and windows adequately draught proofed? 3 (c) Is the living room separated from the main entrance door? 3 (d) Is the hot water tank effectively insulated? 3 (e) Is there adequate mechanical extract ventilation in the kitchen and bathroom?	6, 7 2,3 All components total only 7 4, 5
Part 4. Contain up to date kitchens and bathrooms 4 (a) Is the kitchen 15 years old or less, unless in good condition? 4 (b) Are there adequate facilities for washing, drying and airing clothes? 4 (c) Are the bathroom and WC facilities 25 years old or less, unless in good condition? 4 (d) Is there a shower as well as a bath?	4 4, 10 5 5
Part 5. Well managed (for rented housing) 5 (a) Is the dwelling fairly, efficiently and well managed?	All components total
Part 6. Located in attractive and safe environments 6 (a) Are roads and footpaths accessible, providing safety for residents, pedestrians and children? 6 (b) Is there soft and hard landscaping with planting in protected areas? 6 (c) Is there adequate street lighting? 6 (d) Is there adequate and safe play space for young children? 6 (e) Are there adequate, practical and maintainable communal areas? 6 (f) Are dwellings clearly identifiable with definable boundaries? 6 (g) Are utility services practically located and well identified? 6 (h) Is there adequate and practically located car parking clearly visible to residents?	Not measured
Part 7. As far as possible, suit the specific requirements of the household (e.g. specific disabilities) 7 (a) Is there sufficient space within the dwelling for every day living? 7 (b) Is internal and external general storage space adequate? 7 (c) Does the dwelling layout meet the special cultural needs of the residents? 7 (d) Does the dwelling have the necessary physical aids to suit the requirements of the residents? 7 (e) Is there a level area no smaller than 10m ² directly accessible from the dwelling? 7 (f) Is there a paved access to the drying line and any garden gate?	4 4, 10 4, 5 4, 5, 10 10 10

Key

1. Roofs and associated components
2. Windows
3. External doors
4. Kitchens
5. Bathrooms
6. Energy rating (SAP \geq 65)
7. Central heating systems
8. Electrical systems
9. Mains powered smoke detectors
10. Gardens and external storage up and including the boundary of the property

Further information

Further information is available from the statistics web site:

<https://stats.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Housing/Social-Housing-Quality>

National Housing Strategy – ‘Improving Lives and Communities – Homes in Wales’:

<http://gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/publications/strategydoc/?lang=en>

‘Programme for Government 2011 -2016’ - current government strategy:

<http://gov.wales/about/programmeforgov/?lang=en>

The White Paper for Better Lives and Communities:

<http://gov.wales/consultations/housing-and-regeneration/housewhitepaper/?lang=en>

The Housing (Wales) Act:

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=8220>

We actively encourage feedback from our users. If you have any comments please e-mail us at:

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