



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WHQS Update

CHC Future Homes SDG

4th November 2020

WHQS Deadline

- All social landlords were on track to achieve the WHQS deadline of 31st December 2020 (with the majority having achieved the standard and in maintenance phase for some time) until Covid-19 impacted on programmes of work from March 2020
- We are confident that you all continue to work hard to deliver WHQS programmes as safely, quickly and efficiently as possible but know that regrettably the target is no longer achievable for some social landlords
- We've considered a number of options to manage this including a formal change to the deadline and the Minister has approved the following option:
 - **Maintain** the 31st December 2020 deadline for all social landlords
 - Agree an **extension beyond the deadline** for those social landlords who find themselves unable to achieve the target due to Covid-19

WHQS Deadline – Rationale for Approach

Chosen Option ✓

Maintain the WHQS deadline but agree an extension beyond the deadline for the social landlords who have not yet complied with the standard

- This is a pragmatic, targeted approach, recognising the challenges you face whilst giving some flexibility in terms of the future, with potential further Covid-19 waves
- This reflects the fact that most of you are already compliant with the standard and will continue to maintain it – we don't need to complicate or diminish that achievement
- We recognise that Covid-19 will have impacted on maintenance programmes across the sector but this is a reflection of the global pandemic, not the success or failure of the programme
- We want to ensure that where the target cannot be met because of a global pandemic, we have agreed an extension to ensure there is no breach in terms and loss of funding for the improvement of tenants homes which will still happen, although on a different timescale
- The maintenance of the programme will continue anyway whilst we develop the new standard in consultation with you
- A formal change to the deadline would be time consuming, requiring formal consultation and may have to change again if there are further local or national lockdowns

WHQS Deadline – Rationale for Approach

Social Landlords who have achieved compliance

- We ask you to **continue to maintain** the standard
- We appreciate that you will see higher levels of maintenance phase acceptable fails (AFs) as you are unable to access some homes, are managing issues with resources (staff, contractors and supplies) and are adapting to new ways of safe working

Social Landlords who have been granted an extension beyond the deadline

- Details of the extension beyond the deadline (provisionally one year to 31st December 2021) will be agreed with you
- **Additional monitoring** requirements will be agreed to allow us to update the Minister on progress

For all social landlords

- We will provide **updates on the timing of statistical returns** and the required treatment for Covid-19 related additional AFs in due course
- We will continue to ask for your support in the **development of the new standard**

WHQS Deadline – Statistical Reporting

- Our colleagues in statistical services have been under pressure to deliver critical health and economy statistics throughout the pandemic and our usual WHQS return was understandably cancelled.
- We are working with them to agree a timeframe for WHQS statistical reporting to restart.
- Logically we would report at the programme deadline (31st December 2020) although there would, as ever, be a lag between this date and reporting to allow for data updates and verification.
- We appreciate that the level of AFs will be much increased as a result of Covid-19
- We would like to agree with the sector and be able to clarify our expectations in terms of treatment for common issues around Covid-19.
- If you have processes to address this that you have already developed for internal reporting, please share with us.

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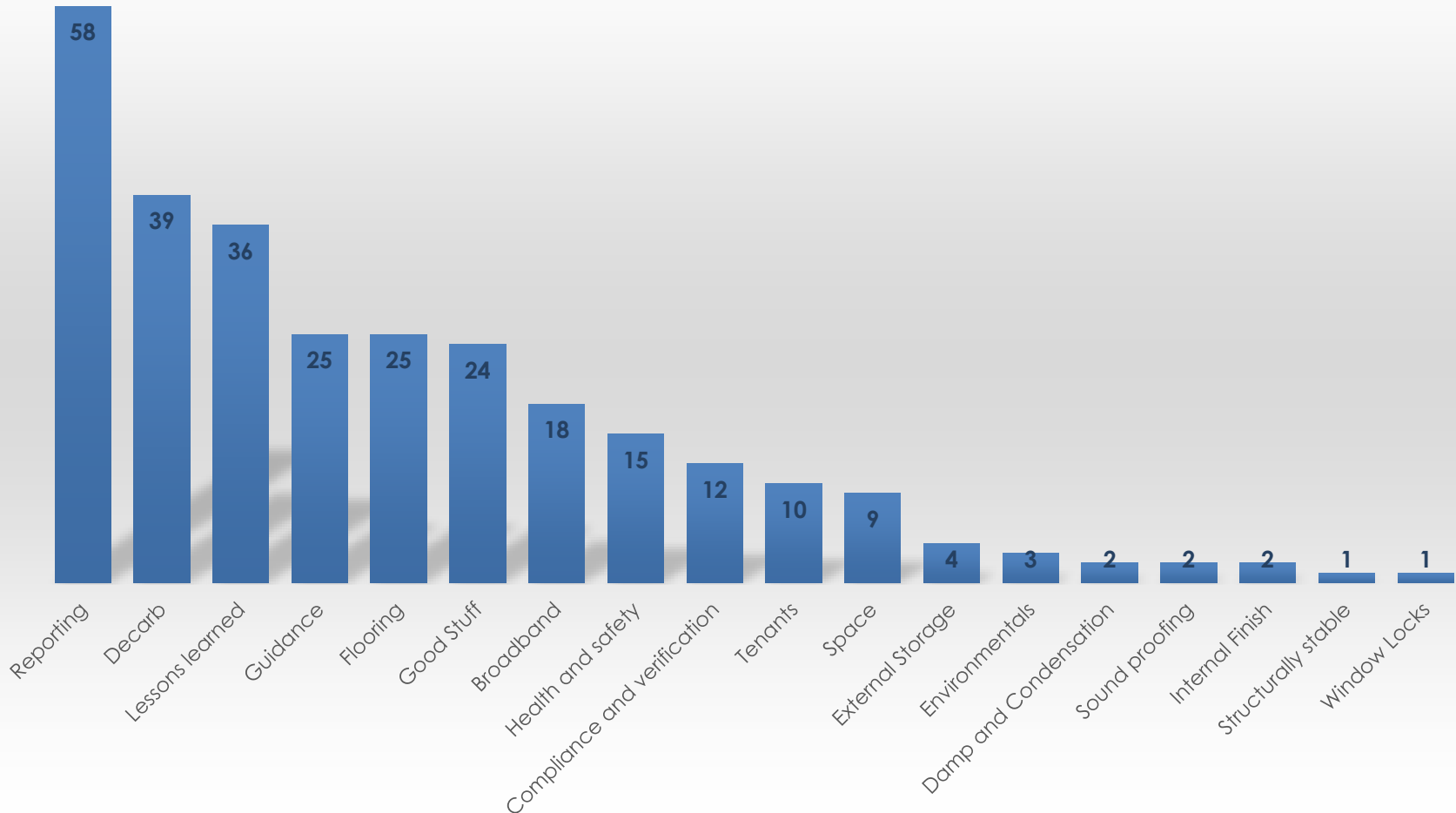
Social Landlord Feedback

- We held eight workshop sessions during May and June 2020 via Teams
- The aim was to listen to you as the practitioners and to benefit from your experience of working with the standard
- We structured the sessions in to four areas:
 - What works well
 - What should we add?
 - What could we take away or update?
 - Reporting
- We summarised the feedback from each session and shared it with the participants
- We held a Teams session for all social landlords to look at the combined feedback from all the groups

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Social Landlord Feedback

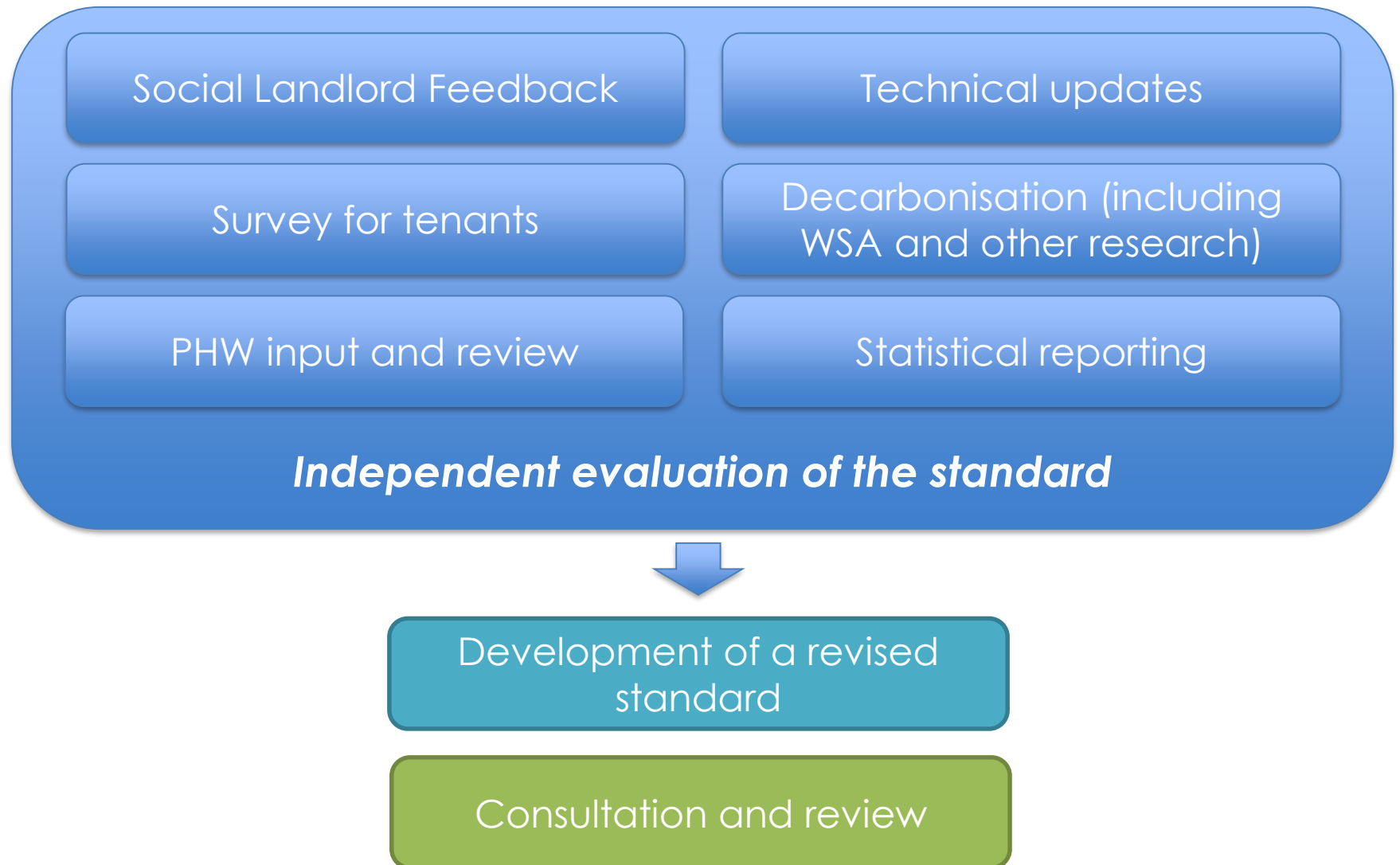
No. of comments from all workshops grouped by theme
(286 in total)



Tenant Survey

- Many thanks to those who helped us push this survey out to tenants
- Closed on 14th October 2020 after four weeks
- Run by WG colleagues in Social Research team
- Total of 1,016 responses
- 945 were social housing tenants (core sample)
- Aiming for draft report on results by 12th November

Where does this fit in with other work?



Evaluation of the current standard

The aims of the independent evaluation are:

- To assess the extent to which the WHQS has been achieved;
- To reflect upon the outputs of delivering the standard (including social, economic and well-being, as well as physical improvement to housing stock);
- To apply the findings from the summative evaluation to producing recommendations for the development of the revised standard.

We are currently procuring this work with a planned final reporting date of April 2021

Development of the revised WHQS

- To ensure no social landlord or tenant is disadvantaged as a result of the extension beyond the deadline where required as a result of Covid-19, the revised standard will not commence until January 2022 at the earliest.
- As discussed in the workshops over the summer we are expecting two areas of significant change:
 - Affordable warmth and carbon reduction
 - Measurement and reporting – with the aim of developing a line level data collection. To note, data collection under the new standard would not commence until after at least one year so we have a longer lead time to develop and agree this in detail.
- We'll provide regular updates on the progress with the evaluation and development of the revised standard.

Brexit and Supplies

We know that supplies have been an issue for many as a result of the Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions. Further issues may arise as a result of Brexit.

Welsh Government colleagues have provided these links:

https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/EU-Exit-Business-Readiness_Movement-of-Goods-and-Materials-v1.pdf

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/>

We'll share any further information that we receive

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Please keep in touch

For all WHQS related queries and comments, please contact:

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