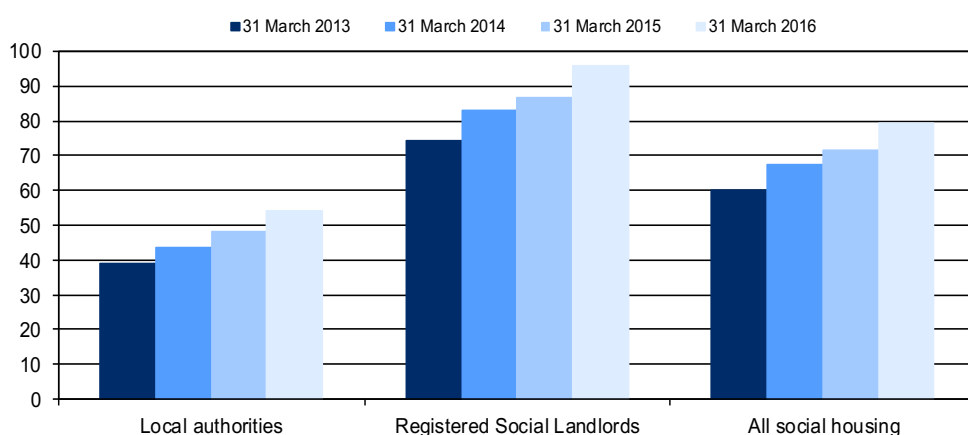


Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), as at 31 March 2016

6 October 2016
SFR 135/2016

The number of social housing dwellings that are compliant with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) (including acceptable fails) continues to increase. At 31 March 2016, 79 per cent of social housing dwellings (177,219 dwellings) were compliant with the WHQS (including acceptable fails) compared to 72 per cent a year earlier.

Percentage of dwellings compliant with WHQS (including acceptable fails)



Levels of WHQS compliance continue to be higher for registered social landlords (RSLs), with 96 per cent of RSL dwellings achieving WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2016 compared to 54 per cent of local authority dwellings.

At 31 March 2016, across all social housing, the most common reason given for an acceptable fail was 'Timing of Remedy' occurring in 49 per cent of compliant dwellings that contained at least one acceptable fail.

The two components that showed the highest percentage of WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2016 were 'Mains powered smoke detectors' and 'Central heating Systems' at 99 per cent and 98 per cent respectively.

About this release

This annual Release presents information from the annual data collection measuring the progress made by social landlords in achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) for all their stock. The release covers compliance with the standard as at 31 March 2016 and information on compliance with the WHQS by individual component type.

In this release

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------|----|
| WHQS compliance | 2 |
| Acceptable fails | 4 |
| Compliance against components | 6 |
| Compliance by local authorities | 8 |
| Compliance by RSLs | 9 |
| Key quality information | 11 |
| Glossary | 19 |
| Annex 1 | 22 |
| Further information | 24 |

1. WHQS compliance

The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) is the Welsh Government standard of 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, but in any event by 2020. Further details can be found in the Key Quality Information section along with definitions in the Glossary towards the end of this release.

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.

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).

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 6¹ 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.

[Revised guidance](#) was issued for social landlords in 2008.

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.

¹ 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.

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 2016 there were a total of 222,962 social landlord dwellings^{2,3} in Wales, of these 79 per cent (177,219 dwellings) were compliant with the WHQS (including acceptable fails). This compares with 72 per cent a year earlier (Table 1).

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

| | <i>Per cent</i> | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Compliance | 31 March 2013 | 31 March 2014 | 31 March 2015 | 31 March 2016 |
| WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails) (b) | | | | |
| Local authority dwellings | 38.8 | 43.6 | 48.3 | 54.1 |
| Registered social landlord dwellings | 74.5 | 83.0 | 86.7 | 95.8 |
| All social housing | 60.3 | 67.4 | 71.6 | 79.5 |
| Fully compliant | | | | |
| Local authority dwellings | 32.5 | 36.7 | 40.3 | 43.5 |
| Registered social landlord dwellings | 53.4 | 58.3 | 64.5 | 72.0 |
| All social housing | 45.1 | 49.8 | 55.0 | 60.8 |
| Not compliant | | | | |
| Local authority dwellings | 61.2 | 56.4 | 51.7 | 45.9 |
| Registered social landlord dwellings | 25.5 | 17.0 | 13.3 | 4.2 |
| All social housing | 39.7 | 32.6 | 28.4 | 20.5 |

Source: Annual WHQS returns

(a) The information shown for local authorities is based on the 11 local authorities who still retained stock as at 31 March 2016. Information shown for registered social landlords (RSLs) is based on responses received 58 RSLs in 2013, 59 in 2014, 58 in 2015 and 60 in 2016. Information was not received from 4 RSLs in 2013, 2 RSLs in 2014, 3 RSLs in 2015 and 2 RSLs in 2016. These represent less than 1 per cent of all RSL stock. The RSL stock numbers have been adjusted accordingly.

(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.

As was the case in the three previous years, at the end of March 2016 a greater percentage of registered social landlord (RSL) dwellings achieved WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) than local authority dwellings and the gap had increased compared with the previous year. In March 2015, WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) was 38 percentage points higher for RSLs than local authorities but this gap had increased to 42 percentage points by the end of March 2016 when 96 per cent of all RSL dwellings were WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails) compared with 54 per cent of local authority dwellings.

² 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.

³ 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.

Of the 11 local authorities who retained their housing stock, 5 stated that all their stock was compliant with the WHQS (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2016 compared with 4 in the previous year.

Of the 60 RSLs that responded over two thirds (45 RSLs) reported that all their stock had achieved WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2016, with 2 further RSLs reporting that they would achieve compliance during 2016. This is 4 more than the number of RSLs who reported they had achieved WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2015.

The percentage of social housing dwellings not compliant with WHQS has continued to fall, with 21 per cent of all social housing not compliant at the end of March 2016, down from 28 per cent a year earlier. However more than two thirds (46 per cent) of local authority dwellings were still not compliant at 31 March 2016 compared with 4 per cent of RSL dwellings.

The percentage of non compliant RSL dwellings has decreased by 9 percentage points since March 2015 whilst the percentage of local authority non compliant dwellings has decreased by 6 percentage points over the same period.

2. Acceptable fails⁴

The percentage of all social housing dwellings that were compliant (including acceptable fails) had increased to 79 per cent by 31 March 2016 (Table 1).

The number of compliant dwellings with at least one acceptable fail had been increasing each year to 31 March 2014 before dropping by 6 per cent at 31 March 2015 to 36,913 dwellings. At 31 March 2016 the number had increased by 13 per cent to 41,548 dwellings.

Of all dwellings which were compliant (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2016, 23 per cent had at least one acceptable fail.

RSLs continue to have a higher proportion of compliant dwellings that contain at least one acceptable fail than local authority compliant dwellings. At 31 March 2016, a quarter of all RSL compliant dwellings had at least one acceptable fail compared with nearly a fifth of local authority dwellings.

3. Reasons for acceptable fails

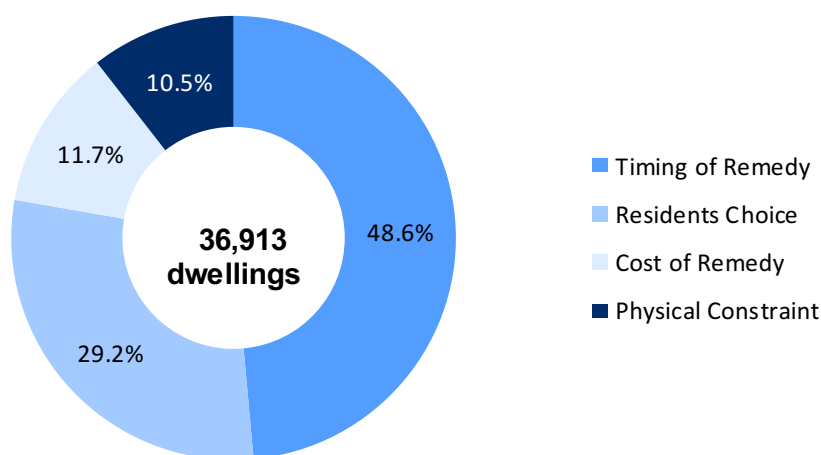
Since 2012-13, information has been collected on the reasons for the 'acceptable fails' as reported by local authorities and RSLs. A dwelling may contain one or more elements which are classified as an 'acceptable fail' under the WHQS guidance and therefore there may be several reasons why the property 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;

⁴ Some local authorities and RSLs were unable to provide any information on acceptable fails. Further details are available in the Key Quality Information section.

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 2016, across all social housing, the most common main reason given for an acceptable fail was 'Timing of Remedy' occurring in 49 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 occurring in 12 per cent and 11 per cent of dwellings respectively (Chart 1, Table 2).

Chart 1 - Percentage of all dwellings compliant subject to acceptable fails by reason for acceptable fails, 31 March 2016 (a)



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."

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 just under half of all 'acceptable fails' (49 per cent) whilst for RSL compliant dwellings this reason only accounted for 24 per cent. Similarly whilst 'Timing of Remedy' accounted for over half (51 per cent) of all 'acceptable fails' in RSL compliant dwellings it was only given as the reason for 41 per cent of local authority 'acceptable fails' (Table 2).

The 'Cost of Remedy' accounted for 12 per cent of 'acceptable fails' in RSL compliant dwellings compared to 10 per cent of local authority compliant dwellings whilst there were just 1 per cent of cases where local authorities reported 'Physical Constraint' as the reason for the 'acceptable fail' compared with 13 per cent for RSLs (Table 2).

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.

Table 2: Number of dwellings WHQS compliant subject to acceptable fails, by reasons for acceptable fails as at 31 March 2016 (a)(b)

| WHQS compliant subject to acceptable fails | <i>Number/Per cent</i> | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| | Local authority dwellings | Registered social landlord dwellings | All social housing |
| Dwellings compliant subject to acceptable fails by reasons for acceptable fails: | | | |
| Residents Choice | 4,506 | 7,618 | 12,124 |
| Physical Constraint | 51 | 4,321 | 4,372 |
| Timing of Remedy | 3,770 | 16,407 | 20,177 |
| Cost of Remedy | 904 | 3,971 | 4,875 |
| Total dwellings compliant subject to acceptable fails | 9,231 | 32,317 | 41,548 |
| Percentage of dwellings compliant subject to acceptable fails by reasons for acceptable fails: | | | |
| Residents Choice | 49 | 24 | 29 |
| Physical Constraint | 1 | 13 | 11 |
| Timing of Remedy | 41 | 51 | 49 |
| Cost of Remedy | 10 | 12 | 12 |

Source: Annual WHQS returns

(a) The information shown for local authorities is based on the 11 local authorities who still retained stock as at 31 March 2016. The information shown for registered social landlords (RSLs) is based on responses received from 60 RSLs only. 2 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.

(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.

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)

| Component | <i>Per cent</i> | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------|------|------|
| | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
| Roofs and associated components | 90.2 | 90.7 | 89.6 | 92.1 |
| Windows | 96.4 | 96.7 | 96.9 | 97.5 |
| External Doors | 92.2 | 95.5 | 95.2 | 96.3 |
| Kitchens | 76.8 | 82.2 | 87.2 | 93.4 |
| Bathrooms | 76.7 | 81.6 | 87.8 | 93.1 |
| Energy rating (SAP ≥ 65) | 77.8 | 85.6 | 84.9 | 93.0 |
| Central heating systems | 88.1 | 91.6 | 96.0 | 98.1 |
| Electrical systems | 86.1 | 88.8 | 90.7 | 93.2 |
| Mains powered smoke detectors | 95.4 | 96.5 | 97.7 | 99.0 |
| Gardens and external storage up to and including the boundary of the property | 82.5 | 86.6 | 85.6 | 87.0 |

(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.

The two components that showed the highest percentage of WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2016 were 'Mains powered smoke detectors' and 'Central heating Systems' at 99 per cent and 98 per cent respectively. The component 'Mains powered smoke detectors' also had the highest percentage of WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) in 2015 and second highest in 2014. This may be because this component is relatively easy or cost effective to apply.

At 31 March 2016, however, the two components with the lowest levels of WHQS compliance were 'Gardens and external storage' and 'Roofs and associated components' at 87 per cent and 92 per cent respectively. The lower levels of compliance for these two components may be due to higher failure rates for 'Gardens and external storage' and 'Roofs and associated components' 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 12 percentage points in March 2016.

The three components showing the highest level of improvement in compliance between March 2015 and March 2016 were 'Energy rating (SAP ≥ 65)' (up by 8 percentage points), 'Kitchens' (up by 6 percentage points) and 'Bathrooms' (up by 5 percentage points) (Table3).

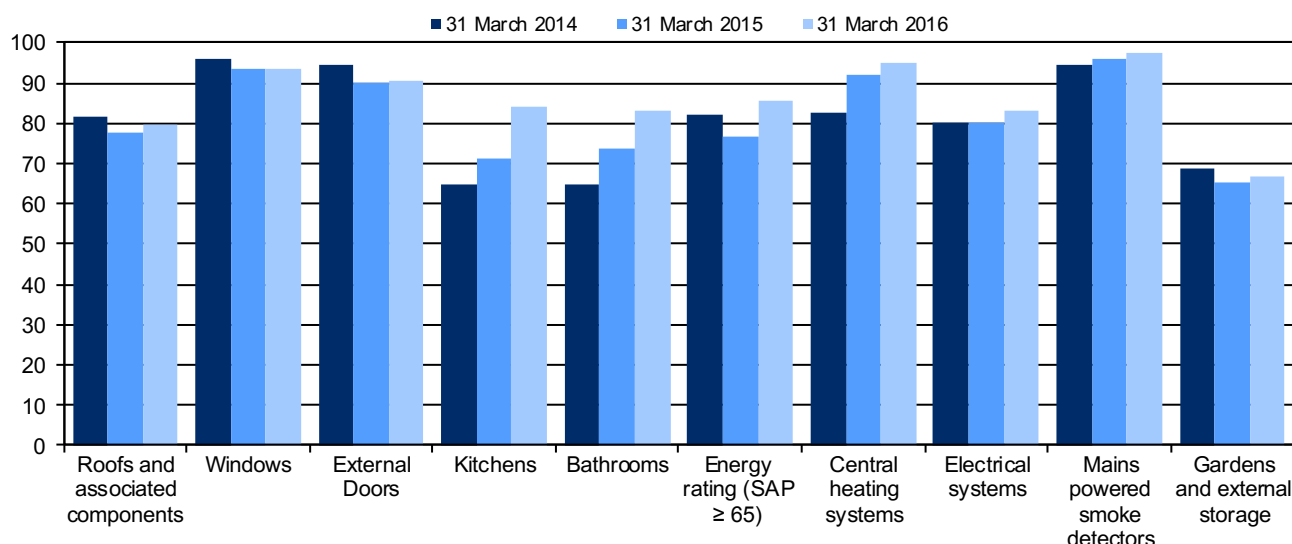
5. Compliance against components by social landlord

5.1 Local authorities

At 31 March 2016, for local authority dwellings, 'Mains powered smoke detectors' was the component showing the highest percentage of dwellings that were WHQS compliant (including acceptable fails) (97 per cent), followed by 'Central heating systems' (95 per cent) and 'Windows' (94 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 2016 (67 per cent). However this did represent an increase on the previous year. This was followed by 'Roofs and associated components' (80 per cent) and 'Electrical systems' and 'Bathrooms' (83 per cent) (Chart 2).

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 2015 and 2016 were 'Kitchens' (up by 13 percentage points), 'Bathrooms' and 'Energy rating (SAP ≥ 65)' (both up by 9 percentage points) (Chart 2).

As previously explained, falls in compliance may be due to improvements in data quality or deterioration of housing stock. At 31 March 2016 there were no components showing a decrease compared with the previous year.

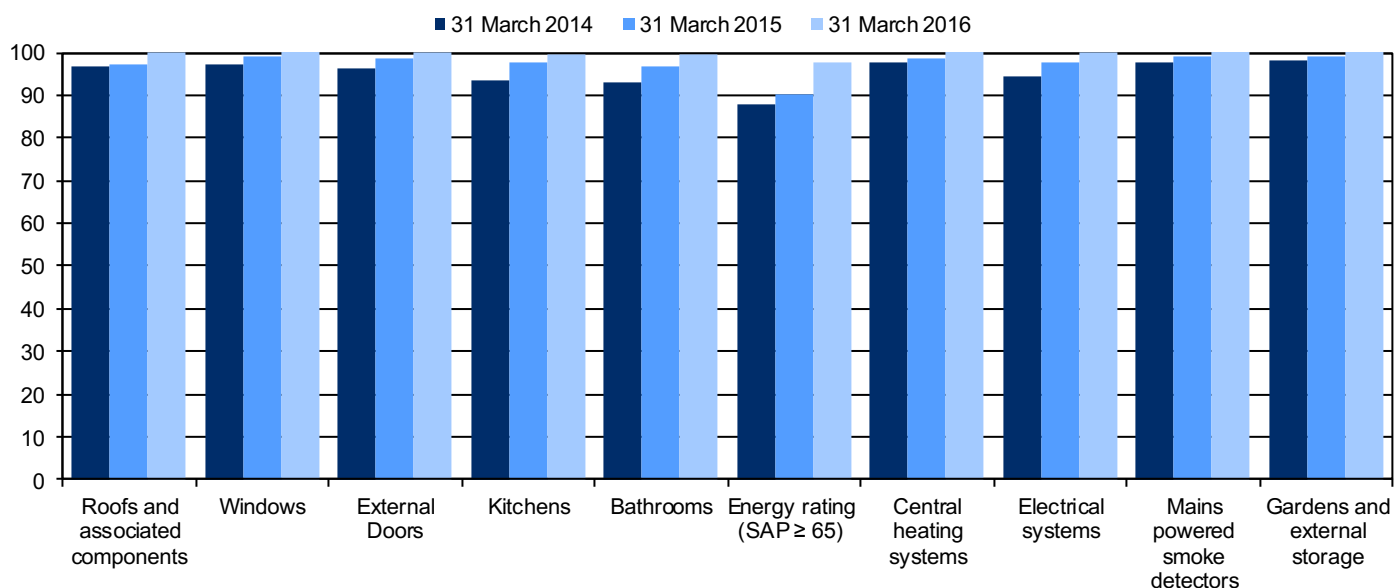
5.2 Registered social landlords

For RSLs, 9 of the 10 components were 100 per cent compliant with the WHQS (including acceptable fails) at 31 March 2016. The only exception was the component 'Energy rating (SAP \geq 65)' which also showed a high level of compliance 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' with a difference of 34 percentage points followed by 'Roofs and associated components' with a difference of 20 percentage points.

At 31 March 2016, 'Energy rating (SAP \geq 65)' continued to be the component with the lowest level of WHQS compliance (including acceptable fails) for RSL dwellings for the fourth year in a row though compliance had increased by 8 percentage points compared to the previous year.

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 2015 and 2016 the component showing the largest increase in compliance was 'Energy rating (SAP \geq 65)' increasing by 8 percentage points. As was the case with the local authority dwellings, there was no reduction in compliance for any individual components compared with the previous year (Chart 3).

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 2016, 9 reported that they had a strategy or policy in place as did 45 of the 60 RSLs who provided a response.

6. 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

Well-Being of Future Generations Act 2015

2. The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.
3. Information on indicators and associated technical information - [How do you measure a nation's progress? - National Indicators](#)
4. Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).
5. The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

The Welsh Housing Quality Standard

6. Background information on the introduction of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard is provided in Section 1 of this release.
5. The [National Housing Strategy](#) includes an objective for all households in Wales to have the opportunity to live in good quality homes.
6. 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’.
7. 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.

Data source and coverage

8. This annual data collection was introduced in July 2012 in order 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 are 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'.

9. 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.
10. Copies of the current WHQS data collection form are available on the [statistics and research website](#).
11. Further information on the data processing cycle can also be found in the [Housing Statistics Quality Report](#).
12. Data were collected from all 11 local authorities that retained stock as at 31 March 2016 and from 60 of the 62 Welsh Registered Social Landlords including Abbeyfield societies, Almshouse Charities and Co-ownership societies. The 2 RSLs who did not provide a completed data collection return were all very small organisations which in total represent less than 1 per cent (16 dwellings) of all RSL stock. The RSL stock numbers have been adjusted accordingly. The collection achieved a 97 per cent response rate.
13. 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 2015-16 for each social landlord.

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 |

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.

Measuring WHQS compliance

16. 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 2016 (excluding any assessments under category 6). As well as information on the number of dwellings that complied subject to acceptable 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.
17. 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.

Users and uses

18. The collection was introduced to monitor the progress made by local authorities and RSLs in achieving the WHQS standard for all their stock.

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.

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

20. 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.
21. 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.

22. More detailed quality information relating specifically to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, which is not included in the quality report, is given below.

Administrative data quality assurance

27. This release has been scored against the UK Statistics Authority Administrative Data Quality Assurance matrix. The matrix is the UK Statistics Authority regulatory standard for the quality assurance of administrative data. The Standard recognises the increasing role that administrative data are playing in the production of official statistics and clarifies what producers of official statistics should do to assure themselves of the quality of these data. The toolkit that supports it provides helpful guidance to statistical producers about the practices they can adopt to assure the quality of the data they receive, and sets out the standards for assessing statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

28. The matrix assesses the release against the following criteria:

- Operational context and administrative data collection
- Communication with data supply partners
- Quality assurance principles, standards and checks applied by data suppliers
- Producer's quality assurance investigations and documentation.

29. The release has provisionally been scored as 'A2:Enhanced assurance' against each of the first three of the above categories and as 'A3:Comprehensive assurance' against the final category. Work is on-going to produce a fuller description of the assurances required. Further information is available on the [UK Statistics Authority website](#).

Validation and verification

30. Data are collected from local authorities and registered social landlords via Excel spreadsheets. These are downloaded from the Afon file transfer website which provides a secure method for users to submit data. The spreadsheets allow respondents to validate the data before submitting to the Welsh Government. Respondents are also given an opportunity to include contextual information where large changes have occurred (e.g. data items changing by more than 10% compared to the previous year). This enables some data cleansing at source and minimises follow up queries.

31. Local authorities and registered social landlords are notified of the data collection exercise timetable in advance. This allows adequate time for local authorities and registered social landlords to collate their information, and to raise any issues they may have. There is guidance in the spreadsheet, which assists users on completing the form.

Accuracy

32. 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 report (Altair, May 2014) made some comment on the consistency of reporting from landlords (see WHQS Evaluation below).
33. Once we receive the data, it goes through further validation and verification checks, for example:
- Common sense check for any missing/incorrect data without any explanation;
 - Arithmetic consistency checks;
 - Cross checks against the data for the previous year;
 - Cross checks with other relevant data collections;
 - Thorough tolerance checks;
 - Verification that data outside of tolerances is actually correct.
34. If there is a validation error, we contact the local authority or registered social landlord and seek resolution. If we fail to get an answer within a reasonable timescale, we will use imputation to improve data quality. We will then inform the organisation and explain to them how we have amended or imputed the data. .

Revisions

35. This release contains the final data as at 31 March 2016. 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.
36. Occasionally, revisions can occur due to errors in our statistical processes. In these cases, a judgement is made as to whether the change is significant enough to publish a revised statistical release. Where changes are not deemed to be significant i.e. minor changes, these will be updated in the following year's statistical release. However minor amendments to the figures may be reflected in the Stats Wales tables prior to that next release.
37. Any revised data is marked with an (r) in the statistical release.
38. We follow the [Welsh Government's statistical revisions policy](#).

Accessibility

39. A full set of data including information by individual local authority and individual RSL are available to download from our [StatsWales interactive website](#).

Comparability

Housing health and safety rating system

40. 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.

Coherence with other statistics

WHQS evaluation

41. 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](#).
42. 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.
43. 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.
44. 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. Recommendations have been implemented and

compliance policy guidance issued to landlords in March 2015. Landlords have confirmed introduction of a WHQS compliance policy by April 2016 which include details of:

- how landlords judge they are implementing or have implemented WHQS;
- how they communicate with tenants about progress;
- how they are independently verifying compliance; and
- the extent to which community benefits have been achieved by WHQS improvement programmes.

Officials have an ongoing dialogue and relationship with landlords, particularly those receiving funding, where regular monitoring visits take place based upon the evidence from business plans, compliance policies, progress reports, statistical returns and visits to homes where WHQS works are being undertaken. A copy of the [full report and a summary of findings are available](#).

Related statistics for other UK countries

England:

47. 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 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.

The latest information is available in the ['English Housing Survey: 2014-15 Headline Report'](#).

Scotland:

48. 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. Scottish Government set a policy target for those landlords to bring their stock up to every element of the Standard (where applicable) by April 2015.

49. The Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) is the official, national measure of SHQS progress towards the April 2015 deadline for social landlords. The latest information is available in the report [Scottish House Conditions Survey :Key findings 2014](#).

Northern Ireland:

50. The Decent Homes Standard was introduced in June 2004 to promote measurable improvements to housing in Northern Ireland. The Decent Homes standard in Northern Ireland is tracked via the House Condition Survey and the latest information is available in the report [Northern Ireland House Condition Survey 2011](#).

Symbols

51. 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

7. 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)

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.

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, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10 |
| 1 (b) Is the dwelling free from damp? | All components total only |
| Part 2. Safe and secure | 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 |
| 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 |
| 2 (i) Do rooms used for sleeping have escape routes not passing through another room? | All components total only |
| 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 in? | 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? | 6, 7 |
| 3 (b) Are external doors and windows adequately draught proofed? | 2,3 |
| 3 (c) Is the living room separated from the main entrance door? | All components total 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 |
| Part 4. Contain up to date kitchens and bathrooms | |
| 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 |
| 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? | 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? | |
| 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? | 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 ² 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 |

8. Further information

The document is available at

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/welsh-housing-quality-standard/?lang=en>

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

[‘Improving Lives and Communities – Homes in Wales’](#) - National Housing Strategy:

Next update

August 2017 (Provisional)

We want your feedback

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

stats.housing@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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