

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard





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In February 2004 the Minister for Communities announced to Parliament that all social landlords are required to meet a new national standard for housing: the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. The deadline for meeting this new standard is 2015. As a registered social landlord Wishaw & District Housing Association is required to ensure all its properties will comply with the Standard.

This information leaflet explains what the Standard is and how the Association plans to meet its requirements.

What is the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)?

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard is a national housing quality standard made up of five key categories:

- Tolerable standard
- Free from serious disrepair
- Energy efficient
- Modern facilities and services
- Healthy, safe and secure

TOLERABLE STANDARD

This is a very basic standard. To meet the tolerable standard a dwelling must be fit for human habitation. This is a very broad definition and covers items such as having basic toilet and bathing facilities and being wind and watertight. Under the SHQS a dwelling fails if it is not compliant with the tolerable standard.

FREE FROM SERIOUS DISREPAIR

This category includes both primary and secondary elements. If the dwelling fails on one primary element then it fails the whole Standard. However, it must fail by two or more secondary elements to fail overall.

The primary elements are:

- Wall structures
- Internal floor structures
- Foundations
- Roof structures

An element fails where it requires repair or replacement of more than 20%.

The secondary elements are:

- Roof covering
- Chimney stacks
- Flashings
- Rainwater goods
- External Wall finishes
- Access decks/balustrades
- Common access stairs and landings, pathways within the curtilage of the dwelling
- Individual dwelling balconies/verandas
- Individual dwelling attached garages and internal stairs
- Damp proof course
- Windows and doors
- Common windows/rooflights
- Underground drainage

Again, a fail is measured by the requirement for repair or replacement of more than 20% of the component.

ENERGY EFFICIENT

This category aims to ensure all dwellings are well insulated and have efficient central heating systems. It includes only primary elements and a dwelling fails the SHQS if it does not comply with any one element.

The criteria elements are:

- Cavity insulation where technically feasible and appropriate
- 100mm loft insulation where appropriate
- Insulation of hot water tanks and pipes (and cold water tanks as an ancillary measure)
- A full house central heating system that has an acceptable efficiency rating, or similarly efficient heating system that is developed in the future (the Standard defines acceptable efficiency)
- Additional energy efficiency measures, where technically feasible, necessary to achieve a minimum NHER*rating of 5 or SAP^ rating of 50 (typical SAP rating for newbuild dwelling is in excess of 100)

** NHER: National Home Energy Rating. An energy label for dwellings, based on total annual running costs.*

^ SAP: Standard Assessment Procedure. A measure of the cost per m² of providing energy for heating and domestic hot water.

MODERN FACILITIES AND SERVICES

This category covers kitchen and bathroom facilities and includes only primary elements. A dwelling will fail the Standard if it does not meet any one of the primary elements. An element fails where it requires repair or replacement of more than 25%.

The criteria elements are:

- Bathroom amenities should include a WC, bath or shower and wash hand basin in good and usable condition
- Kitchen fittings in good and usable condition
- Adequate kitchen storage to current building standards where practical
- Safe kitchen working arrangements, including worktop space on at least one side of, and at least the same width as, the cooker
- Sufficient power outlets in the kitchen (6 or more sockets)

HEALTHY, SAFE AND SECURE

This category covers elements such as electrical and gas systems, smoke detectors and ventilation and includes primary elements only. A dwelling will fail the Standard if it does not meet any one of the primary elements. A persistent problem with condensation or mould is defined where an area of more than 5% of the wall and ceiling are affected.

The criteria elements are:

- Internal pipework to be lead free
- Mechanical ventilation in the kitchen and bathroom where this is required to tackle persistent problems of condensation, dampness and mould growth
- Adequate noise insulation where there are problems with external noise eg from traffic or factories
- A smoke detector present in the home
- Safe electrical systems
- Safe gas and oil systems and appliances
- Common stairwells, lifts, lobbies, courts, laundry and drying areas, refuse chutes and bin stores, where provided, in good and safe order
- Adequate lighting in common internal and external areas within the curtilage of the house
- Secure front and rear access doors
- Front door entry systems and secure rear access to enclosed common areas

How does the Association plan to meet the requirements of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard?

The Association has a 'Standard Delivery Plan' in place detailing how we propose to ensure all of our properties will meet the Standard by 2015. As part of our preparation of this Delivery Plan we assessed which of our houses currently pass and fail the Standard criteria and which would fail the Standard come 2015 in the absence of any upgrading works. The Delivery Plan also sets out a costed programme for the works required to ensure all of our properties will comply with the Standard by the government's target date. Our Standard Delivery Plan was accepted by our regulators, Communities Scotland, in December 2005 and is available for consultation at the Association's offices.

We are in the fortunate position that the Association's properties are generally in very good condition, thanks to our ongoing programmes of planned and cyclical maintenance works. We have, however, re-programmed some of our longer-term planned maintenance works in order to ensure we are meeting all of the Standard criteria by 2015.

Review of the Standard Delivery Plan

Our Delivery Plan is a fluid document and is regularly reviewed as we annually reassess the condition of our properties through estate visits and condition surveys and take into account the works we carry out each year. The original Plan, compiled in 2005, was based on a sample stock survey where we looked at the condition of 10% of our houses, across property age, type and area. As we are required to gather full stock condition information we have embarked on an annual programme of surveys. These will be undertaken in the spring of each year until we have 100% stock condition data.

In addition we are required to formally monitor our progress towards meeting the Standard by 2015 and will submit regular reviews to Communities Scotland throughout the Delivery Plan period.

English not your first language? Visually impaired?

This information leaflet and all other public information, application forms and documents produced by the Association can be made available in alternative languages and formats upon request.

Further information

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Open: Monday – Thursday: 9.00am – 4.30pm and
Friday: 9.00am – 4.00pm
Closed for lunch: 12.30pm – 1.30pm

