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The Welsh Housing Quality Standard

Making social housing better in Wales – A guide for tenants

This document was written by **Welsh Government**. It is an easy read version of
**'The Welsh Housing Quality Standard - maintaining and improving social
housing in Wales'**.

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd /
This document is also available in Welsh

How to use this document

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This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 34**.

Where the document says **we**, this means **Welsh Government**.

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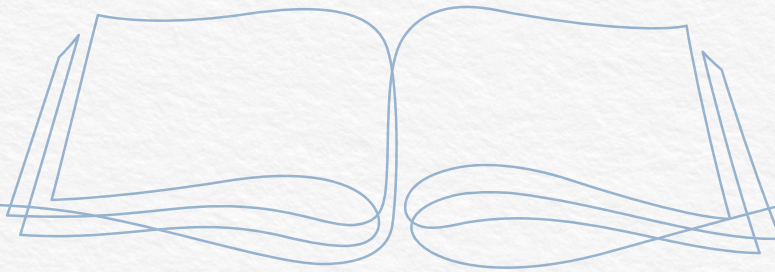
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Introduction



We are the **Welsh Government**.



We wrote a document called the **Welsh Housing Quality Standard**. We will call it the **Standard** for short. This new document is an update about what landlords must do from April 2024.



We want people who live in **social housing** to have good quality homes.



Social housing is homes that people can afford to rent with not much money.



The **Standard** is for **landlords** who own **social housing**. Social **landlords** are councils and housing associations.



Landlords own homes that other people rent and live in. **Landlords** must make sure their homes are in good condition.



The **Standard** tells **landlords** how to make their homes better. And safer.



This **guide** helps social **tenants** know what to expect from their **landlord**. It explains what the **Standard** says **landlords** must do.



A **tenant** is someone who rents their home. They pay their **landlord** every week or month.

About the Standard

The Standard lists 8 things a good quality home must have. It must:



1. Be in good condition.



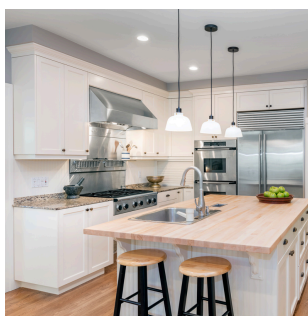
2. Be safe and secure.



3. Not cost too much to heat. And not be bad for the **environment**.



The **environment** is where we live. It includes the land, the sea, the air, and everything that lives on and in it. For example, plants, animals, and fish. Some fuels used to heat homes can harm the **environment**.



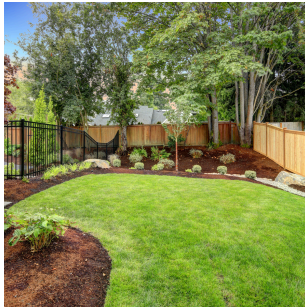
4. Have an up to date kitchen.



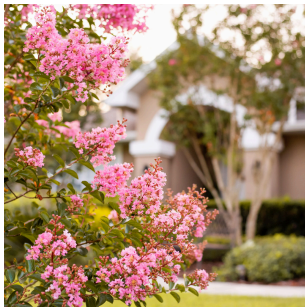
5. Have an up to date bathroom.



6. Be comfortable. And suit the person living there.



7. Have a garden if possible.



8. Have nice outside space if possible.

If a home has all these 8 things,
we say it has passed the **Standard**.





But we know some homes cannot pass every part of the **Standard**.



That is okay. So long as there is a good reason.



If a home does not pass a part of the **Standard**, **landlords** must tell us the reason.

How to pass the Standard



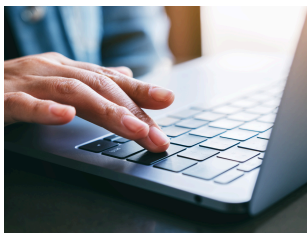
This section says what **landlords** must do and check so a home can pass the **Standard**.



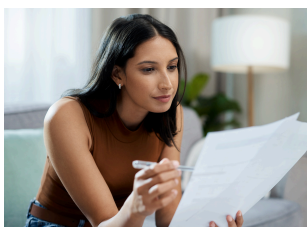
There are other documents and guides too. They explain the checks for different things in more detail.



We have listed these other documents and guides in the **more information** section on page 27.



There is a tool for **landlords** called the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. Click for more information.



It will help **landlords** check their homes. To make sure they are safe and good quality.

Homes must be in good condition



Walls

Walls must be in good condition.
And not be weak or falling down.



Damp

There should be no damp in a home.
Damp walls are bad for a home.
And bad for a **tenant's** health.

Safety and security



Staircases

Staircases should be safe.
And not have any damage that
makes them dangerous.



Doors and windows

Secured By Design is a guide from the police about home security [click here - Secured By Design](#) for more information.

This advice helps to make sure doors and windows are safe and secure.



Fire safety

Homes must have heat and smoke detectors that meet **British Standards**.



British Standards are quality rules that everyone must follow.



Tenants must have a safe and easy way to escape if there is a fire. This includes from flats and shared homes.



Landlords must check homes regularly for fire safety. And follow all fire safety laws.

Gas and heating safety

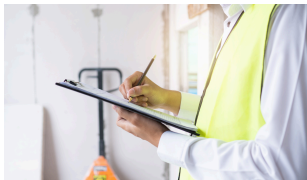


Homes must have **carbon monoxide detectors** that meet **British Standards**. **Carbon monoxide** can be a harmful gas. The detectors will make a noise if there is a gas leak.



Homes should have a safety check every year if they use:

- Gas. For example, a gas boiler.
- Oil. For example, an oil heater.
- Solid fuel. For example, a coal fire.



All safety checks must be done by a qualified person.



Landlords must give **Tenants** a copy of the safety checks.

Electrical safety



Any electrical items owned by the **landlord** should have a safety test every year. For example a cooker.



Homes should have an electrical safety check every 5 years or less. This is called an **Electrical Installation Condition Report**.



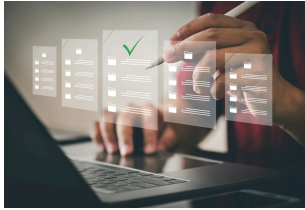
This safety check must be done by a professional.



Landlords must give **Tenants** a copy of the safety checks.

Heating and the environment

Heating



The **Standard Assessment Procedure** is a check to see if homes have good quality heating.



The **landlord** must follow the **Standard Assessment Procedure**.



They must make sure that heating a home does not cost too much money. **Tenants** can ask landlords to arrange for a smart meter to be added to the home if there isn't one. These help **tenants** know and manage how much they spend.



They must make sure that heating a home is not bad for the **environment**.



Homes must be able to let air flow through them properly. Especially in kitchens and bathrooms by using things like ducts, fans and vents in the walls.

Heating and the environment

Water



Homes should have fittings and appliances that stop water being wasted.



This can help **tenants** to keep their water bills down.



And it is good for the **environment**.



The **landlord** must follow **The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999**. This is a law about using water.



They should put **water butts** in gardens if possible. Water butts collect rainwater. **Tenants** can use this water for their gardens. Landlords should put warning labels on them to make sure tenants use them safely.

Heating and the environment

Kitchens



Kitchens should be less than 16 years old. Unless they are in good condition.

New kitchens should be planned out properly. And safely.
For example:



- There should be space for a cooker, a fridge and a washing machine. And other appliances if needed.



- Work surfaces should be big enough so they can be used properly. And safely.



- There should be enough storage in the kitchen. And in the rest of the home.

Heating and the environment

Kitchens



- There should be somewhere to store recycling. This can be inside or outside.



- There should be at least 6 double power sockets that are easy to reach.



- Kitchens must have a non-slip floor. It should be easy to clean and not break if it gets wet.



- There should be somewhere to wash, dry and air clothes. If there is nowhere to dry clothes, the landlord should provide a tumble dryer.

Heating and the environment

Bathrooms



Bathrooms and toilets should be less than 26 years old. Unless they are in good condition.



Bathrooms must have a non-slip floor. It should be easy to clean and not break if it gets wet.



Bathrooms should have a shower and enough space for a bath. A shower can be over the bath.

Homes must be comfortable



Space

Homes should have enough space to live in comfortably.



There are rules about how much space is needed in a home.

The **landlord** should use **The Metric Handbook** to work out the space needed in a home.



Flooring

All rooms should have suitable flooring in good condition when a new tenant moves in.



For example, bathroom floors should not be too slippery.



The **Landlord** should check the flooring every time a **tenant** moves out.



If the flooring is not in good condition, they should change it before a new tenant moves in. The landlord will provide suitable flooring. The landlord can also gift flooring to the tenant so that the tenant must look after it.



Noise

Walls and windows should be good quality.



So that normal noises do not bother **tenants** too much. For example, the noise from traffic outside.

Making homes suit the tenant



The **landlord** should make sure a home suits the **tenants** living in it.



For example, some **tenants** need space for a bigger family. Or for praying.



And some **tenants** need extra storage for food because of their religion.



A home should suit a disabled **tenant's** needs. And an older **tenant's** needs.



Finding and getting into a home should be easy. Especially for the emergency services.



Gardens

Homes should have a garden. But it may not always be possible to have one.



Tenants should be able to get to the garden easily. And safely.



Gardens should have a path so they are safe to walk around.



Gardens need to be big enough for people to use comfortably. They should be safe for young children to play in.



The **landlord** should provide a clothes drying line if possible. And there should be a path to it.



There should be some lockable storage outside. For example, to store bikes and garden equipment.



Nice outside spaces

The **landlord** should try to create nice outside spaces. And they should be easy to look after.



Outside spaces should be wildlife friendly. For example, for birds and bees.



There should be plenty of plants and trees. And sunlight should be able to get through.



This is all good for the **environment**.



If you don't have your own garden, there should be enough secure storage outside for bikes, pushchairs or mobility scooters for all **tenants**.

What the landlord needs to do



By March 2034, all **social housing** must pass the **Standard**.



By March 2025, **social housing landlords** must:



- Collect information about the quality of your homes.



- Find out what work is needed to pass the **Standard**.



- Find out how much the work will cost.



- Write a plan about what they are going to do. And include what they cannot do too.



They should let **tenants** have a say in the plans.



The plans should be good for the local community. For example, by creating new jobs or better services for the community.



By March 2027, **social housing landlords** must have a plan to make the heating in your homes better. So, it is better for the **environment**. And won't cost too much money.