

How Housing Associations provide safe quality homes

This factsheet outlines the role of Welsh housing associations in providing safe, high-quality homes. It explains the regulatory framework they operate within and the procedures they follow for addressing reports of hazards and repairs.

Legal obligations

In Wales, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), commonly referred to as housing associations, are bound by statutory and regulatory obligations to maintain safe, quality homes.

- **Statutory duties:** Under the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016, housing associations are legally mandated to maintain properties in good repair and ensure they are Fit for Human Habitation (FFHH).
- **Regulatory standards:** They must comply with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which requires the provision of high-quality accommodation and tenant services.
- **Timely responses:** Landlords are obliged to respond promptly to repair issues and address them within a reasonable timeframe. They have established protocols for emergency, urgent, and routine repairs. From 1st April 2026, a new WHQS requirement introduces [set timeframes](#) for hazards and requires landlords to keep tenants informed of progress via a written plan.

How the sector is regulated

Housing associations are subject to continuous, rigorous scrutiny.

- **Regulatory framework:** The [Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations in Wales](#), requires high-quality tenant services and accommodation.
- **Performance monitoring:** RSLs evaluate their own performance and compliance through a self-assessment at least once a year and submit quarterly regulatory surveys to the Regulator on safety checks, outstanding repairs, and damp and mould cases.
- **Governance and oversight:** Performance is scrutinised by housing association Boards, who review internal audits and monitor repair and compliance trends.
- **External scrutiny:** The sector acts upon findings from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) and will utilise tenant feedback, complaints, and their annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey to drive improvements.



Performance and investment

Sector data demonstrates strong performance in delivering quality safe homes.

- **Repairs performance:** Around 98% of emergency repairs are completed on time, with low levels of outstanding repairs (0.11 outstanding repairs per property)¹
- **Safety compliance:** High compliance rates across statutory checks, including gas (99.8%), fire (98.1%), and electrical and asbestos safety (over 99%)²
- **Tenant satisfaction:** 83% of tenants report satisfaction with the quality of their home³
- **Investment:** Housing associations invest significantly in maintaining and improving homes, with average annual maintenance spend of £1,859 per property (2024/25). Investment in repairs per home has increased by 34% between 22/23 and 24/25.⁴
- **WHQS compliance:** WHQS data shows that in the first year of the new standard, 48% of homes were fully compliant (70% when including homes with conditional passes and temporary fails). This demonstrates strong initial progress towards full compliance (under the old standard, compliance increased from 33% in 2012 to 78% by 2023).⁵

Key safety priorities

Following increased national focus on housing conditions including building safety and damp and mould, the sector has intensified its focus on tenant safety by establishing quicker response times and actively encouraging early reporting.

In response to the Grenfell tragedy RSLs undertook comprehensive fire safety reviews across their stock;

- checking cladding systems
- strengthening fire risk assessment processes
- improving record-keeping
- working much more closely with fire and rescue services

We are now supporting the development of new building safety legislation in Wales.

Following the tragic death of Awaab Ishaak, the sector actively shifted to a proactive early-intervention model for damp and mould:

- **Early intervention:** Staff are trained to identify issues during any home visit
- **Improved systems:** Enhanced Damp and Mould approaches with targets for inspection and resolution support faster responses. Significant investments have been made in new IT software to better track open jobs, identify complex cases, and improve record-keeping.

¹ Welsh Government [Quarterly Regulatory Survey July-September 2025](#)

² Welsh Government [Quarterly Regulatory Survey July-September 2025](#)

³ Welsh Government [Tenant Satisfaction Survey May 2025](#)

⁴ CHC & Housemark [Welsh RSL Global Accounts 2024/25](#)

⁵ Welsh Government [WHQS progress as of March 2025](#)



- **Preventative action:** RSLs are increasingly utilising diagnostic technology (like thermal imaging) and investing in preventative measures, such as upgrades to building fabric, sensor monitoring, and improved ventilation.
- **Tenant engagement:** Clear, accessible guidance and communication campaigns have been used to encourage tenants to report issues with their homes and to understand their rights to complain and escalate concerns.

New WHQS Requirement (from April 2026)

The Welsh Government has introduced a new [WHQS rule](#) (effective 1st April 2026) mandating fixed timescales for responding to hazards:

- 24 hours for a "significant risk with an assessed likelihood of imminent harm,"
- 10 days for a "significant risk without imminent harm".

The sector supports the intent of the new requirement to improve transparency and drive consistency in responses. Housing associations are focused on effectively implementing the new requirements across all 28 hazard categories during a swift transition period.

Housing associations are preparing for the 1st April by

- developing internal response pathways
- adapting systems to record and report hazards
- reviewing staff resources
- training staff to ensure that they can confidently assess and manage reported hazards

The introduction of these changes, while necessary and beneficial for residents, inevitably entails substantial costs, both in terms of initial investment and ongoing operational expenditure. Responses will evolve and mature over time as housing associations gain practical experience and identify areas for improvement. Given the relatively rapid pace at which this new requirement has been implemented, it is anticipated that initial approaches will be subject to continuous refinement to meet the needs of tenants.

Welsh Government will monitor compliance against the new requirements through a set of KPIs which will be reported on a quarterly basis.

Factors affecting timely repairs

Housing associations aim to resolve issues quickly, but several factors affect how fast works can be completed:

- **Access:** Investigations and repairs require safe entry to the home. Missed appointments, refusals, or complex household needs can delay works, especially where urgent access is required within 24 hours.
- **Health and safety requirements:** Some hazards (e.g. structural risks) require specialist processes before work can begin.



- **Workforce and materials:** Specialist contractors and materials may not always be immediately available, particularly where multiple trades are needed.
- **Inspection and diagnosis:** Many issues require inspection first with complex problems (e.g. significant damp and mould) requiring multiple visits.
- **Prioritisation and resources:** Emergency risks are prioritised, meaning less urgent repairs may take longer during periods of high demand.
- **Property complexity:** Older or complex buildings may require phased or specialist works. Weather can also delay external repairs.

Role of CHC

CHC as the representative body for 30 not-for-profit housing associations in Wales has taken several proactive steps to support the sector in improving its responses to damp and mould:

- **Reviewing policy and practice:** CHC has worked collaboratively with sector partners including the Housing Regulator, the Welsh Local Government Association, TPAS Cymru, CIH, Shelter Cymru and Tai Pawb to review current policies and practices for responding to reports of disrepair.
- **Facilitating shared learning:** Sector-wide learning through "communities of practice" spaces, webinars and conference sessions focusing on key topics related to disrepair and damp and mould.
- **Improving tenant communications:** CHC has directly supported its members in developing clear tenant communications, specifically focusing on guiding residents on how to [report problems within their homes](#).
- **Engaging with government:** CHC has actively engaged with the Welsh Government, providing evidence and feedback to support effective and practical regulation. While supporting the intent of the new rules, we have raised operational concerns on behalf of the sector and called for clear operational guidance and a realistic lead-in period to ensure the new requirement is rolled out effectively.

Housing associations are committed to maintaining safe, good quality homes and are continuously improving services. They operate within clear legal and regulatory frameworks and are committed to making hazards safe and delivering repairs as quickly as possible.

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