

## Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), as at 31 March 2022

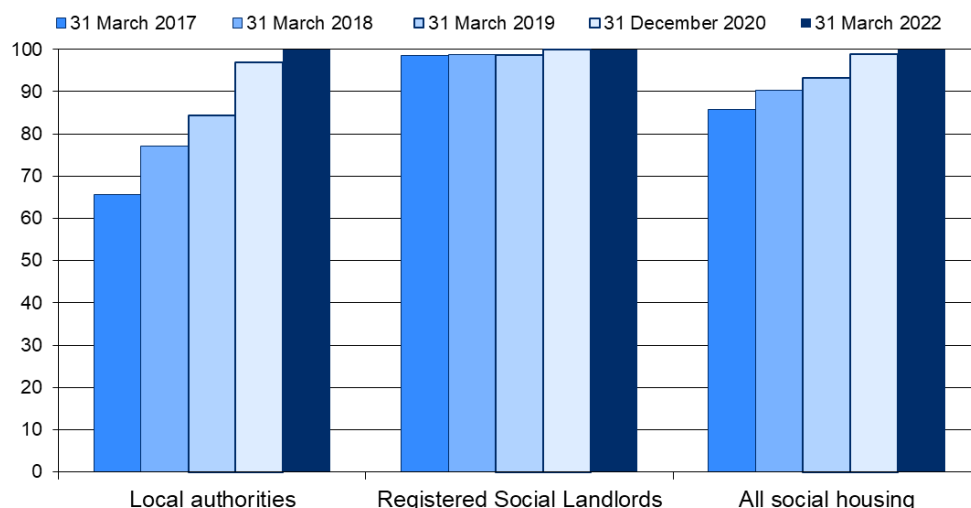
10 Nov 2022  
SFR 224/2022

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 31 March 2020 collection and publication was deferred to 31 December 2020 and the 2021 publication was cancelled.

### Key Results

- The number of social housing dwellings that are compliant with WHQS (including acceptable fails) continues to increase from 228,510 dwellings as at 31 December 2020 to 232,880 as at 31 March 2022. At 31 March 2022, 100% of these social housing dwellings were compliant with the WHQS (including acceptable fails) compared to 99% as at 31 December 2020.
- At 31 March 2022, across all social housing, the most common reason given for an acceptable fail was 'Timing of Remedy'; occurring in just over half of all compliant dwellings that contained at least one acceptable fail.

**Chart 1: Percentage of dwellings compliant with WHQS (including acceptable fails), 2017-2022**



Source: Annual WHQS returns

### About this release

This annual Release presents information from the annual data collection measuring the self-reported progress made by social landlords in achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) for their stock. The release covers compliance with the standard as at 31 March 2022 and information on compliance with the WHQS by individual component type.

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## 1. Background - WHQS

The [Welsh Housing Quality Standard \(WHQS\)](#) is the Welsh Government standard of social housing quality. 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, with the deadline for achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) being the end of December 2020 with a small number of social landlords being granted an extension to December 2021 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Social landlords must maintain the WHQS on an ongoing basis. The WHQS measures 41 individual elements within seven categories (see [Annex 1](#)):

- 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).

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, residents 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.

Further details can be found in the [Quality Report](#) published alongside this release. Definitions are shown in the [Glossary](#) towards the end of this release.

Some elements of the WHQS were measured by the [Welsh Housing Conditions Survey \(energy efficiency of dwellings\) 2017-18](#). **Users wanting to look at trends in meeting the quality standard for social housing over time should use these Official Statistics**, those wanting to compare across tenures should use the [Welsh Housing Conditions Survey WHQS report](#) (noting that only a subset of elements have been measured). **The two data sources are not directly comparable.**

## 2. WHQS compliance – Results

For the purposes of this data collection, social housing dwellings assessed include all self-contained general needs, sheltered, other supported, and extra care properties, including bedsits. As at 31 March 2022 there were a total of 232,880<sup>1</sup> such dwellings in Wales.

As at 31 March 2022 100% of social housing dwellings (232,880 dwellings) were compliant with the WHQS (including acceptable fails). This compares with 99% as at 31 December 2020 ([Table 1](#)).

**Table 1 – Progress made by social landlords towards compliance with WHQS as at 31 March, 2013 to 2022 (a) (b) (c)**

Compliance	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 (c)	Per cent	
									2020 (c)	2022
WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails) (b)										
Local authority dwellings	39	44	48	54	66	77	84	97	100	100
Registered social landlord dwellings	75	83	87	96	99	99	99	100	100	100
All social housing	60	67	72	79	86	90	93	99	100	100
Fully compliant										
Local authority dwellings	32	37	40	43	45	50	58	72	79	79
Registered social landlord dwellings	53	58	65	72	70	71	75	77	77	77
All social housing	45	50	55	61	61	63	69	75	78	78
Not compliant										
Local authority dwellings	61	56	52	46	34	23	16	3	0	0
Registered social landlord dwellings	25	17	13	4	1	1	1	0	0	0
All social housing	40	33	28	21	14	10	7	1	0	0

Source: Annual WHQS returns

(a) The information shown for local authorities is based on the 11 local authorities who had stock as at 31 March 2022. Information shown for registered social landlords (RSLs) is based on responses received 58 RSLs in 2013, 59 in 2014, 58 in 2015, 60 in 2016, 59 in 2017 and 2018, 60 in 2019, 48 in 2020 and 49 in 2022.

(b) 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 accompanying Quality Report.

(c) Data for this year was collected at 31 December.

The percentage of registered social landlord (RSL) dwellings that were WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails) has been higher than that of local authority dwellings every year since the first year of publication in 2013 ([Table 1](#)). The gap between the levels of compliance for RSLs and local authorities has continuously decreased over the years with both achieving the same level of 100% compliance (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2022. The proportion of compliant (including acceptable fails) local authority dwellings has increased substantially in the last 6 years from 54% in 2016 to 100% in 2022.

<sup>1</sup> Stock numbers reported by providers as part of the WHQS data collection

### **3. Acceptable fails**

Of all dwellings which were compliant (both fully compliant and compliant subject to an acceptable fail) at 31 March 2022, 22% had at least one acceptable fail. Between December 2020 and March 2022, the number of dwellings which were in the category of 'compliant (subject to an acceptable fail)' decreased by 5% to 52,289 dwellings. This was offset by an increase in fully compliant dwellings and a decrease to zero non-compliant dwellings.

### **4. Reasons for acceptable fails**

Since 2012-13, information has been collected on the reason for the 'acceptable fails' as reported by local authorities and RSLs. These include 'Residents Choice', 'Physical Constraint', 'Timing of Remedy' and 'Cost of Remedy'.

The most common reasons for acceptable fails remain unchanged from 2020. At 31 March 2022, across all social housing, the most common reason given for an acceptable fail was 'Timing of Remedy' occurring in 53% of compliant dwellings that contained at least one acceptable fail, followed by 'Residents Choice' which occurred in 30% of these dwellings. 'Physical constraint' and 'Cost of Remedy' were the least common reasons for acceptable fails occurring in 13% and 4% of dwellings respectively ([Table 2](#), [Chart 2](#)). These percentages are similar to those noted as at 31 December 2020.

**Table 2 - Number of dwellings WHQS compliant subject to acceptable fails, by reasons for acceptable fails as at 31 March 2022 (a)(b)**

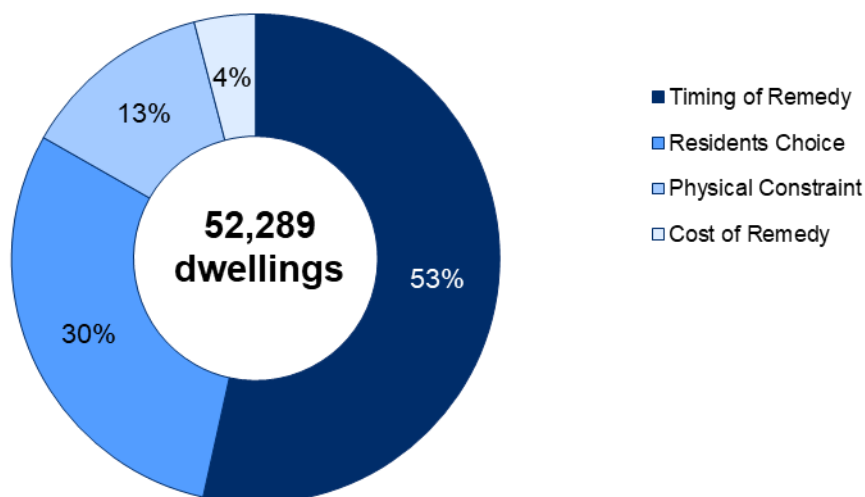
WHQS compliant subject to acceptable fails	Number / Per cent		
	Local authority dwellings	Registered social landlord dwellings	All social housing
Dwellings compliant subject to acceptable fails by reasons for acceptable fails:			
Residents Choice	9,592	5,975	15,567
Physical Constraint	2,124	4,520	6,644
Timing of Remedy	6,061	21,893	27,954
Cost of Remedy	805	1,319	2,124
<b>Total dwellings compliant subject to acceptable fails</b>	<b>18,582</b>	<b>33,707</b>	<b>52,289</b>
Percentage of dwellings compliant subject to acceptable fails by reasons for acceptable fails:			
Residents Choice	52	18	30
Physical Constraint	11	13	13
Timing of Remedy	33	65	53
Cost of Remedy	4	4	4

Source: Annual WHQS returns

(a) The information shown for local authorities is based on the 11 local authorities who had stock as at 31 March 2022. Information shown for registered social landlords (RSLs) is based on responses received 58 RSLs in 2013, 59 in 2014, 58 in 2015, 60 in 2016, 59 in 2017 and 2018, 60 in 2019, 48 in 2020 and 49 in 2022.

(b) 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.

**Chart 2 - Percentage of all dwellings compliant subject to acceptable fails by reason for acceptable fails, 31 March 2022**



Source: Annual WHQS returns

## 5. 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 also appear to fall due to a change in the quality of the source data. Some landlords have informed us that due to more recent stock condition surveys and improved estimation processes and data management systems, the accuracy of the data they provide is improving. Further information is available in the [Quality Report](#).

**Table 3 - Compliance of all social landlords with WHQS (including acceptable fails) by component as percentage of dwellings as at 31 March 2022 (a) (b)**

Component	<i>Per cent</i>								
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022
Roofs and associated components	90.2	90.7	89.6	92.1	92.7	95.6	97.3	99.6	100.0
Windows	96.4	96.7	96.9	97.5	97.7	97.9	98.1	99.6	100.0
External Doors	92.2	95.5	95.2	96.3	96.4	97.2	98.1	99.6	100.0
Kitchens	76.8	82.2	87.2	93.4	96.4	98.6	99.3	99.9	100.0
Bathrooms	76.7	81.6	87.8	93.1	95.5	97.9	99.3	99.9	100.0
Energy rating (SAP ≥ 65)	77.8	85.6	84.9	93.0	95.7	97.1	98.3	99.4	100.0
Central heating systems	88.1	91.6	96.0	98.1	98.5	98.5	99.0	99.9	100.0
Electrical systems	86.1	88.8	90.7	93.2	96.4	97.6	98.0	99.9	100.0
Mains powered smoke detectors	95.4	96.5	97.7	99.0	99.4	99.3	100.0	100.0	100.0
Gardens and external storage up to and including the boundary of the property	82.5	86.6	85.6	87.0	89.9	93.2	95.7	99.0	100.0

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 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.

For the first time since the collection began in 2013, all 10 components showed 100% WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2022.

## 6. Compliance against components by social landlord

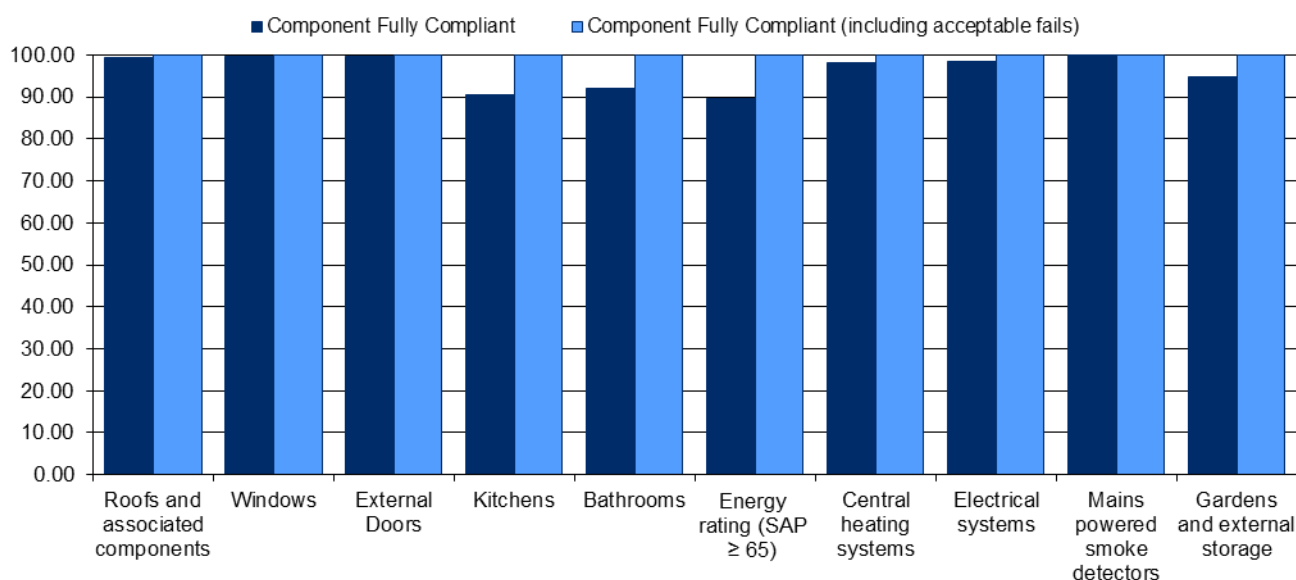
### 6.1 Local authorities

For local authority dwellings, all 10 components were 100% WHQS compliant (**including acceptable fails**).

At 31 March 2022, for local authority dwellings, 'Mains powered smoke detectors' was the component showing the highest percentage of dwellings that were **fully** compliant at 99.9% followed by 'External Doors' and 'Windows', both at 99.7%. ([Chart 3](#)).

'Energy rating (SAP ≥ 65)' was the component showing the lowest level of **full** compliance (89.7%). This was followed by 'Kitchens' and 'Bathrooms' at 90.6% and 92.0% respectively. ([Chart 3](#)).

**Chart 3: Percentage of local authority dwellings compliant with WHQS by component, as at 31 March 2022 (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.

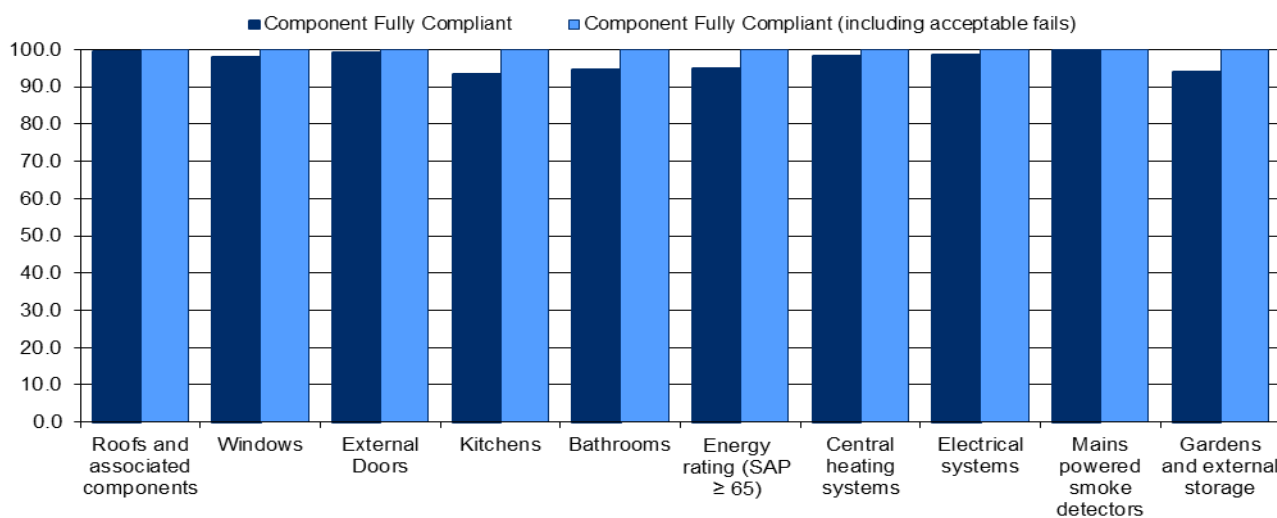
(d) The compliance numbers shown will generally be higher than those in [Table 1](#), as properties may comply with a subset of the elements, without necessarily complying with them all.

## 6.2 Registered social landlords (RSLs)

For RSLs, all of the 10 components were 100% component compliant (**including acceptable fails**) at 31 March 2022. 'Mains powered smoke detectors' was the component showing the highest percentage of dwellings **fully** compliant at 99.9%, followed by 'Roofs and associated components' at 99.6%.

'Kitchens' was the component showing the lowest level of **full** compliance (93.5%). This was followed by 'Gardens and external storage' and 'Bathrooms' at 93.9% and 94.6% respectively. ([Chart 4](#)).

**Chart 4 - Percentage of RSL dwellings compliant with WHQS by component, as at 31 March 2022 (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.

RSLs had higher rates of **full** component compliance than local authorities for all components of WHQS except for 'Windows', 'Gardens and external storage', and 'External doors'. The largest differences in levels of **full** component compliance between RSLs and local authorities were for 'Energy rating (SAP ≥ 65)' with RSL full compliance 5.3 percentage points higher than local authority full compliance, followed by 'Kitchens' at 3.0. The component where full compliance was higher in local authority dwellings than in RSL dwellings was 'windows' at 1.6 percentage points.

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.



## 7. Further information

The document is available at

<https://gov.wales/welsh-housing-quality-standard-statistics>

More detailed data are available on the [StatsWales website](#).

## Next update

To be advised

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to:

[stats.housingconditions@gov.wales](mailto:stats.housingconditions@gov.wales)

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## **Glossary**

### **Acceptable fails**

An acceptable fail is only possible on individual elements and not the dwelling as a whole. 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

### **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 $\geq$ 65)**

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 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<sup>2</sup>. 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.

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<sup>2</sup> WHQS guidance is based on SAP 2005 but some landlords use more recent versions.

## **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 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 m<sup>2</sup> 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.

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## Annex 1 - List of WHQS elements

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

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