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Welsh Homes Quality Standard



Healthy
Homes
Cymru

WHQS FAQs – The Standard



What is WHQS23?

- In October 2023, the Welsh Government introduced a new set of standards for social housing in Wales – WHQS is short for Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS 2023).
- These standards build on the old WHQS standard and continue to drive up the quality of good quality affordable social rented housing, which is suitable for the needs of existing and future residents.

What are the main things included in the standard?

To meet the standard, we must make sure that our residents have the opportunity to live in a home that:

- **Is in good condition**
- **Is safe and secure**
- **Is affordable to heat and have minimal environmental impact**
- **Have an up to date kitchen**
 - Kitchens should be less than 16 years old, unless they are in good condition.
 - New kitchens should have space for a cooker, fridge and washing machine.
 - Kitchen floors must be non-slip.
If there is nowhere to wash, dry or air clothes
 - we should provide a tumble dryer.
- **Have an up to date bathroom**
 - Bathroom and toilets should be less than 26 years old, unless they are in good condition.
 - Bathrooms must have non-slip flooring.
 - They should have a shower and a bath if possible. A shower can be over the bath.
Is comfortable and suitable for the people living there.
- **Your home should have enough space to live in comfortably**
 - Flooring – when new tenants move in, all rooms must have floor covering which is suitable, appropriate and in good condition.
 - Noise – walls and windows should be good quality, so normal noise doesn't bother you.
 - We need to make sure a home suits your needs, including disabled and older tenants.
- **Has a garden if possible**
 - It isn't always possible to have a garden, as it depends on where you live.
 - You should be able to get to your garden safely and easily.
 - There should be a path for you to access your home.
 - If possible, we should put up a clothesline, and there should be a path to it for you.
 - You should have lockable storage space outside e.g. to store a bike or garden equipment.

- **Ideally has pleasant outdoor space**

- We need to try and create a nice outdoor space, that is easy to look after.
- Spaces should be wildlife friendly.
- If you don't have your own garden, we should provide enough outdoor storage space for bikes, pushchairs or mobility scooters.

WHQS23 Key Dates



**MARCH
2025**

Compliance figures from individual homes must be reported to the Welsh Government along with the company compliance policy.

**MARCH
2027**

Whole house assessments and target energy pathways (TEP's) for each home are required. This will provide information on what energy efficiency measures are required on your home.

**MARCH
2030**

All homes must achieve a minimum energy efficiency level of SAP 75.

**MARCH
2034**

All homes must meet the WHQS 2023 standard.

I've heard people mention Target Energy Pathways (TEP's), but what is it?

This is the name for the plan detailing the energy improvement work that we are going to do within your home. The new WHQS standard requires landlords to create a plan for each home which shows the energy efficiency and carbon reduction measures that it will be undertaking in the future. The standard requires that all plans need to have been created by March 2027 and then the work delivered by 2034.

Will I have a smart meter installed in my home?

The new WHQS standard requires landlords to arrange for smart meters to be installed at change of tenancy and prior to a new resident moving in. Smart meters have a range of benefits for residents, and you can talk to your energy supplier about having your meters changed to smart meters at any time. For more information on smart meters visit the energy saving trust.



Will I have a water butt?

As with smart meters, the new WHQS standard requires a landlord to install a water butt in the garden at change of tenancy. Not all properties have a garden area that is suitable to receive a water butt.

Washing drying and airing clothes

The WHQS standard requires each home to have space and plumbing for a washing machine an external drying line and a heated airing cupboard (in some homes this requirement will be provided within communal facilities) Where a property does not have access to outside drying facilities or where there are no communal drying facilities available a washer dryer will be provided.

Will I get new flooring?

The WHQS standard requires the landlord to ensure that there are suitable floor coverings within the home prior to a new resident moving in. While you are living in your home you are responsible for the maintenance and future replacement of your floor coverings.

Will I get new flooring if I have a mutual exchange?

No - mutual exchanges are not considered new tenancies, however we will check that the existing flooring is suitable, appropriate and in good condition as part of the mutual exchange process.

Does my home require fire detection (smoke and heat detectors)

The new WHQS standard has changed compared to the old one. Under the old standard homes needed.

- A mains powered interlinked smoke detector (with battery backup) within the circulation area of each storey.

The new standard still requires this but also requires additional detection within your home.

- A smoke detector in the principal living room of your home
- A heat detector within the kitchen of your home
- All the detectors within your home are to be mains powered with battery backup and linked together so if one alarm sounds, they all will.

We will be installing the additional detectors in your home as part of a planned programme.

How do I know if my home is electrically safe?

The WHQS Standard requires landlords to carry out an electrical safety inspection on your home every 5 years. This is known as an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR). The inspection will be carried out by a qualified person and you will be provided with a copy of the report to show that your electrical system is safe. If at any time you believe there to be an issue with your homes electrical system you can ring our Pobl Solutions team to report the issue so that a repair can be carried out. They can be contacted on 0330 175 9726 or by e-mail at info@poblgroup.co.uk.

How can I find out more about WHQS23?



Questions on improvement works

When will you make improvements on my home and how will I be informed when this is happening?

We hold lots of information about the age and condition of components within your home (kitchen, bathroom, heating, windows, doors, roof etc). Each of those components has an average life expectancy and we try to ensure that we replace them prior to them wearing out.

If your home is due to have any of its components upgraded, we will get in touch with you to discuss the matter further and keep you always informed of the various stages of the process.

Can I refuse improvement works?

When the time comes for improvement work to be carried out on your home you may decide that you don't want it done. You can discuss this further with us at the time to see if we can resolve your concerns. If we can't, you are able to say that you don't want the work carried out. However, if the work is required on safety grounds e.g. electrical safety or the installation of fire detection or carbon monoxide alarms, we will need to carry out the work

Why is my neighbour getting improvements and I am not?

Our improvement programmes are based on the age and condition of the various components in your home (kitchen, bathroom, windows, doors etc). The components in your home may not be as old as your neighbours and therefore yours may have more life left in it and therefore doesn't need replacing just yet.

Will you use my electricity to do improvement works?

Our maintenance teams and contractors should use battery tools and generators to carry out work on your home so they shouldn't need to use your electricity.

How long will the works take to do to my home?

The time it takes to carry out the improvement work on your home will depend on the work that is going to be carried out. Prior to any work starting our team will contact you to discuss the work package with you, how long it is likely to take, the amount of disruption it could cause and how we can work together to minimise it.

If I am unhappy with the works that have been done to my home, who can I complain to?

If you have concerns about any part of the work that is being carried out on your home, then please raise it with our team that are supervising the work while it is being carried out and they will do their best to resolve the situation. If they are unable to resolve the matter to your satisfaction you can raise a complaint feedback@poblgroup.co.uk

How will I know if the people working on my home are working for Pobl / Linc How can I be sure I am letting the right people in my home?

All staff that work for Pobl have identification with them and should show it prior to entering your home. All our contractors also carry ID with them and will confirm who they are and who they work for before entering your home. If you are at all suspicious about somebody trying to enter your home who say they are carrying out repairs on behalf of Pobl you can ring our solutions team to check on 0330 175 9726.

Green technology / low carbon Improvements to your home

In order to improve the energy efficiency of your home and reduce carbon emissions your home may receive some new Technologies. the following FAQ's may give you some more information.

What are Photovoltaic (PV) Panels and how do they work?

PV panels are installed on the roof of your home. They are designed to capture the energy from the sun and convert the sunlight into electricity. The sun's energy is absorbed by the PV panels which creates electrical charges that move as a current. This current travels through cables to an inverter that converts the absorbed energy into useful electricity that is connected into your consumer unit (fuse board) for you to use to power your electrical appliances. PV panels are fitted on roofs orientated to get the maximum benefit from the sun.

What are the benefits of Photovoltaic (PV) Panels?

The electricity that the PV panels produce is generated by the sun and is used within your home. Therefore, when the panels are generating electricity, you are using that electricity rather than purchasing the electricity from your electricity supplier. This will help you save money on your electricity bills. PV panels will also help you to reduce your carbon footprint as some of your electricity usage will be made from the sun rather than imported from the electricity grid.

What is battery storage and how does it help?

Battery storage can be installed in your home to work alongside PV panels to help you make the most of the electricity that is generated. If your PV panels are generating electricity that is not being used by you at the time it can be stored in the battery and used later. Battery storage will also allow you to discuss different tariff options with your electricity provider where they can sell you electricity at cheaper rates (when they have less demand for power) so that you can store it and use it later when you need it.

What are solar thermal panels?

Solar thermal panels can be installed on your roof that convert the sun's energy into heat. The panels absorb the sun's energy which heats up the liquid that is within the panels, the liquid then flows via pipes and then through a coil within your hot water cylinder where the heat is transferred to your stored hot water that you use your washing and bathing. The solar thermal system reduces your reliance on your boiler or electric immersion to heat your hot water and therefore reduces your running costs.

How long will the works take to do to my home?

The time it takes to carry out the improvement work on your home will depend on the work that is going to be carried out. Prior to any work starting our team will contact you to discuss the work package with you, how long it is likely to take, the amount of disruption it could cause and how we can work together to minimise it.

What is an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) and how does it work?

An air source heat pump may be installed in your home instead of a gas boiler. It has an external part that looks similar to an air conditioning unit and an internal part which would usually go in a cupboard within your home. The ASHP is powered by electricity and works by taking the heat from the outside air and transfers it to a fluid refrigerant that then passes through a compressor which raises the temperature of the refrigerant which then transfers into your central heating system. Generally, ASHP's run at lower temperatures than traditional gas boilers and therefore you may need to have larger radiators installed to get the right amount of heat in each room.

An ASHP is very efficient and can generate around 3 times more energy than is put in. However, electricity is more expensive to buy compared to gas and therefore we would need to ensure your home's walls, doors, windows and roof are as energy efficient as possible before we change over from a gas boiler.

As the ASHP uses electricity rather than fossil fuels they reduce carbon emissions and will therefore lower your carbon footprint.

Will these low carbon home improvements reduce my energy bills?

Carrying out energy improvement measures to the fabric of your home (walls, roof, windows and doors) will reduce the amount of energy your home needs to keep it warm. New technologies such as PV and batteries will allow your home to generate and store electricity rather than purchase it from the grid from your energy provider. Therefore, in theory these improvements should see a reduction in the energy you purchase reducing your energy bills. However, even with the improvement work you will always need to purchase some energy from your supplier and those energy costs could rise.

Energy Suppliers

There may be opportunities for you to save money by switching your energy supplier, tariffs and payment methods. Further advice can be obtained from the energy saving trust



Questions on Tenant Engagement

Tenant Engagement & Communication

How will I be kept informed about WHQS23 improvements?

We will communicate through letters, emails, customer meetings and social media. You can also check our website for updates.

Can I have a say in what improvements are made to my home?

Yes. Customer feedback is crucial. We are working with Cardiff Met to help us to gather customer feedback. We will also be carrying out our own engagement work with you. You may be invited to consultation events, surveys, or meetings to discuss planned improvements.

What if I have concerns about the planned work in my home?

You can e-mail customerengagement@poblgroup.co.uk or speak to your Neighbourhood Manager to discuss concerns, request changes, or understand the scope of the work.

Will I be notified before any work starts?

Yes, you will receive advance notice detailing what work will be done, how long it will take, and any disruptions expected.