



Welsh Government
Consultation Document

Mandatory quality standards for new homes

The proposed new standard will replace the current “Development Quality Requirements” (DQR) published in 2005 in response to the key recommendations of the Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply April 2019

Date of issue: 01 August 2020

Action required: Responses by 01 November 2020

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

Overview

Housing schemes built using Social Housing Grant (SHG) and other forms of public subsidy are currently required to meet Welsh Government Development Quality Requirements 2005 (DQR).

A key recommendation of the Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply (April 2019) stated that Welsh Government should develop new consolidated and simplified standards for new build grant funded homes and affordable homes delivered through planning agreements (under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) and planning conditions. These standards should be simpler to use and should not have conflicting requirements. The new standards should concentrate on minimum space standards, including storage inside and outside. The Review also recommended a requirement for all new affordable homes to be near zero carbon, using a fabric first approach from 2021. The Review also recommended Welsh Government to set a longer term goal of 2025 at the latest to have the same standards for all homes irrespective of tenure.

How to respond

Please respond by completing the consultation response form questionnaire at the back of this document and sending it to:

SHGSchemeDelivery@gov.wales

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

The current version of Development Quality Requirements (DQR) can be located at <https://gov.wales/development-quality-requirements-housing-associations>

The Lifetime Homes standard can be located at <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

The proposed changes to Building Regulations Parts L and F in Wales may be viewed at

<https://gov.wales/building-regulations-part-l-review-0>

Contact details

For further information:

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General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Welsh Government will be data controller for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation. Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (e.g. a research organisation or a consultancy company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation

If your details are published as part of the consultation response then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

Your rights

Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data held about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer:
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF10 3NQ

e-mail:

Data.ProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745 or
0303 123 1113

Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Summary

Affordable housing must be designed to comply with the Welsh Government Development Quality Requirements 2005 (DQR). The current version has been subject to several updates and associated explanatory circulars. It is widely considered that the current standard is in need of simplification and review.

The design quality requirements for the delivery of affordable homes under 'Section 106' planning agreements needs clarification due to inconsistency in application.

More consideration needs to be given to design quality, sustainability, innovation, modern methods of construction and carbon reduction in the building of homes.

The Review of Affordable Housing Supply recommended Welsh Government to set a longer term goal of 2025 at the latest to have the same standards for all homes irrespective of tenure.

Brief summary of past proposed changes to DQR and consultation to date

Workshops were held with all stakeholders in 2015 to inform the process of revising the standards and the results were incorporated into a revised version that was subject to a consultation in 2016.

However, the revised standard was not issued and was overtaken by the Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply, dated April 2019 (AHR), recommendation 3 of which stated that "Welsh Government should develop new consolidated and simplified standards for new build grant funded and S106 homes. The new standards should be easier to use and should not have conflicting requirements. The new standards should concentrate on minimum space standards, including storage inside and outside".

Drawing on the results of the 2015 consultation and the extensive AHR workgroup findings a new standard has been developed to replace DQR, titled "Beautiful Homes and Spaces" (BHS).

Evidence for change

The review of DQR is widely regarded to be overdue and the new standard has been drafted in response to the key recommendations of the Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply April 2019.

There is inconsistency in the application of DQR for affordable housing provided under section 106 agreements. It is important to rectify this situation as approximately 30% of the affordable housing provided over the last three years (2016-19) was delivered through these planning agreements.

House sizes are becoming too small, challenging compliance with inclusive design principles such as Lifetime Homes and other mobility considerations which are not sufficiently legislated for under the Approved Documents to building regulations.

The proposals

- Proposed main changes.

The standard is simplified and emphasises:

- Housing quality, innovation and sustainability.
- Flexibility.
- Safety and Security.
- Minimum space standards.

The standard encourages the use of “best practice” guidance available to designers to ensure a high quality environment, in preference to prescriptive requirements. Where considered necessary, critical elements of design are prescribed, but the new standard is drafted to give more freedom to encourage high quality design and innovation.

- Option for consideration

We are considering changing the name of the standard from Development Quality Requirements (DQR) to Beautiful Homes and Spaces (BHS).

There has been a consultation relating to proposed amendments to the Building Regulations Part L (conservation of fuel and power) together with Part F (overheating). We are considering the early introduction of the conservation of fuel and power regulations for affordable housing in advance of any building regulation transitional arrangements. Also we are considering the early introduction to achieve EPC A (SAP 92) for new affordable homes.

What outcomes do we anticipate?

- The new standard is simple, more user-friendly and easier to understand than DQR, which will facilitate better compliance.
- Housing providers will have greater freedom to develop their own quality standards and will be required to improve the design quality of homes and places through encouraging “best practice” in preference to unnecessarily prescriptive detailed design requirements.
- The requirement for minimum space standards in conjunction with the Lifetime Homes standard will ensure that people live in functional homes.
- The new standards promote the use of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and encourage due consideration for the circular economy process (with regard to waste and embodied carbon).
- The new standard encourages high quality design, sustainability and wellbeing.

The questions

The current Development Quality Requirements are referenced in the following questionnaire as “DQR”. The proposed new mandatory quality standards are referenced as “proposed new policy”

There are seventeen questions in this consultation.

Please consider and complete a response to each of the questions. “No comment” (NC) may be entered against question responses where considered applicable.

**Consultation
Response Form**

Your name:

Organisation (if applicable):

email / telephone number:

Your address:

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here:

Question 01: What are your general views on the proposed new policy with regard to the issues itemised within the above Summary:

Please enter here:

Question 02: What are your general views on the proposed new policy with regard to the “evidence for change” itemised within the above Summary:

Please enter here:

Question 03: Do you think there are the benefits to the proposed new policy:

Please enter here:

Question 04: Do you think there are any dis-benefits to the proposed new policy:

Please enter here:

Question 05: What changes (if any) do you think are needed to the proposed new policy? Please explain and provide evidence for your views:

Please enter here:

Question 06: Do you agree or disagree that it is important for all affordable homes delivered through section 106 agreements and planning conditions to meet the proposed quality standards for new homes? If you disagree, please tell us why.

Please enter here:

Question 07: What is your opinion on the intention to adopt the proposed new policy for all housing irrespective of tenure. Please explain and provide evidence for your views:

Please enter here:

Question 08: What is your opinion of the proposed minimum space standard. Please explain and provide evidence for your views:

Please enter here:

Question 09: With the exception of the Lifetime Homes requirements, the proposed new policy is not prescriptive in relation to inclusivity and notably such matters as, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, human rights or children's rights. Do you consider that the proposed new policy is sufficiently inclusive or not. Please explain and provide evidence for your views:

Please enter here:

Question 10: We are proposing to change the name of DQR to "Beautiful Homes and Spaces" (BHS). What is your opinion of the proposed name change and do you have an alternative suggestion:

Please enter here:

Question 11: Subject to the outcome of the consultation on changes to the Building Regulations Part L (conservation of fuel and power) and Part F (overheating), new regulations will come into force. What is your opinion of the potential early introduction of the conservation of fuel and power and overheating regulations for new affordable housing in advance of any building regulation transitional arrangements?

Please enter here:

Question 12: What is your opinion on the potential introduction of a requirement that all new affordable housing should meet EPC A (SAP 92).

Please enter here:

Question 13: We have asked a number of questions. We would welcome any other views you may have about the proposed new policy and the proposals for implementation:

Please enter here:

Question 14: We would like to know your views on the effects that the proposed new policy would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favorably than English.

What effects do you think there would be?

How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Question 15: Please also explain how you believe the proposed new policy could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Question 16: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Please enter your responses to questions 14, 15 and 16 here:

Question 17: In view of the effect of Covid-19 which will change the way we live in and use our homes, please indicate any additions to the standards and any other suggestions relating to the pandemic you want us to consider

Please enter here: