

# Design and quality standards

April 2007



**AFFORDABLE HOMES STRONG COMMUNITIES**



April 2007

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# Introduction

## Context

During the second part of 2006, the Housing Corporation established a Future Investment Approaches working group to help us formulate proposals for revising our funding framework. The working group included the National Housing Federation, the Home Builders Federation, the Building Research Establishment, the Council of Mortgage Lenders, housing associations and private developers – in tandem we contacted local authorities and regional assemblies. The group was invited to assist the Corporation identify how further flexibilities and freedoms might be introduced to help speed up supply and improve value for money in the provision of affordable housing, whilst maintaining good design and quality standards. The remit included contributing to a review of the Corporation's Scheme Development Standards (SDS).

The review of SDS concluded that the content of the Standards could be streamlined and modernised in the light of changes to Building Regulations that had taken place since 2003 and the advent of the Code for Sustainable Homes in 2006. The increasing relevance of the Corporation's Standards within a mixed market, which now includes developers and house builders, underpins the need for the Standards to be expressed in terms of performance that can be readily understood and widely adopted. Procedural compliance matters currently covered within the SDS are being separately reviewed and will be

transferred to the Corporation's Capital Funding Guide.

In keeping with the change of approach and in order to highlight this change more widely, the Corporation has decided to issue its new and restructured Standards under the new title of the Housing Corporation's Design and Quality Standards. SDS will be phased out in parallel with the completion of the National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP) 2006-08.

## Purpose

The Design and Quality Standards (D&QS) sets out the Corporation's requirements and recommendations for all new homes which receive Social Housing Grant (SHG):

- the new core performance standards define the minima that is expected in return for the public funds invested by way of SHG;
- the Special Provisions Annex sets out for specified categories, classifications or types of accommodation an appropriate standard of design and quality that should be achieved; and
- the Recommendations Annex sets out further enhanced standards that will improve the design and quality of schemes and subsequently find reflection in the Corporation's assessment of affordable housing providers through the Value for Grant Comparator tool. Some enhanced aspects will

be reflected in the Grant Index during the bid assessment process and improve the value for money ranking.

To the extent that it sets out performance criteria and how these may be addressed, our D&QS is a guide for affordable housing providers, both public and private, together with their partners, consultants and the rest of the contributing supply chain. Similarly, by setting out recommendations it provides some insight into the possible future direction of travel for mandatory standards.

The D&QS is not intended to be used as part of any 'employer's requirements' within a contractual framework. Some aspects of the mandatory requirements may need reference to other published guidelines to ensure proper interpretation. If it is intended to refer to design and quality aspects contained in the D&QS within a contractual framework, then such references should be accompanied by the employer's intended interpretation in order to make clear what particular performance is expected.

If affordable housing providers wish to seek advice on the Corporation's interpretation of any aspect of standards they should contact the Innovation and Development Manager of the relevant regional office of the Corporation.

## Format

The D&QS consists of three sections plus annexes:

<b>Section 1:</b>	Core standards
<b>Section 2:</b>	Applicability
<b>Section 3:</b>	Compliance
<b>Annex 1:</b>	Special provisions
<b>Annex 2:</b>	Recommendations
<b>Annex 3:</b>	Further reading and references

# Section 1: Core standards

## Prime expectation

Affordable housing providers should produce well-designed, good quality housing to meet identified needs in places where people want to live.

Three core performance standards underpin the achievement of this prime expectation. In determining the extent to which this has been met the Housing Corporation will assess achievement against the following aspects:

- **Internal environment**
  - size
  - layout
  - service provision
- **Sustainability**
  - Code for Sustainable Homes
- **External environment**
  - Building for Life

## 1 Internal environment

### Core performance standard

Internal environments should be comfortable, convenient, capable of sensibly accommodating the necessary furniture and equipment associated with specific room activities and be suitable for the particular needs of intended user groups.

### Performance measure

The performance measure stipulated for the internal environment core performance standard consists of fully meeting minimum scores for three aspects of the published Housing Quality

Indicators (HQIs). The specified HQI aspects and stipulated minimum scores to be met are as follows:

HQI aspect	Minimum score required
Unit size	41
Unit layout	32
Unit services	22

Fully meeting the above performance measure for each individual home funded by grant within development will be deemed to satisfy the internal environment core performance standard. However, in meeting the HQI unit layout minimum score, affordable housing providers will be expected to ensure that internal and external storage provision at least meets the requirements specified for the occupancy and does not fall short in any aspect. Storage provision is a common cause of concern identified on the Corporation's Impact Assessment visits and will be subject to particular scrutiny in future.

## 2 Sustainability

### Core performance standard

New homes should be designed and constructed in a sustainable manner using products and processes that reduce environmental impact, better adapt to climate change, with lower running costs and incorporating features that enhance the health and well-being of constructors, occupiers and the wider community.

### Performance measure

The performance measure stipulated for the sustainability core performance standard consists of fully meeting a prescribed minimum standard as set out in the published Code for Sustainable Homes. The prescribed minimum standard to be met is as follows:

Code Standard	Incorporating
Level 3 (***)	Full points for Security from Category 8

Fully meeting the above performance measure for the whole of the development will be deemed to satisfy the sustainability core performance standard. Affordable housing providers are encouraged to utilise the available four additional Code points for Lifetime Homes provision within the Code.

## 3 External environment

### Core performance standard

The development of new homes should be undertaken in a manner which delivers great places to live, creates well-mixed and integrated communities and provides an appropriate balance between private and public open space.

### Performance measure

The performance measure stipulated for the external environment core performance

standard consists of positively addressing a number of design aspects using the Building for Life publication Delivering Great Places to Live – Twenty Questions You Need to Answer as the Touchstone of Reasonableness. The prescribed minimum standard to be met is as follows:

Scenario	Minimum commitment
Rural and street-fronted infill	50% positive response (10 out of 20)
All other developments	60% positive response (12 out of 20)

Fully meeting the above performance measure for the relevant category of development will be deemed to satisfy the external environment core performance standard.

### Rural housing

The core standards set out above for new-build general needs apply as a minimum requirement for homes provided in rural locations.

The impact of planning restrictions may require the use of local materials, vernacular and traditional crafts. Together with the lack of a full range of main services in some areas, this may cause the costs of development to be higher than in other non-rural locations. These issues need to be considered on an individual case basis and will not automatically be regarded as valid reasons for not achieving core standards.

The following publication may be useful in setting out design considerations to be addressed and contains several case studies: *Creating a Sense of Place: A Design Guide*, published by Business in the Community and freely downloadable from: [www.bitc.org.uk/take\\_action/in\\_the\\_community/rural\\_action/affordable\\_rural.html](http://www.bitc.org.uk/take_action/in_the_community/rural_action/affordable_rural.html)

### **BME provision**

The core standards set out above for new-build general needs apply as a minimum requirement for homes provided for black and minority ethnic (BME) residents.

Housing design should take account of the need to accommodate as wide and as diverse user groups as practicable. Multicultural societies need designs that reflect diverse living options.

The following publication may be useful in setting out design considerations to be addressed: *Accommodating Diversity – Housing Design in a Multicultural Society* Second Edition, published by the National Housing Federation and Home Housing Trust (ISBN 0 86297 383 X).

# Section 2: Applicability

## General

For clarity the new core standards have been predicated upon new-build general needs provision. This is by far the majority of the provision that we fund.

The core standards will also apply to other new-build provision where the accommodation to be provided mirrors that of general needs provision in all aspects other than by classification or codification. This provision will include, but is not limited to:

- wheelchair-user housing;
- higher density family housing;
- rural housing; and
- BME provision.

Some of these categories or types of accommodation need additional consideration and may need to have features over and above the core standards. Guidance on additional standards to be applied to wheelchair-user housing and higher density family housing provision is set out in the Special Provisions Annex 1.

The core standards will apply in part, together with additional requirements and features set out in the Special Provisions Annex 1, to the following housing provision:

- housing for older people; and
- purpose-designed supported housing.

The core standards will apply in part to low-cost home ownership (LCHO) in respect of the need to achieve a Sustainability standard of at least Level 3 (\*\*\*) of the Code for Sustainable Homes. In addition, compliance with internal and external environment aspects of the general needs core standards will avoid adverse value-for-money assessments by the Corporation when considering funding or other support. It is therefore in the interest of affordable housing providers to ensure that the standard of provision for LCHO does not fall below that of equivalent homes for rent.

The core standards will apply in part to rehabilitation and temporary social housing 15 to 29-year lease schemes in respect of the internal environment aspects. Other requirements in respect of Sustainability are set out in Special Provisions Annex 1. These will supplement these standards.

The core standards will not apply to the temporary social housing two to 14-year lease category. This category of housing provision is of a nature that some aspects of the core standards cannot reasonably be applied. Guidance on appropriate standards to be applied to this category is set out in the Special Provisions Annex 1.

	NB Gen	NB HD family	NB Wheel Chair	NB Rural	NB BME	Older people	NB Supported	NB LCHO	RH & TSH 15-29	TSH 2-14
<b>Int</b>	Mand	Mand	Mand	Mand	Mand	No	No	Incen	Mand	No
<b>Sus</b>	Mand	Mand	Mand	Mand	Mand	No	No	Mand	Mand	No
<b>Ext</b>	Mand	Mand	Mand	Mand	Mand	Mand	Mand	Mand	Incen	No
<b>Add</b>	Incen	Mand	Mand	Incen	Incen	Mand	Mand	Incen	Incen	No
<b>Alt</b>	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
<b>Guide</b>	No	Guide	Guide	Guide	Guide	Guide	Guide	No	No	No

### Key

- Int** = Internal environment core standards apply
- Ext** = External environment core standards apply
- Alt** = Alternative standards apply
- Sus** = Sustainability core standards apply
- Add** = Additional specific standards apply

- Mand** = Mandatory
- Incen** = Incentivised through the Grant Index
- Guide** = Guidance applies

### Waivers

The refocus on core standards inherent in this new Design and Quality Standards publication allows a new approach to the Corporation’s position on the issuing of waivers. Any previous national or regional arrangements relating to waivers in respect of requirements contained in Scheme Development Standards will not apply to schemes being developed in accordance with these design and quality standards.

By focusing on performance standards, rather than on numerous individual essential items, the previously perceived need for waivers should no longer exist. The Corporation will retain the discretion to issue waivers in exceptional circumstances, but the presumption should be that they will not be granted.

In order to track the frequency of waivers we will monitor waiver requests. The incidence of waivers affecting design or quality will be recorded and used as part of the quality output performance

assessment of individual affordable housing providers.

In the case of compliance with the Code for Sustainable Homes, the Corporation has been granted special dispensation to issue waivers for the grant-supported Section 106 element of schemes targeted at the private market by developers, where the grant-funded element forms only a small proportion of the developer's overall scheme. The Corporation will use this dispensation only in exceptional circumstances and where there are other benefits to funding. The exercise of this discretion is required to be recorded, monitored and reported to Communities and Local Government on a regular basis. The Corporation reserves the right not to exercise this discretion on an individual scheme basis. The Corporation's decision will be final.

# Section 3: Compliance

## Housing Quality Indicators

A revised Version 4 of the HQI methodology and calculator will apply to all grant-funded developments contained within the 2008-11 National Affordable Housing Programme. The revised version includes amended sections and scoring recalibrations to reflect the approach adopted in this new Design and Quality Standards publication more adequately. The completion of HQI assessments by affordable housing providers will continue to be a mandatory requirement under the D&QS as was the case for SDS.

The previous version of HQIs will be phased out in parallel with the completion of the NAHP 2006-08<sup>1</sup>.

Due to the changes and recalibration undertaken, great care will need to be exercised in comparing aspects of developments scored under the new HQIs and historical HQI data. For example, under the new sustainability indicator, EcoHomes 'very good' will score 45 whereas the previous version would have returned a score of 71.

## Assurance of attainment

A new feature introduced to run alongside this new Design and Quality Standards publication is the requirement to seek assurance of attainment for all aspects of the core standards.

From 1 April 2008 enhanced assurance will be required for all grant-funded developments contained within the 2008-11 NAHP and subsequent competitions for grant funding by the Corporation.

The Corporation will require independent certification of attainment for each of the core standards by the following means:

### Internal environment

- for RSLs the checks undertaken by independent auditors as part of the self-compliance process will be expanded to include certification in respect of the Housing Quality Indicator scores achieved;
- for unregistered bodies the checks undertaken by Independent Certifiers under the Grant Agreement process already encompass attainment of the contracted standards which include HQIs.

### Sustainability

- the Code for Sustainable Homes requires that certification by Building Research Establishment (BRE) accredited assessors takes place in two stages – an interim certificate at design stage and a final certificate at pre-completion stage. The Corporation will rely upon these statutory requirements.

<sup>1</sup> See [www.housingcorp-online.org/HC/HELP/Acrobat/HQI\\_Formv31\\_Guidance\\_Sept\\_2006.pdf](http://www.housingcorp-online.org/HC/HELP/Acrobat/HQI_Formv31_Guidance_Sept_2006.pdf)

## External environment

- for RSLs the checks undertaken by independent auditors as part of the self-compliance process will be expanded to include certification in respect of the reasonableness of the number of design aspects positively addressed using the Building for Life publication *Delivering Great Places to Live – Twenty Questions You Need to Answer*;
- for unregistered bodies the checks undertaken by Independent Certifiers under the Grant Agreement process will be expanded in the same way as above.

The enhanced independent certification set out above in respect of Building for Life criteria and HQIs should be undertaken by suitably qualified individuals who are competent to undertake the required assessments. The presumption will be that those undertaking assessments using the Building for Life criteria will have undergone training by CABI, Design for Homes, English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation or other recognised experts in the field. Similarly, for the HQI assessments the presumption will be that assessors have undergone some training or can otherwise demonstrate expertise. The Corporation will reserve the right to require evidence of competence.

# Annex 1

## Special provisions

### Scope

The scope of this annex is wide ranging. It endeavours to set out – for specified categories, classifications or types of accommodation – an appropriate standard of design and quality that should be achieved. The categories, classifications and types of accommodation covered under special provisions are:

- higher density family housing;
- housing for older people;
- wheelchair-user housing;
- supported housing;
- rehabilitation; and
- temporary social housing.

### Approach

The approach adopted varies according to category – some being covered by reference to specific standards, some by reference to existing toolkits and some by reference to good practice and case studies. Our goal is to be in a position to have specific guidance and case studies available for all the specified categories or types of accommodation within this Annex. Whilst some is already available, some will need to be commissioned over the next two years to supplement the current guidance. In the short term we will use what we regard as the best available guidance to underpin this Special Provisions Annex.

## Higher density family housing

Specific standards apply to this category.

### Definitions

The London Housing Federation's publication Higher Density Housing for Families: A Design and Specification Guide (2004) defines higher density as family homes at more than 80 dwellings per hectare or 250 habitable rooms per hectare. Family housing is defined as two-bedroom, three-person homes or over. Families are households with at least one child under 18 years old.

The East Thames Group has published a freely available web-based Higher Density Toolkit (2006) which defines higher density as including all schemes over 70 dwellings per hectare. The toolkit contains guidance and technical notes outlining the approach to be adopted in calculating net housing density.

### Core standards

The core standards set out above in Section 1 apply as a minimum requirement for higher density family housing. However, the core standards alone will be insufficient to address the additional design and management considerations associated with successful higher density family provision.

## Additional standards

In order to address the factors affecting higher density housing for families, affordable housing providers should additionally comply with the principles set out in the LHF publication Higher Density Housing for Families: A Design and Specification Guide, mentioned above.

In addition, schemes comprising over 20 units of accommodation with densities over 70 dwellings per hectare, providing family housing should undertake the web-based self-assessment evaluation freely available via:  
[www.east-thames.co.uk/highdensity/pages/overview/the\\_toolkit.asp](http://www.east-thames.co.uk/highdensity/pages/overview/the_toolkit.asp)

Results of the evaluation (received back by return e-mail) should not include total negative results exceeding 25%. Copies of the assessment should be retained for audit purposes.

## Housing for older people

Specific standards apply to this category.

### Definitions

Housing Corporation Regulatory Circular 03/04 issued in April 2004 sets out the definitions for housing for older persons. There are three types of housing for older people:

- housing for older people (all special design features);
- housing for older people (some special design features); and
- designated supported housing for older people.

Properties should be described as housing for older people if they are intended for older people (regardless of the actual characteristics of each tenant) and they either incorporate the range of basic facilities and special design features set out below or are specially designated supported housing for older people. The distinctive design features should be over and above Lifetime Homes adaptations to general needs properties.

### Housing for older people (all special design features)

Remodelled or purpose-built grouped housing that has all the basic facilities and all special design features intended to enable people to live there for their lifetimes. All the following requirements have to be met:

#### Basic facilities

The scheme or main building must have basic facilities of a laundry for residents and/or washing machines in living units, or provision for washing machines to be installed. The scheme must also have a communal lounge.

## Special design features

- The whole scheme, including entrances and the buildings that comprise it must be designed to wheelchair-user standards;
- Living units must have walk-in showers or bathrooms, adapted for people with mobility problems or wheelchair users;
- Bathrooms in living units that are wheelchair standard must meet the criteria for adapted bathrooms;
- Living units must have kitchens that are designed to wheelchair standards;
- The scheme must have a bathroom with provision for assisted bathing; and
- If there is more than one storey there must be a lift.

The needs of less active older people are such that application of general needs-based Internal Environment core standards would be inappropriate at addressing the particular design and management considerations associated with the successful provision of this type of housing. The balance of provision between private and communal is important and should reflect the needs of the particular community being served.

Useful guidance on elemental design is provided in Design Guide for the Development of New Build Accommodation for Older People, by PRP Architects and published by the Abbeyfield Society (ISBN 1 872 380 468). Section three of the guide offers a range of well-designed flat layouts and accompanying commentary on design issues,

including configurations for economic planning and checklists for communal, recreational and ancillary accommodation.

Similarly, the Sustainability element of the core standards cannot be applied to this type of housing since the Code for Sustainable Homes is not currently designed to apply to housing provision with integral communal facilities.

However, the External Environment element of the core standards will apply to this type of housing.

## Housing for older people (some special design features)

Remodelled or purpose-built grouped housing that has all the basic facilities and at least one or more of the special design features listed below. Residents must have access to support services to enable them to live there for their lifetimes. In addition, if there is more than one storey there must be a lift.

### Basic facilities

The scheme or main building must have basic facilities of a laundry for residents and/or washing machines in living units, or provision for washing machines to be installed. The scheme must have a communal lounge.

## Special design features

- Living units should have walk-in showers or bathrooms adapted for people with mobility problems or wheelchair users;
- Bathrooms in wheelchair-standard living units should meet the criteria for adapted bathrooms; and
- The living units, the entrance area into the building and communal areas should be designed to wheelchair-user standards.

The needs of less active older people are such that application of general needs based Internal Environment core standards would be inappropriate at addressing the particular design and management considerations associated with the successful provision of this type of housing. The balance of provision between private and communal is important and should reflect the needs of the particular community being served.

Useful guidance on elemental design is provided within the following publication: Design Guide – For the Development of New Build Accommodation for Older People, written by PRP Architects and published by the Abbeyfield Society (ISBN 1 872 380 468).

Section three of the guide offers a range of well-designed flat layouts and accompanying commentary on design issues, including configurations for economic planning and checklists for communal, recreational and ancillary accommodation.

Similarly, the Sustainability element of the core standards cannot be applied to this type of housing since the Code for Sustainable Homes is not currently designed to apply to housing provision with integral communal facilities.

However, the External Environment element of the core standards will apply to this type of housing.

The following highly successful award-winning development represents an excellent example of good design of a scheme for older people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds:

### Colliers Gardens, Fishponds, Bristol

[www.designforhomes.org/hda/2006/complete/collgard.html](http://www.designforhomes.org/hda/2006/complete/collgard.html)

The following website is regularly updated and includes information and guides on design for extra care housing and housing for older people.

### Housing Learning Improvement Network, part of the Health and Social Care Change Agent Team Care Services Improvement Partnership

[www.changeagentteam.org.uk/index.cfm?pid=10](http://www.changeagentteam.org.uk/index.cfm?pid=10)

## Designated supported housing for older people

Buildings with none of the basic facilities or special design features listed above, but which provide accommodation designated for older people requiring support, with support services provided by the landlord or another organisation

will be classified as 'general needs' provision and all of the standards set out in Section 1: Core Standards will apply.

## Wheelchair-user housing

Specific standards apply to this category.

### Definitions

The term wheelchair-user housing referred to in this document is used to describe self-contained accommodation designed for independent living of physically disabled people and wheelchair users.

### Core standards

The Sustainability and External Environment elements of the core standards, set out in Section 1 above for new-build general needs, apply as minimum requirements.

The Internal Environment performance standard of the core standards sets out the outcome to be achieved, but the core standard performance measures are insufficient for two of the three specified HQI aspects, namely:

- unit size; and
- unit layout.

These two aspects need to achieve significantly higher performance levels than the specified HQI minima to ensure that the accommodation provided is capable of sensibly accommodating

the necessary furniture and equipment associated with specific room activities and suitable for the particular needs of wheelchair users.

## Additional standards

The higher performance levels required will be satisfied by full compliance with the requirements set out in the following publication:

Wheelchair Housing Design Guide, Second Edition by Stephen Thorpe and Habinteg Housing Association, published by BRE Press. (ISBN 1 86081 897 8). [www.brepress.com](http://www.brepress.com)

## Supported housing

Specific standards apply to this category.

### Definitions

Housing Corporation Regulatory Circular 03/04, issued in April 2004, sets out the definitions for supported housing. There are two types of supported housing:

- purpose-designed supported housing; and
- designated supported housing.

The term supported housing applies to purpose-designed or designated supported housing. The delivery of support under the Supporting People framework does not necessarily result in the

categorisation of housing as supported if the property is not purpose-designed or designated for a particular client group. In the absence of either of these two conditions, housing is general needs. The design features which distinguish the two types of supported housing are listed below.

### Purpose-designed supported housing

Buildings that are purpose-designed or remodelled to enable residents to adjust to independent living or to enable them to live independently and which require specific design features. There must be support services provided by the landlord or another organisation. As a minimum, a building or scheme must have the following:

#### Facilities

The scheme or main building must have basic facilities of a laundry for residents or washing machines in living units provided by the landlord. The scheme must also have a communal lounge.

#### Design features

The entrance area into the building, communal areas and some living units must be designed to wheelchair-user standards.

Good practice approaches are provided within the publication 21st Century Supported Housing: A Design Guide, published by the Housing Corporation, summer 2007. The guide includes case studies of good supported housing design

approaches for a variety of client groups. In particular the document gives guidance on the number of and type of shared facilities that should be provided depending on the number and type of residents housed.

The Sustainability element of the core standards cannot be applied to this type of housing since the Code for Sustainable Homes is not currently designed to apply to housing provision with integral communal facilities.

However, the External Environment element of the core standards will apply to this type of housing.

### Designated supported housing

Buildings with none of the facilities or design features listed above, but that are designated for a specific client group with support services in place to enable them to adjust to independent living or to enable them to live independently will be classified as general needs provision and all of the standards set out in Section 1: Core Standards will apply.

## Rehabilitation

Core standards apply in part.

### Definitions

The purchase and improvement/modernisation/conversion of an existing building to new

build equivalent standards, and the resulting accommodation has a design life (with proper maintenance and repair) of at least 30 years.

### Rehabilitation performance standards

The general presumption will be that the Internal Environment aspects of the new-build general needs core standards will apply equally to rehabilitation projects as will the associated performance measures.

Given the limited opportunities for redesign within the confines of an existing structure, it is accepted that there will be instances where some shortfall against the performance measures will be unavoidable. Where such a shortfall exists the need for a specific waiver from the Corporation will not be required so long as the affordable housing provider is able to demonstrate as part of any subsequent compliance audit that:

- it has properly considered full compliance with the relevant core standard but the costs of compliance were shown to be disproportionate to the benefits achievable; and
- the resultant homes were, after due consideration by the provider's housing manager, regarded as suitable for the intended user groups.

The issue of Sustainability needs to be considered separately from the levels associated with the new-build general needs core standards. The Code for Sustainable Homes, which forms the back-bone

of the Corporation's new-build core standards, does not apply to rehabilitation projects. In order to address Sustainability issues the Corporation has modified HQI Version 4 to include aspects that are relevant to rehabilitation. The general presumption will be that rehabilitation projects will achieve no less than 30 points within the HQI Sustainability profile. Whilst this is considerably less than the 45 points needed to achieve the equivalent of Code Level 3(\*\*\*) for new build, it does endeavour to set a benchmark that recognises the limitations of developing within an existing structure.

Good Practice Guide 155 – Energy Efficient Refurbishment of Existing Housing contains a useful opportunity matrix on page four of the Guide which highlights the type of improvement that may readily be linked with a particular opportunity.

It is accepted that the difficulties of applying the core standards in relation to External Environment are such that they should not apply to rehabilitation schemes.

### Temporary social housing

Specific standards apply to this category.

#### Definitions

A programme developed to help affordable housing providers bring into use at sub-market

rents, accommodation acquired on a temporary basis with a life of more than two but less than 30 years.

Temporary social housing (TSH) provision framework applies to:

**unimproved properties** – leased properties which require improvement/repair in order to meet the Corporation’s relevant specified TSH performance standards as set out below;

**improved properties** – leased dwellings recently refurbished or newly built, completed to a standard broadly equivalent with the relevant specified TSH performance standards as set out below. All properties that were built or refurbished within the two years prior to the signing of the lease are included in this category, as are other properties in such good condition that no works are required.

For TSH purposes it is the length of the unexpired lease that determines the relevant standard.

## Two to 14-year lease schemes

### TSH performance standards

Before occupation, dwellings must at least achieve the minimum housing standards specified by the Housing Corporation for temporary social housing and be suitable for the intended user group and appropriate for the period of the lease.

### TSH performance measures

Heating provided, combined with appropriate levels of ventilation and insulation.

Heating arrangements ensure that heat is well distributed within rooms.

Main living area and bathroom have fixed heating appliances.

Habitable rooms have at least facilities for portable heaters (not paraffin or bottled gas).

Openable window areas/background trickle ventilation provided.

Mechanical extract provided for rooms (e.g. basements) which are otherwise difficult to ventilate.

Effective remedial measures incorporated to eradicate dampness and serious condensation.

Electrical and gas installations certified as safe by qualified inspectors.

Lighting (natural and/or artificial) adequate for safety.

Staircases well lit with secure balustrades/handrails.

Floors generally level and suitable to receive floor coverings.

Floor coverings in kitchens and bathrooms hygienic, easy to clean and moisture resistant.

Safety glazing provided for window glass below 800mm, glazed doors and side screens.

Windows and balconies provide protection against falling for vulnerable occupants.

Where roof space is accessible, access is safe.

Doors to individual dwellings are sturdy, with mortise lock and suitable frame fixing.

Internal decorative surfaces in a serviceable condition as appropriate to the lease period.

External decorative surfaces in a serviceable condition as appropriate to the lease period.

Rooms capable of sensibly accommodating standard furniture associated with room activity.

Kitchen provides:

- food preparation area;
- serviced sink;
- hygienic and easily cleaned worktops;
- space and connections for cooker (cooker provided in shared accommodation); and
- at least two double socket outlets in addition to cooker point.

Kitchen fittings, serviceable and in a condition to cover the lease period without replacement.

Bathrooms provide:

- serviced wash hand basin, WC (or separate with additional basin) and a bath or shower.

In shared, sharing restricted to:

- bathroom (comprising one basin, WC and bath) per five sharers; and
- additional WC (separate with basin) provided where bathroom shared by three or more.

Sanitary fittings, serviceable and in condition to cover the lease period without replacement.

## Fifteen to 29-year lease schemes

### TSH performance standards

The TSH performance standards for 15 to 29-year lease schemes will be as described above for rehabilitation.

In addition such schemes should fully meet all of the performance measures set out for two to 14-year lease schemes above.

# Annex 2

## Design and quality standards: Recommendations

### Scope

This Annex sets out some key recommended, rather than mandatory standards. It is set out in two sections; the first dealing with general recommendations, the second dealing with a package of enhanced standards.

Where reference is made in this section to other publications, details of the publications are contained in Annex 3: Further Reading and References.

### General recommendations

#### Internal environment

Achieve a score of at least 60 for HQI Internal Environment.

Ensure that low-cost home ownership design sizes are at least equivalent to rental provision.

Ensure that internal and external storage space provision for all homes exceeds the HQI unit layout requirement for the designed occupancy.

In homes designed for families, ensure that there is an area where homework studies may be undertaken in private, away from other family activities.

Fully incorporate all of the 16 Lifetime Homes features into houses and apartments wherever practicable. Refer to [www.lifetimehomes.org.uk](http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk).

Ensure adequate space for ancillary equipment such as dishwasher, freezer, etc. without the need to reduce kitchen storage capacity.

#### Safety and security

Ensure that hot water taps to baths have a thermostatically (TMV) controlled supply.

Ensure that the principles of Housing Sight are incorporated wherever possible.

Ensure that the scheme design reflects advice obtained from local police architectural liaison officers/crime prevention design advisers prior to detailed planning stage.

Obtain Secured by Design certification wherever possible.

Ensure that the water supply rising main is sized (32mm min.) to allow future domestic sprinkler installation.

Ensure that a domestic sprinkler installation is fitted in group homes for vulnerable tenants following liaison with and advice from senior Fire Brigade officials.

## Lifts

Provide a communal lift to serve dwellings with entrances 7.5m above ground floor entrance level.

## Maintainability, durability and adaptability

Ensure that service installations have unobtrusive piping and ductwork with suitable access for inspection, routine maintenance and repair of components.

Ensure that an independent assessment of suitability for housing is carried out when conventional components are combined in innovative ways or when innovative building systems are used.

Ensure that the design of dwellings eases future internal remodelling, wherever possible by:

- full-span floor construction;
- non load-bearing internal walls; and
- floor/ceiling space service runs.

Ensure that the design of houses with pitched roofs facilitates loft conversion wherever possible by the initial provision of:

- clear loft area and of a size and height that will provide a habitable room; and
- extra space for new or extended stairs from existing landing area.

## External environment

Ensure that the principles set out in the Urban Design Compendium second edition are incorporated wherever possible

Ensure that the principles set out in Car Parking – What Works Where are incorporated in all developments.

Ensure that new developments can positively address 14 or more of the 20 Building for Life questions set out in Delivering Great Places to Live (12 or more out of 20 for rural or street-fronted infill schemes).

## Enhanced standards recommendations

The following package of enhanced standards may be usefully used in association with specific programmes of new homes. This initial package represents an example of the type and scale of enhancement that might be appropriate for wide-scale application.

Inclusion of all the above General Recommendations.

Extra points are achieved within the Code for Sustainable Homes for the following aspects:

- Flood risk Extra = > 0.5 points
- Water consumption Extra = > 1.5 point (external)
- Daylight Extra = > 4.0 points

- Lifetime Homes           Extra = > 4.0 points
- Cycle storage             Extra = > 1.2 points
- Considerate             Extra = > 1.1 points  
contractors

Commitment to undertake Master Planning in association with key stakeholders prior to developing scheme design proposals on all developments of 200 homes or more.

Ensure that the principles set out in It's Our Space – A Guide for Community Groups Working to Improve Public Space are encouraged and adopted in order to facilitate the future ongoing maintenance and management of the public realm.

The Corporation, in discussion with other stakeholders, may issue enhanced standards for specific programmes within the NAHP. Any such enhanced standards will be issued prior to scheme bidding.

# Annex 3

## Further reading and references

### Internal environment

#### Housing Quality Indicators

Methodology and calculator

V3.1: Applicable to pre-2008 NAHP schemes and transitional expectations

[www.housingcorp-online.org/HC/HELP/Acrobat/HQI\\_Formv31\\_Guidance\\_Sept\\_2006.pdf](http://www.housingcorp-online.org/HC/HELP/Acrobat/HQI_Formv31_Guidance_Sept_2006.pdf)

V4.0: Applicable to 2008-11 NAHP schemes

[www.housingcorp.gov.uk](http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk)

#### Plans that meet the standards

Plan compliance

[www.housingcorp.gov.uk/server/show/conWebDoc.1058](http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk/server/show/conWebDoc.1058)

#### Space, layout and storage (SHG 2006)

Size matrices and guidance

[www.swingacat.info/index.php](http://www.swingacat.info/index.php)

#### Standards and quality in development (NHF 1998)

Accommodating diversity (NHF 1998) Higher

Density Housing for Families: a Design and Specification Guide (LHF 2004)

No Parking: Making Low or Zero Parking Work On Higher Density Housing Schemes (LHF 2006)

National Housing Federation

Lion Court, 25 Procter Street, London, WC1V 6NY  
(020 7067 1010)

[www.housing.org.uk](http://www.housing.org.uk)

#### Lifetime Homes

Downloadable: [www.lifetimehomes.org.uk](http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk)

#### Housing sight

RNIB and the Welsh Assembly Government (Oct 2003)

(029 2045 0440)

ISBN 1 85878 600 2

[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

#### Preventing the dangers of scalding

Downloadable: [www.tmva.org.uk](http://www.tmva.org.uk)

See also Child Accident Prevention Trust:

[www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk)

#### Secured by Design

Downloadable: [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)

#### Safer Places

Downloadable: [www.crimereduction.gov.uk/activecommunities/activecommunities61.htm](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/activecommunities/activecommunities61.htm)

#### Domestic sprinklers

Downloadable: [www.firekills.gov.uk/protection/08.htm](http://www.firekills.gov.uk/protection/08.htm)

#### The Fire Prevention Handbook

Downloadable: [www.firekills.gov.uk/handbook/pdf/handbook-english.pdf](http://www.firekills.gov.uk/handbook/pdf/handbook-english.pdf)

#### Wheelchair Housing Design Guide, Second Edition.

IHS Technical Indexes, Willoughby Road, Bracknell, RG12 8FB (01344 328 038)

### Homes for the Third Age

published by E & FN Spon (ISBN 0 419 23120 X).

### Housing Corporation Regulatory Circular 03/04 issued April 2004

Sets out the definitions and required standards for  
Supported housing and Housing for Older People.

Downloadable: [www.housingcorp.gov.uk/server/  
show/conWebDoc.3057](http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk/server/show/conWebDoc.3057)

### Flexible Housing – A Guide (2006)

University of Sheffield sponsored by IGP grant  
from the Housing Corporation: [www.housingcorp.  
gov.uk](http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk)

## Sustainability

### Code for Sustainable Homes

[www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1162094](http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1162094)  
[www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/  
en/1115314116927.html](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/en/1115314116927.html)

### A Cost Review of the Code for Sustainable Homes (Jan 2007)

English Partnerships, 110 Buckingham Palace Road,  
London SW1W 9SA  
[www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/publications.  
htm#bestpractice](http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/publications.htm#bestpractice)

### Sustainable Homes

[www.sustainablehomes.co.uk](http://www.sustainablehomes.co.uk)

### Energy Efficiency – The guide

[www.est.org.uk/housingbuildings/localauthorities/  
theguide/england/intro](http://www.est.org.uk/housingbuildings/localauthorities/theguide/england/intro)

### One Million Sustainable Homes

[www.wwf.org.uk/sustainablehomes](http://www.wwf.org.uk/sustainablehomes)

### EcoHomes

[www.breeam.org/page.jsp?id=21](http://www.breeam.org/page.jsp?id=21)

### Energy Efficient Refurbishment of Existing Housing – GPG 155

### Energy Efficient Refurbishment of Existing Housing – Case Studies

### Refurbishing Dwellings with Solid Walls

### Refurbishing Cavity-walled Dwellings

Energy Efficiency Best Practice in Housing  
Helpline: 0845 120 7799  
[www.est.org.uk/bestpractice](http://www.est.org.uk/bestpractice)

### Green Guide to Housing Specification

[www.breeam.org/page.jsp?id=33](http://www.breeam.org/page.jsp?id=33)

### Accredited Construction Details for Part L – Energy Efficiency

Downloadable: [www.planningportal.gov.uk/  
england/professionals/en/1115314255826.html](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/en/1115314255826.html)

## External environment

Delivering Great Places to Live (Nov 2005)

[www.buildingforlife.org/buildingforlife.aspx?contentid=384&aspectid=15](http://www.buildingforlife.org/buildingforlife.aspx?contentid=384&aspectid=15)

Car Parking : What Works Where (2006)

Urban Design Compendium (2000)

English Partnerships, 110 Buckingham Palace Road,  
London SW1W 9SA

[www.englishpartnerships.co.uk](http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk)

Manual for Streets (March 2007)

Communities and Local Government and  
Department of Trade and Industry

[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

The Cost of Bad Design (June 2006)

Actions for Housing Growth (Feb 2007)

Housing Audit – EM, WM and SW (Feb 2007)

Housing Audit – NE, NW and YH (Nov 2005)

Housing Audit – London, SE and East (Oct 2004)

What It's Like to Live There (Nov 2005)

It's Our Space (Feb 2007)

Green Space Strategies (Jan 2004)

Building for Life Newsletter Issue 7: Storage Space  
(July 2006)

Design Champions (March 2006)

Building for Life Newsletter Issue 6:

Accommodating the Car (Feb 2006)

Winning House Designs (Nov 2005)

What Home Buyers Want (March 2005)

Better Neighbourhoods: Making Higher Densities  
Work (March 2005)

Design Review-ed Urban Housing (July 2004)

Design and Access Statements (Reprinted 2007)

Commission for Architecture and the Built  
Environment (CABE)

1 Kemble Street, London, WC2B 4AN (020 7070  
6700)

[www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk).

Housing Design Award Schemes (2006)

Design for Homes

[www.designforhomes.org/hda/index.html](http://www.designforhomes.org/hda/index.html)

## General

2012 Construction Commitments – Affordable  
Housing Sector

[www.housingcorp.gov.uk](http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk)

### Considerate Constructors' Scheme

Downloadable: [www.considerateconstructorsscheme.org.uk/htm-howtobe/index.html](http://www.considerateconstructorsscheme.org.uk/htm-howtobe/index.html)

### Construction Skills Certification Scheme

Downloadable: [www.cscs.uk.com/](http://www.cscs.uk.com/)

### Robust Details – Noise Attenuation

Downloadable: [www.robustdetails.com](http://www.robustdetails.com)

### The Housing Forum

[www.constructingexcellence.org.uk/sectorforums/housingforum/publications\\_results.jsp?category=546](http://www.constructingexcellence.org.uk/sectorforums/housingforum/publications_results.jsp?category=546)

### National Centre for Excellence in Housing

[www.homein.org/index.jsp](http://www.homein.org/index.jsp)

### *Independent accreditation and/or warranties*

#### The National House-Building Council (NHBC)

(01494 434477) [www.nhbc.co.uk](http://www.nhbc.co.uk)

#### Zurich Municipal Insurance

(01252 522000) [www.zurichmunicipal.co.uk](http://www.zurichmunicipal.co.uk)

#### Buildplan

(01245 348500) [www.farr.uk.com](http://www.farr.uk.com)

#### Building LifePlans Ltd

(0207 240 8070) [www.buildinglifepans.com](http://www.buildinglifepans.com)

### *Technical assessment of innovative approaches*

#### The Building Research Establishment (BRE)

(01923 664257) [www.bre.co.uk](http://www.bre.co.uk)

#### The British Board of Agreement (BBA)

(01923 665300) [www.bbacerts.co.uk](http://www.bbacerts.co.uk)

#### Building LifePlans Ltd

(020 7240 8070) [www.buildinglifepans.com](http://www.buildinglifepans.com)

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Internet: [www.housingcorp.gov.uk](http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk)

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109/119 Charles Street  
Leicester LE1 1FQ

31 Waterloo Road  
Wolverhampton WV1 4DJ

Westbrook Centre  
Block 1 Suite 1  
Milton Road  
Cambridge CB4 1YG

## LONDON

Maple House  
149 Tottenham Court Road  
London W1T 7BN

## NORTH

4th Floor  
One Piccadilly Gardens  
Manchester M1 1RG

1 Park Lane  
Leeds LS3 1EP

St. George's House  
Team Valley  
Kingsway Trading Estate  
Gateshead NE11 0NA

## SOUTH EAST

Leon House  
High Street  
Croydon CR9 1UH

## SOUTH WEST

Beaufort House  
51 New North Road  
Exeter EX4 4EP

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# Design and quality standards

## April 2007

This publication sets out what the Housing Corporation expects of and recommends for all new affordable homes that receive Social Housing Grant.

It explains performance criteria and how these may be addressed, and provides a guide for affordable housing providers, both public and private, together with their partners, consultants and the rest of the supply chain. It also offers a number of recommendations, which give some insight into the possible future direction of travel for mandatory standards.