



WHQS Compliance Policy

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1.0 Policy Statement

Trivallis will maintain the 100% compliance to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and will have a minimum target of a 10% reduction of Acceptable fails on an annual basis. This target is intended to renew secondary elements before the Primary element fails i.e. providing safety flooring in bathroom, whereby the primary element has not failed.

The WHQS is the Welsh Government's target standard for all social housing in Wales. It states that the minimum standard in each dwelling should

- Be in a good state of repair
- Be safe and secure
- Be adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated
- Have up to date kitchens and bathrooms
- Be well managed
- Be located in attractive and safe environments
- As far as possible, suit the specific requirements of the household

The Welsh Housing Quality Standard has been developed to provide a common target standard for the physical condition of all housing in Wales; this provides a framework for associations to devise programmes of work to bring dwellings up to the standard.

Should a dwelling not meet the standard of the WHQS a failure is recorded against the element; categorised as either a Primary or Secondary element. A Primary element is one that impacts on the safety of the residents; a Secondary element is more focused around the comfort of the residents.

Trivallis operates an Asset Management software system called SAM (Strategic Asset Management). This incorporates a complete suite of tools for the management of property assets. SAM is able to store a variety of information including, stock condition survey data, completion dates, health and safety hazards and the condition of stock. This data is analysed to create forecasts, budgets and reports. It also allows monitoring of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and subsequently determines what dwellings fail the standard.

The improvement and modernisation of Trivallis' houses and flats up to the WHQS is a key policy aim of Trivallis. The WHQS represents a reasonable definition of quality for existing social housing and looks to improve not just the physical condition of homes but also the level of internal amenities, the wider environment in which the homes are located and how the stock is managed.

A WHQS policy has been developed to explain how Trivallis collate, record and report on 42 individual elements.

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Interpretation of WHQS

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. This could include the cost or timing of the work, the tenant choosing not to have the work or where there are physical constraints to the work. In these

instances, the landlord may record one or more elements as acceptable fails, if all other elements are compliant, the dwelling is deemed to be compliant subject to acceptable fails.

Trivallis have developed life cycle expectancies for all elements, all life cycles and costs have been verified by external consultants. If elements are deemed to be in good condition on inspection, after reaching their life expectancy, they will be recorded as compliant.

Each element has been categorised as either primary or secondary, and Trivallis uses this categorisation to prioritise improvements. A primary element impacts on the safety of the tenant and a secondary element focuses on the comfort of the tenant.

2.2 Interpretation of Acceptable Fails

If any individual element is classified as a fail, the dwelling will be recorded as a fail. It is possible for an element in a dwelling to be reported as an acceptable fail if it does not achieve the stated standard and cannot be improved because of the reasons listed below. This relates to individual elements only and not the dwelling as a whole.

The local interpretation of acceptable fails that are required clarification are identified in Appendix two.

2.2.1 Cost of Remedy

If Trivallis decides that the cost of improving an element, to achieve the required standard, is not cost effective, the improvement will not be carried out and will be the secondary element will be postponed. e.g. Structural work needed to increase size of a kitchen.

2.2.2 Timing of Remedy

If Trivallis decides that improving a secondary element, to achieve the required standard, is not practical at a moment in time, the improvement will be postponed until the primary element fails e.g. Installation of non-slip floor in kitchen/bathroom. These elements will be remedied through the WHQS Planned Maintenance Programme.

2.2.3 Residents' Choice

If a tenant refuses work, with the exception of health and safety requirements, electrical test and any category 1 hazards identified, Trivallis will record this as an acceptable fail. These elements will be renewed when the property next becomes void or if the tenant contacts Trivallis and requests the improvement. After, following the "no access" procedure, if Trivallis is unable to gain access to assess an element that is recorded as due for renewal, the element will be shown in SAM Client as a remaining life of -1, and an acceptable fail of Residents Choice.

2.2.4 Physical Constraint

If Trivallis are unable to complete works due to physical restrictions, the element will be recorded as an acceptable fail. An example would be providing a 10m² level area in the garden or a kitchen is too small – if there is insufficient room to create this, then Trivallis will deem this as an acceptable fail.

2.3 Data Collection

2.3.1 Stock Condition Surveys

Trivallis undertake surveys to assess the condition of their stock and the remaining life of all elements are assessed by surveyors. There is a planned 5 year rolling programme to survey 20% of the stock each year (approx. 2000 dwellings a year). The information is recorded on SAM mobile and is updated electronically into the SAM Client database.

2.3.2 Completion of Elements on Planned Programmes

Trivallis operates planned programmes to replace/improve internal and external elements of housing stock. All completions are updated on the SAM Client data base and the remaining life amended in accordance with the lifecycle of the element.

2.4 Data Storage

2.4.1 SAM Software

Trivallis stores all its stock condition information in SAM (Strategic Asset Management), which is an integrated asset management package and provides a suite of tools to facilitate the management of property assets.

Surveys are created in-house and customised to suit our needs. Data from stock condition surveys and completions are input in bulk electronically.

2.5 WHQS Progress and Reporting

2.5.1 SAM - WHQS Module

Trivallis monitors and reports WHQS compliance via the WHQS Module within SAM. The module is bespoke to Trivallis; it was developed and tailored to ensure that our local standard can be accurately reported. The detail of how the WHQS data is incorporated into the module is identified in Appendix one.

In-built reporting enables returns (Welsh Government) to be prepared quickly and efficiently taking into account decisions concerning tenant refusals, no access and deferred improvement works. A property may contain one or more elements which are classified as an acceptable fail under the WHQS guidance. As a result, 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 statistical return to the Welsh Government. In such cases the main reason for that acceptable fail will be recorded according to the hierarchical order below: -

1. Resident Choice
2. Physical Constraint
3. Timing of Remedy
4. Cost of Remedy

2.6 Independent Verification

Trivallis aim to undertake verification checks on the collation, recording and reporting of all stock data on a 3-year cycle. External verifiers will undertake these works.

2.7 Annual Financial Investment

The 30-year business plan is produced from the Stock Condition Surveys and is held in SAM. The SAM data base is used to produce volumes and costs to sustain WHQS and is approved by Board on an annual basis. Life cycle costs are reviewed annually by Trivallis and amended in SAM in order to update the 30-year business plan. All WHQS work will be procured in compliance with the Procurement, Tender and Contracting Procedure.

2.8 Community Benefits

Trivallis aims to secure a commitment to the delivery of community benefits from all of its Procurement and tender activities, and as a result a community benefits question attracts a high weighting in our award criteria within our tenders. Trivallis does not dictate the offering that suppliers may make but in general is seeking to secure work experience/placements, training/apprentice opportunities, paid employment, sponsorship, charitable donations, and participation in Give & Gain or BiTC events.

3.0 Inclusion and Diversity

Trivallis aims to provide a service that meets the diverse needs of service users regardless of a person's age, disability, gender, pregnancy, race, religion or sexuality.

We will ensure all staff, customers, contractors and community groups are aware of our equality policy through effective communication.

We will encourage the involvement of Trivallis' diverse communities in decision making and service development through partnerships at all levels.

4.0 Equal Opportunities

This policy is aims to ensure that all customers have the opportunity to be involved and have their say about the services that we provide.

5.0 Risk Management

Risks and opportunities affecting WHQS compliance have been considered and used to develop this policy. Regular reviews of current risks are undertaken, and the policy is regularly assessed for compliance.

6.0 Policy Monitoring

Trivallis will put in place arrangements to ensure that the systems and procedures outlined in this document are carried out.

Trivallis will review the policy on an annual basis and, where difficulties or problems are encountered, make amendments as necessary to ensure that the systems and procedures can be implemented effectively.

7.0 Welsh Language

Trivallis has adopted the principle that, in the conduct of public business in Wales, it will treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality. This will be in accordance with Trivallis Welsh Language Scheme.

The following appendix identifies how WHQS compliance is mapped via SAM in order to undertake a robust reporting mechanism: -

Part 1: In a good state of repair	MAPPING
a) Structurally stable and free from disrepair	HHSRS Structural Collapse - automatic mapping
b) Free from damp	HHSRS Damp and Mould - automatic mapping
Part 2: Safe and secure	
Stairs and Landings	
a) Stairs must have at least one handrail and not be considered hazardous	HHSRS Falling on Stairs - automatic mapping
Kitchens & Bathrooms	
b) The kitchen should have adequate space for appliances	Is there lack of space for appliances? - SCS question mapped
c) The kitchen should be a well organised working area with adequate work surfaces for resting pans and food preparation	Well organised and adequate working area? - SCS question mapped
d) The kitchen should have sufficient storage to meet the needs of the residents	Does the kitchen have sufficient storage? - SCS question mapped
e) The kitchen should have sufficient and conveniently located power sockets	Sufficient and convenient power sockets? - SCS question mapped
<i>f) The dwelling should have flooring suitably designed for kitchens and bathrooms, and, where necessary, flooring suitable for use in wet areas</i>	
f1) Kitchens - The dwelling should have flooring suitably designed and, where necessary, flooring suitable for use in wet areas	Kitchen non slip floor fitted. - SCS question mapped
f2) Bathrooms - The dwelling should have flooring suitably designed and, where necessary, flooring suitable for use in wet areas	Bathroom non slip floor fitted. - SCS question mapped
Fire Escape	
g) The dwelling should have an external fire escape	External fire escape? - FRA mapped
h) The dwelling must have adequate fire alarms and equipment	Install fire alarm? - FRA mapped
i) The dwelling should have an escape route from the rooms used for sleeping to an external door which does not pass through another room	Escape route from bedroom to landing. - SCS question mapped
j) The dwelling must have a suitably located, mains powered, smoke alarm (with a backup secondary power source such as a sealed lithium battery) on each floor	Smoke detectors on each floor? - SCS question mapped
k) The dwelling should not have windows fitted with locks with an automatic locking action in rooms used for sleeping	Are bedroom windows locked without automatic locking? - SCS question mapped
Electrical Installations, Heating Installations and Appliances	
l) The gas, solid fuel or oil service and safety inspection certificate must be current. All heating installations and appliances must be checked and certified safe by an appropriately qualified person at least annually and as required by law	Gas Servicing on SAM - automatic mapping
m) Electrical lighting and power installations must be checked and certified safe by an appropriately qualified person at least every 10 years as a minimum	EICR certs updated on SAM - automatic mapping
Security	
n) The dwelling must have a reasonable level of physical security	Reasonable level of physical security? - SCS question mapped
Outside the Dwelling	
o) All opportunities must be taken to make gardens safe and suitable for young children to play in, easy to maintain and reasonably	Is the garden safe and suitable for children? - SCS question mapped
Part 3: Adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated	
a) Heating systems must be reasonably economical to run and capable of heating the whole of the dwelling to a comfortable level in normal weather conditions	SAP <65 energy module - automatic mapping
b) External doors and windows must be sufficiently well fitting so that they do not cause severe draughts	External doors and windows sufficiently fitted to avoid draughts? SCS question mapped
c) The main entrance door should not open directly into the living room	Is living room separated from front door? - SCS question mapped
d) The hot water tank must be effectively insulated	RDSAP cylinder <0, Insulation = Jacket 80mm - automatic mapping
<i>e) Kitchens and bathrooms should have an adequate amount of mechanical ventilation</i>	
e1) Kitchens - should have an adequate amount of mechanical ventilation	Install kitchen fan? - SCS question mapped
e2) Bathrooms - should have an adequate amount of mechanical ventilation	Install bathroom fan? - SCS question mapped

Part 4: Contain up-to-date kitchens and bathrooms	
Kitchens	
a) The dwelling must have a kitchen 15 years old or less unless it is in good condition	Kitchen REM =<1
Washing and Drying Clothes	
b) The dwelling should have adequate facilities for washing, drying and airing clothes	Adequate facilities for drying/airing clothes? - SCS question mapped
Bathroom and WC Facilities	
c) The bathroom and WC facilities must be 25 years old or less, unless it is in good condition	Bathroom REM =<1
d) The dwelling must have a bathroom with a bath and shower which may be an over bath shower	Is there an overbath or level access shower? - SCS question mapped
Part 5: Well managed	
a) Is the dwelling fairly, efficiently and well managed	Yes - planned programmes/responsive maintenance
Part 6: Located in attractive and safe environments	
a) All roads and footpaths should be accessible and provide safety	Accessible and safe roads/footpaths? - SCS question mapped
b) There should be soft and hard landscaping	Does the area have soft and hard landscaping? - SCS question mapped
c) Street lighting should be adequate	Does the area have adequate street lighting? - SCS question mapped
d) There should be safe play areas for young children	Does the area have safe play areas for children? - SCS question mapped
e) Communal areas should be practical and maintainable	Communal areas practicable and maintainable? - SCS question mapped
f) The dwelling should have a clearly defined boundary	Is the boundary clearly defined? - SCS question mapped
g) Utilities should be clearly identified	SCS question mapped
h) Car parking should also be practically located and should be clearly visible to residents	Is car parking practicable and clearly visible? - SCS question mapped
Part 7: Suit the specific requirements of the household	
a) The dwelling should provide sufficient space for everyday living	HHSRS question - Overcrowding
b) The dwelling should have enough storage both internally and externally	Is internal/external storage space adequate? SCS question mapped
c) The dwelling layout should meet the specific cultural needs of the tenants	Does the layout meet the cultural needs? - SCS question mapped
d) All necessary physical aids required by the residents should be provided	Are there necessary physical aids? - SCS question mapped
e) Dwellings with a garden should have a directly accessible, reasonably sized level area	10 m2 level area directly from the house? - SCS question mapped
f) The dwelling should have paved access to any garden gate and drying line	Is there a paved access to drying line and gate? - SCS question mapped

Appendix Two – Interpretation of acceptable fails

The Standard – 4b the dwelling should have adequate facilities for washing, drying/airing clothes.

According to the guidance '*In dwellings where a hot water tank is present, there should be a heated airing cupboard with at least 1m² of internal slatted shelving provided*'.

Trivallis have concluded that where there isn't a hot water tank i.e. a combi boiler, an airing cupboard is not required.

If there is a space for a washing machine, an external drying line and room for an internal clothes rack, Trivallis have concluded that item 4(b) of the Standard has been satisfied and is therefore a Pass.

The Standard – 2n the dwelling must have a reasonable level of physical security and 2k the dwelling should not have windows fitted with locks in bedrooms

Trivallis have concluded that it is a case of balancing Fire Safety (2k) and Security (2n).

If the bedroom is on a ground floor and the window is not required to act as a fire escape route, then window locks are preferred.

If the bedroom is on an upper floor and not easily accessible to entry or required to act as a fire escape route, then no locking mechanism is preferred.

Trivallis have concluded that either question can be reported as an 'Acceptable Fail - Timing' as both are Secondary elements.

The Standard – 3e Kitchens and bathrooms should have an adequate amount of ventilation

If a property has no mechanical fans or PIV present, but does not experience condensation issues and are not wanted by the tenant – is this property recorded as a Resident Choice acceptable fail or is it deemed not to be a fail at all because the ventilation in the property is adequate?

Trivallis have concluded that as the requirement is to have 'an adequate amount of mechanical ventilation' and does not just to be free from condensation, it should be reported as an Acceptable Fail (as it is a Secondary element) and if an improvement is refused by the tenant then AF - Residents' Choice. This can then be reviewed at change of tenancy as the next occupants may have a different lifestyle and create increased condensation issues.

Trivallis' guidance in accordance with Building Regulations is detailed below: -

1. Building Regulations would deem a PIV adequate, as the only means of mechanical ventilation in a property, where the kitchen and bathroom has windows that open.
2. If a property has a PIV, mechanical extraction in the kitchen and the bathroom has no mechanical extraction and no window; then an additional mechanical extraction unit should be fitted in the bathroom.
3. If a property has a PIV, mechanical extraction in the bathroom and the kitchen has no mechanical extraction and no window; then an additional mechanical extraction unit should be fitted in the kitchen.

4. Properties without a PIV unit should have mechanical extraction fitted in the bathroom and kitchen; irrespective of whether the windows can be opened or not.
5. The two-door rule applies to the fitting of a PIV. Where a PIV is two or more doors away from the kitchen or bathroom. These rooms will require separate mechanical extraction.