

# Cardiff Council

## Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)

### Compliance Policy 2022—2023



Gweithio dros Gaerdydd, gweithio gyda'n gilydd  
Working for Cardiff, working together





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## Introduction

Housing is at the heart of a community's well-being, and Cardiff Council is committed to delivering and maintaining high quality, sustainable and affordable homes, particularly for those in most need.

## Stock profile

The Council housing stock is currently made up of 13,776 Council owned dwellings.

## Interpretation of WHQS reflecting, own resources, circumstances and Health & Safety requirements

The WHQS arose from the National Housing Strategy for Wales 'Better Homes for People in Wales'.

The Standard was developed by the Welsh Government to provide a common target standard for the condition of all housing in Wales.

The WHQS states that all households should have the opportunity to live in good quality homes that are:

- In a good state of repair.
- Safe and secure.
- Adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated.
- Contain up-to-date kitchens and bathrooms.
- Well managed.
- Located in attractive and safe environments.
- As far as possible suit the specific requirements of the household, e.g. specific disabilities .

The Council has followed the principles set out in the WHQS guidance document issued by the Welsh Government July 2008 and in September 2012 was the first Council in Wales to achieve full WHQS accreditation.



Following on from this achievement it is important to ensure the standard is maintained and investment is planned accordingly. The level of actual investment required will vary year on year and consequently detailed programmes of work require adjustment on a yearly basis. This is driven by our 30-year financial Business Plan model.

The Welsh Government has recognised that the standard cannot always be reached because of issues outside of the control of the Council. It has therefore introduced the concept of “Acceptable Fails” into the Welsh Housing Quality Standard guidance in order to recognise legitimate areas which would restrict a Council from reaching the required standard.

The dwellings that have elements that are deemed as acceptable fails, e.g. tenant refusal will be improved as properties become vacant or tenants change their minds.

Action plans are in place to reduce acceptable fails and this is supported by both financial and staff resource.





## **Interpretation and recording of ‘acceptable fails’**

As part of the declaration the Council has accepted that our tenants have the right to refuse improvement works to their homes where safety is not a primary concern. All tenants are actively encouraged to have improvements carried out. Where tenants have actively refused works e.g. kitchen and bathroom replacement we have asked tenants to sign waiver forms wherever possible.

On completion of individual schemes the properties where tenants did not accept the upgrade are placed on a “mop up” list. This list is addressed by either a mop up contract at a later date or when the tenant ends the tenancy and the dwelling becomes void.

In addition, the continually diminishing lists of each and every property remaining, which fall into the “Acceptable Fail” category have been located on an internal microsite. This approach results in all staff directly or indirectly involved with the Compliance process having unrestricted access to the data. This allows any member of staff to respond to a tenant enquiry or target individuals when future schemes allow.

The 2008 guidance determined the following as reasons for acceptable fail:-

## Resident choice or refusal

**Statement** - Our tenants have the right to refuse improvement works to their homes where safety is not a primary concern.

**Practical Approach 1**- It is our policy to undertake all outstanding WHQS works prior to re-letting the dwelling. When opportunity does occur we revisit any refusals / no access dwellings, when schemes are retendered or tenants change their minds.

**Practical Approach 2**- All properties without 'A' rated boilers have been offered a replacement. Efforts are made to upgrade during annual servicing.



## Physical constraint

**Statement** - We endeavour to maximise WHQS space standards wherever practically possible and have none recorded.

**Practical Approach** - It is our policy not to build kitchen extensions if kitchen volumes fail to meet WHQS, however we do carry out minor and major internal remodelling of areas including removal of walls / pantries etc. and utilisation of dining areas to maximise available space if appropriate.



## Timing of remedy

**Statement** –The Council utilises its stock database, component life expectancy to determine the predicted end of life for an asset as a guide prior to actual on site verification of condition and possible replacement.

**Practical Approach 1** - It is our policy to package wherever possible required works into volumes that would result in advantageous contract pricing structures enabling prudent, cost effective use of budgets and external grant funding.

**Practical Approach 2**– We have a number of properties where energy improvement works have been carried out but these improvements have not been captured on revised Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's). Efforts have been made to increase the level and accuracy of EPC data in order to tackle any potential failing properties.

**Practical Approach 3**– All void properties if necessary receive a new "A" rated boiler and a loft insulation check / top-up if required. The dwelling will then receive a new energy certificate based on the most up to date information.



## Cost of remedy

**Statement** - Works consisting of energy measures are currently not cost effective.

**Practical Approach** - Where properties fall short of the requirement in respect of energy certificates, a common sense approach has been adopted to give the best possible outcome. All standard measures have been applied and only high cost measures e.g. wind turbines, solar panels etc. remain.



## Data collection

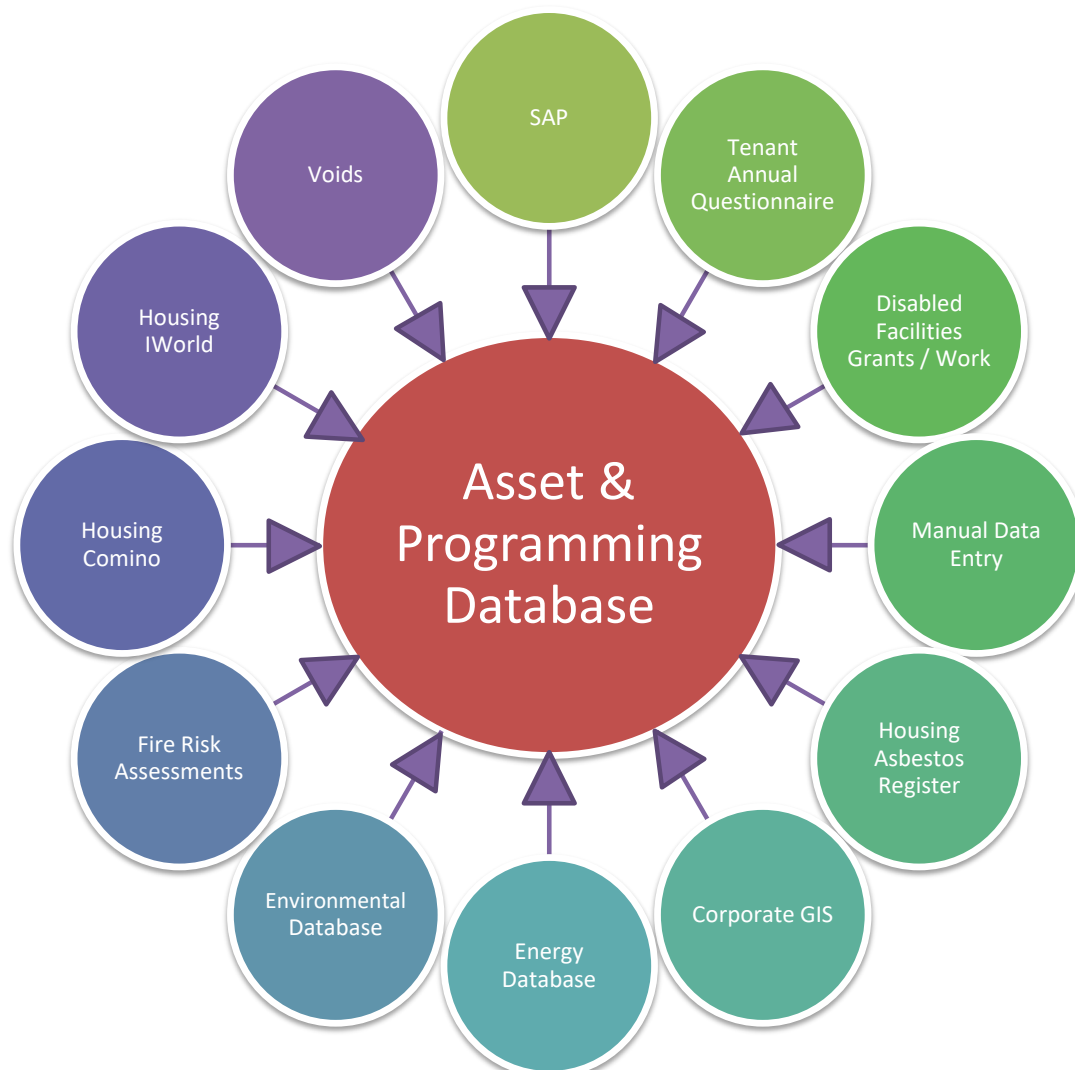
The data for the Asset Management Database is constructed from base tenancy property attributes and information from national gazetteers. This enables the database to source data from any available data source. Initial datasets were built from early house condition assessments and contractual works carried out. Building on this base data, additional data is collected on “mini” surveys carried out on the cyclical painting and defensible space programmes. Initial dates for components are then replaced by more accurate data derived from planned maintenance programmes, routine responsive maintenance and vacant repair works. This ensures that future replacement dates are accurate for condition surveying prior to tender.

The Council declared compliance with the standard in September 2012. We now maintain and improve our assets with our capital programme of improvements in line with our 30 year plan to ensure continued compliance.

Data is still maintained and improved via previously mentioned methods and in addition, the continued use of mobile, data collection tablet computers has ensured that surveyors are fully informed at any survey or verification of the current status of every component.

Data is audited both internally Compliance Team 900 , Planned Vacants team 1,600 and externally 300 2015 by E C Harris.

## Data input chart and sources.





Data Source	Data Ownership	Validation	Volume of data	Comments
SAP	Corporate	Audit / Financial services	All contract data is updated monthly	Used to acquire all information of completed works and schemes Date and cost
Tenant Annual Questionnaire	Communities	Cardiff Research Centre	Annual	Dedicated housing survey with building and community questions
Disabled Facilities Grants / Works	Communities	Communities	High	Reference and audit use only.
Manual Data Entry	Compliance Team	Compliance Team	Constantly on going and updating	This covers all data that cannot be obtained electronically i.e. boiler datatags, gas servicing, electrical testing detailed data, etc
Housing Asbestos Register	Communities	Communities trained asbestos controlling officers	Constantly on going and updating	Data is viewable by all staff internally and by contractors, tenants by a dedicated website
Corporate GIS	Corporate	Corporate GIS layer data	N/A	Corporate GIS layers are updated and contain data on schemes and environmental changes
Energy Database At County Hall Data Feed	County Hall Energy team	Housing Compliance Team and Landmark for EPC's	1000/year based on re-letting and energy schemes	EPC and energy upgrade data is transmitted by live database link allowing reporting in real time
Environmental Database Data Feed	Compliance Team	Corporate GIS datasets	Annual updates	Data is used to evaluate the communities in which our tenants reside and drive environmental and estate improvement programmes
Fire Risk Assessments	Compliance Team	Certified fire Assessors	900/Year	Yearly communal fire reports to low rise blocks and biannually to high rise property condition
Housing Comino	Communities	Communities	Scheduled bi annual document audit.	Reference and audit use only. Comino is the main document depository for communities
Housing I World	Communities	Communities	All Council stock, tenant details rents	Reference and audit use only, for stock numbers and sold dwellings
Voids	Communities	Communities	All current void data	Reference and audit use only

## Data storage

The stock condition data for all our housing assets is held on a restricted area on corporate servers, which are maintained and backed up as per Corporate ICT policies. Access to the database is restricted to designated staff only. The database contains no individual personal data, only property data.

## Database asset management software

The Asset and Programming Database is a bespoke in house designed Microsoft Access relational database with the purpose to combine, access, interrogate and display all available property data in a clear format. It can target and programme work in a co-ordinated approach, to allow our properties to maintain the minimum level of stock condition standards set by the “Welsh Housing Quality Standard”.

It is designed in the form of interactive module building blocks:-

- Asset data module
- WHQS Compliance module
- WHQS Environmental Toolkit
- Fire Communal areas safety module
- Management reporting module
- 30 year programme of works
- 

The asset database was, and continues to be developed with the following design principles:-

- Is constructed using “off the shelf” Microsoft Office products.
- The design does not use any complicated / advanced programming features.
- The database can be modified quickly and easily to accommodate changes in our requirements and offers us complete flexibility and control over the database.
- Queries and reports can be generated with minimal effort.
- Not dependent upon 3rd parties for help or progression of the database.
- Backed up on ICT servers.

The database currently holds 21,500 individual assets. This includes dwellings, garages, physical, communal, and courtyard areas to blocks of flats.

The decision was made at an early stage that no reportable data within the database is, or will be cloned.



## WHQS progress monitoring and reporting

The Council declared and reported our compliance with the standard in September 2012. The Council is now continuing with its capital programme of improvements in line with our 30 year plan to ensure continued compliance, and upgrading of its stock.

WHQS Standard achieved	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013-Date
Roofs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Windows	97%	99%	99%	100%	✓	✓
External Doors	93%	98%	100%	✓	✓	✓
Door Entry Systems	99%	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kitchens	23%	26%	43%	71%	100%	✓
Bathrooms	24%	28%	44%	72%	100%	✓
Energy Efficiency Pass	0%	0%	48%	52%	100%	✓
Central Heating	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Electrical Systems	0%	0%	50%	73%	100%	✓
Smoke Detectors	99%	99%	98%	100%	✓	✓
Environmental Works	51%	52%	67%	79%	100%	✓

### Welsh Government Reports

At the end of each financial year a snapshot of the asset management system is taken to allow the integrated Welsh Government WHQS and WHQS SAP reports to be generated from the reporting module, together with the 30 year planned improvements plan. Each year a snapshot is taken to allow historical data to be constantly available.

Each snapshot allows the generation of an end of year update to our acceptable fail lists for each works category which is provided to senior management and the Council's Tenant Voice group. Details are also kept on the Council's intranet compliance microsite.

### Internal Reporting

The reporting module also provides monthly management reports in respect of planned schemes, contract progress, SAP energy efficiency measures, and environmental neighbourhood status.

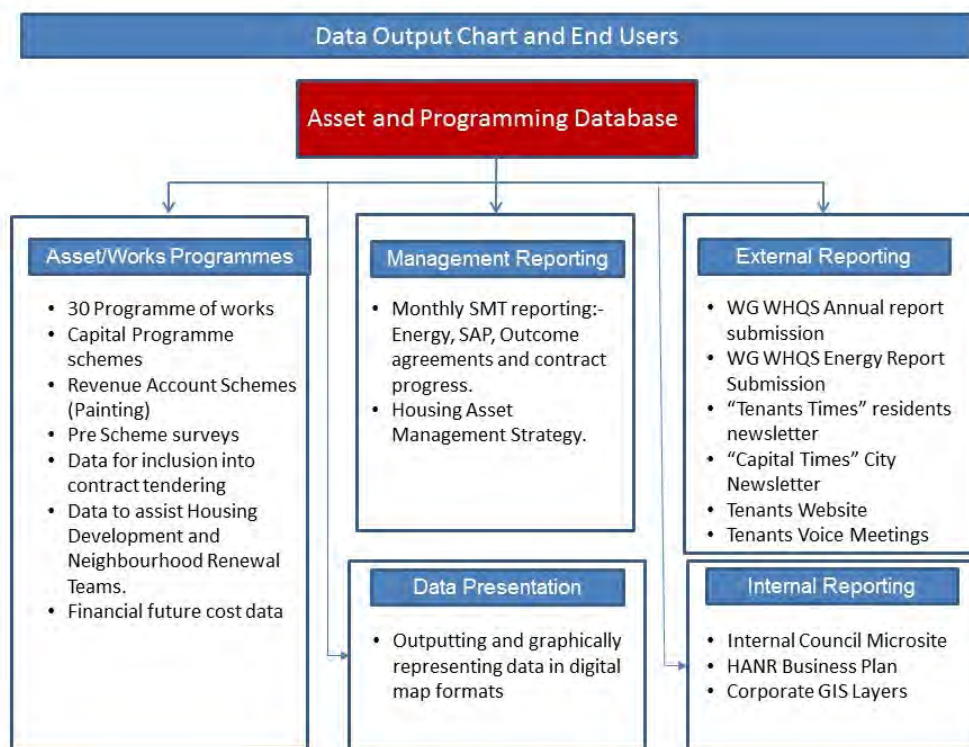
## Process mapping



## Links between Welsh Government reporting, Landlord Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy

Our repairs and stock condition data is updated on our database on completion of schemes to ensure we have accurate up to date records and can plan ahead for future component replacement. This data then feeds into the 30 Year Business Plan which includes an analysis of the stock condition. Work requirements are programmed to ensure our properties are well maintained and continually improved. We allocate WG and RICS lifespans to each major component in the property and allocate costs against the replacement of that item, particularly in regard to major component replacement e.g. kitchens and bathrooms. The 30 year plan is also updated with up to date component replacement costs derived from our tender processes.

The data derived from these processes are linked with business planning, and the Asset Management Strategy.



### Examples of Internal and External Reporting

Report Detail	Report method	Frequency	Published where	Target Audience
WHQS WG Report		Annually	WG website	
WHQS WG SAP Report		Annually	WG website	
Tenants Times Residents Newsletter		Quarterly	Online on Council website	
HANR Business Plan		Annually	Online on Council website	
Asset Management Strategy		Annually	Online on Council website	
WHQS Compliance Policy		Annually	Online on Council website	
Details on WHQS Acceptable Fails by Programme		Ongoing	Internal Council Microsite	
Current and Future Programmes		Ongoing	Tenants Website	
Monthly progress reports to Senior Management Team SMT		Monthly	Internal Pi's and WG end of year Returns	
Tenants Forum / Voice				

## WHQS+ Standard

The Cardiff Council does not provide a WHQS+ standard for its Council housing stock. However we do carry out schemes over and above the WHQS requirements where its appropriate to do and the opportunity exists.

### Example1:-

To improve safety we have upgraded all of our communal areas with new lighting incorporated emergency lighting.



### Example2:-

Securing further funding from the Welsh Government to expand external wall insulation opportunities to mixed tenure residents of harder-to-heat houses in Cardiff. This will utilise Welsh small to medium sized enterprises, providing further employment and local training opportunities.





### Example 3:-

The Alarm Receiving Centre ARC is a CCTV monitoring centre with remote management of door entry and alarm monitoring systems for the safety, wellbeing and security of tenants and visitors to the Council's high-rise accommodation across the city. Based in the Council's Communities directorate office in Cardiff Bay, CCTV operators monitor buildings to help prevent anti-social behaviour ASB and incidents which we know affects the quality of our tenant's lives.

### Example 4:-

Communal Flooring , modern, fresh , slip resistant, acoustic RNIB compliant flooring to all communal areas above minimum requirement. This is an improvement on bare concrete, easy to clean and helps let properties.



### Example 5:-

A programme to upgrade front doors in low-rise blocks, ensures doors in all our low-rise blocks are safe in the unlikely event of a fire. They offer greater security by following the Secure by Design specification.



## Summarised annual financial investment in the stock

The table below summarises the Capital spend financial investment in the stock over the next 5 financial years. The figures exclude any costs for new build or management.

Property count	13,776	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
		£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
<b>WHQS works</b>		19,150	28,928	27,691	16,243	15,951
<b>£ per property</b>		1,390	2,100	2,010	1,179	1,158
<b>Other capital works e.g. Estate Regen</b>		2,650	2,536	2,625	2,716	2,811
<b>£ per property</b>		192	184	191	197	204
<b>Total</b>		21,800	31,464	30,316	18,959	18,762
<b>Total £ per property</b>		1,582	2,284	2,201	1,376	1,362



## Interpretation and recording of community benefits

As set out in the Welsh Government's "WG" guidance, 'Community Benefits: Delivering Maximum value for the Welsh Pound', procurement is viewed as a key driver for delivering WG's sustainable development commitments for Wales. WG, working with the wider Welsh public sector, is striving to develop a vibrant Welsh economy capable of delivering strong and sustainable economic growth by providing opportunities for everyone in Wales.

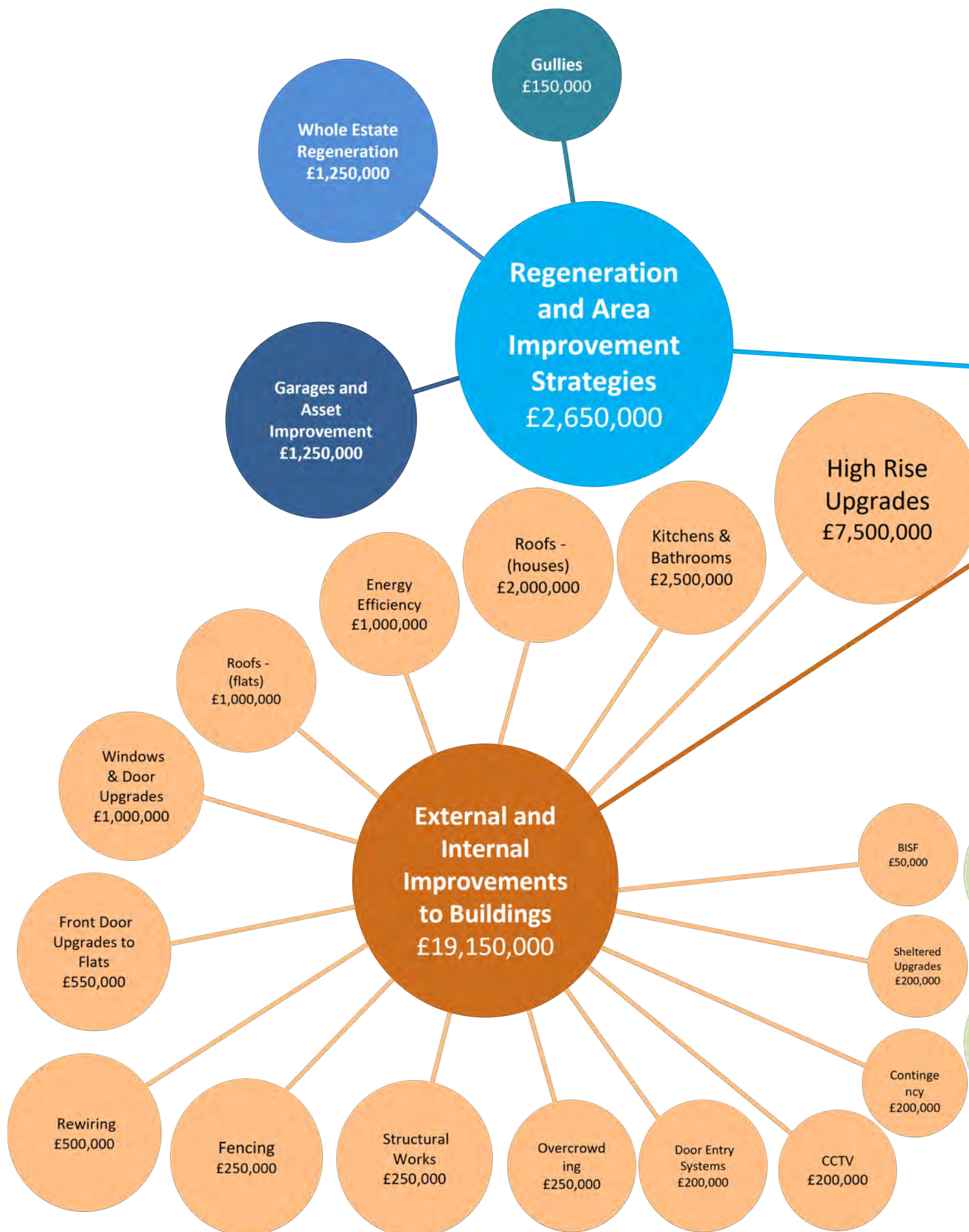
The Council's commitment to deliver 'Community Benefits' outcomes from our procurement activity is designed to ensure that wider social and economic issues are taken into account when spending public money.

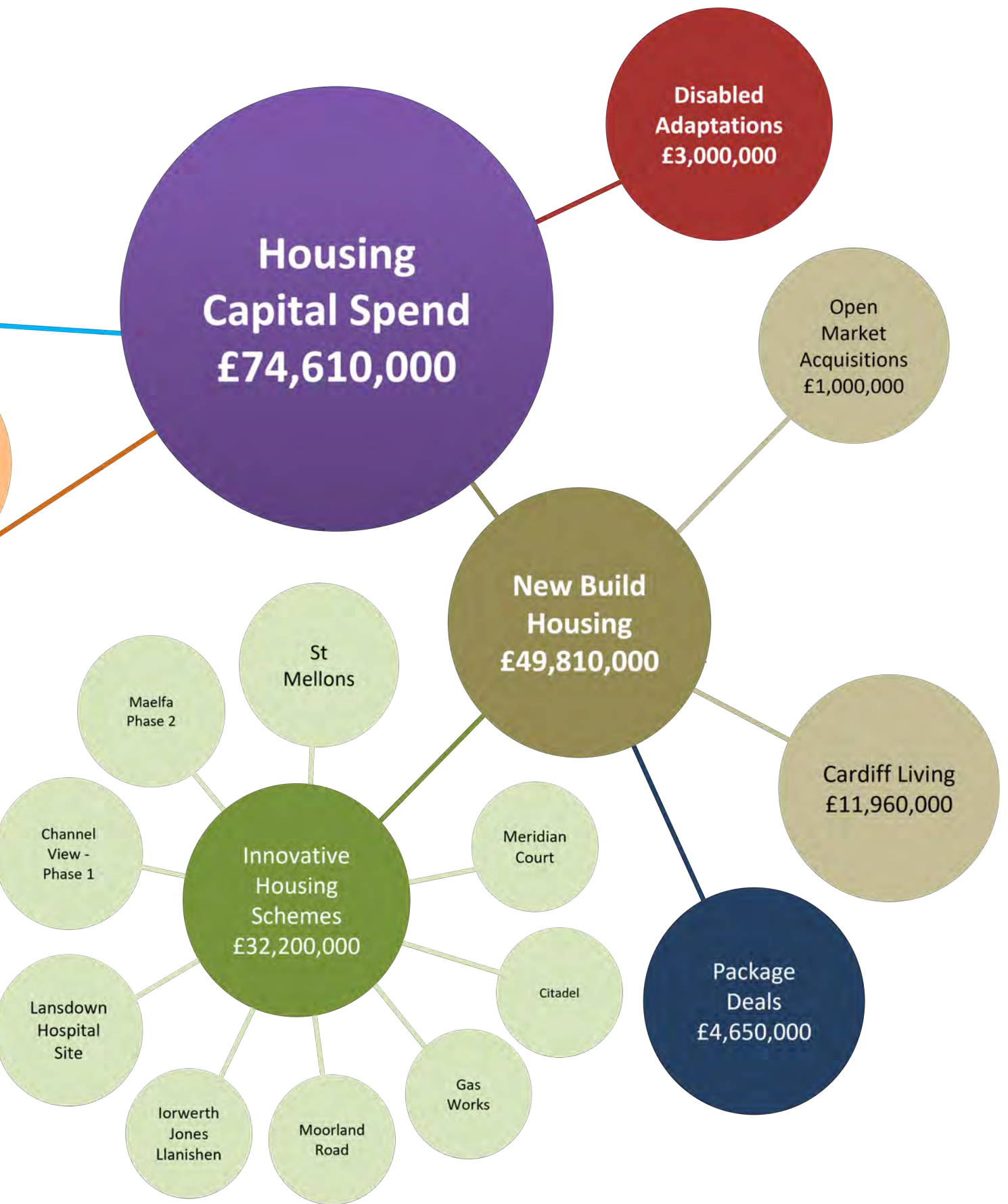
Benefits delivered through the Framework include:-

- Training and employment opportunities
- Contractors will be expected to consider the opportunities to recruit and train long term economically inactive persons as part of the workforce delivering this programmes of work for this Council. The Council is keen that contractors consider offering opportunities such as apprenticeships, NVQs, H S training, full time employment etc.
- Contractors will be expected to work with the Council to open up opportunities for SMEs, including social enterprises.



# Annual WHQS and investment summary—2022-2023





# WHQS Compliance Certificates


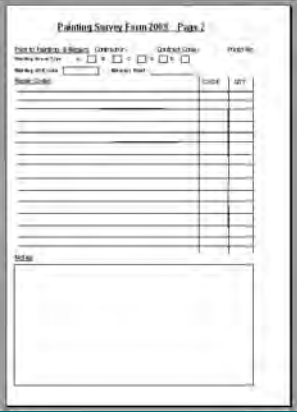
All void properties have a WHQS survey undertaken Inc. SAP improvements before the property is re-let, and new tenants receive a WHQS compliance certificate.

## Verification Of Data

Verification of the data contained within the Asset Database is carried out in the following ways:-

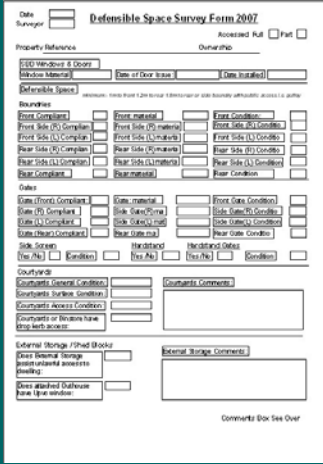

- Annually prior to end of year snapshot, the asset database runs a range of reporting features to identify duplication, inconsistencies, and data inputting errors. These are manually checked against original record sources and corrected whenever necessary.
- Programmed schemes carry out pre surveys, where specific existing data is validated on site, e.g. painting surveys are carried out on a cyclical basis with 20% of the stock visited each year. See typical survey forms.

### Programming Database Painting Survey Forms

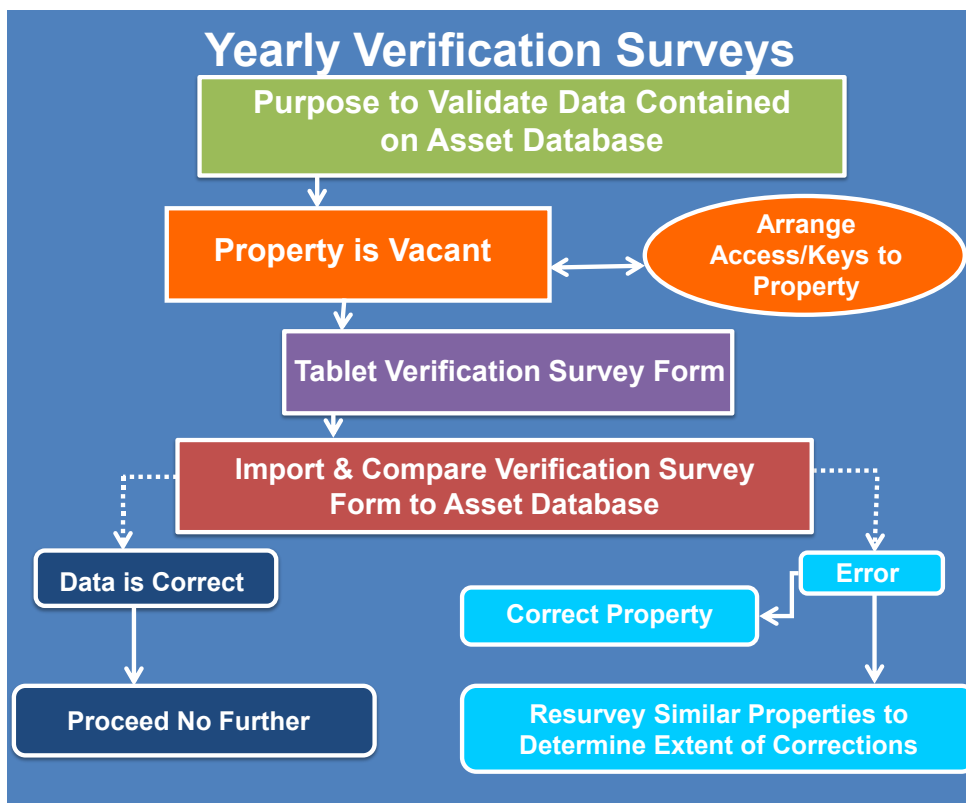
HANR Asset & Programming Database RHL Oct 2008 13

### Programming Database Defensible Space Survey Form

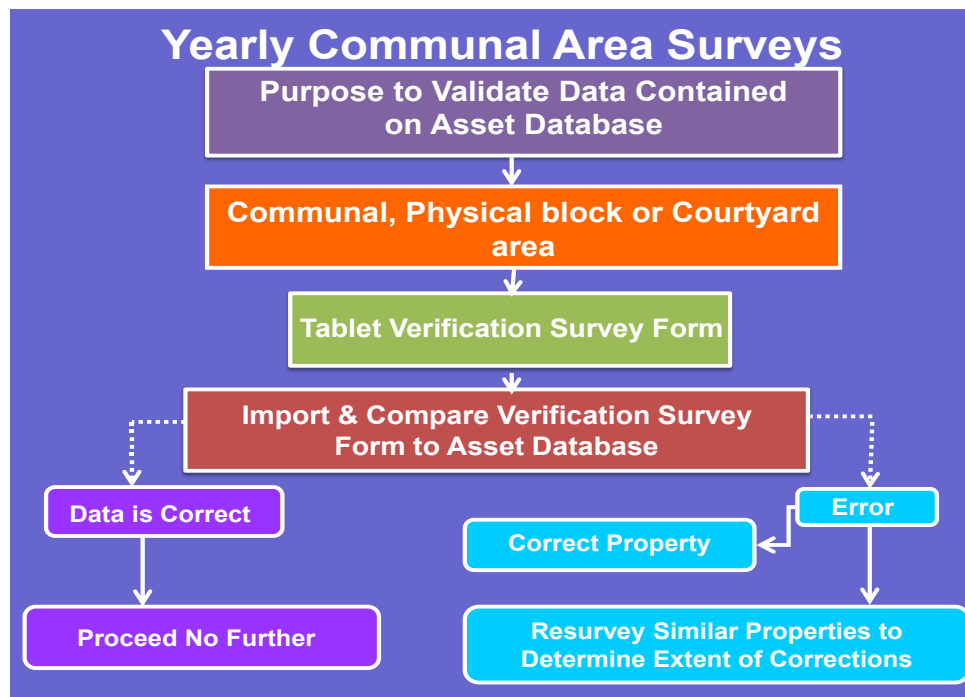



HANR Asset & Programming Database RHL Oct 2008 14

Vacant dwellings are inspected prior to letting, using a mobile tablet version of the database allowing full data verification. See verification process map below.



Communal and public areas to blocks of flats are inspected annually, using a mobile tablet version of the database allowing full data verification. See verification process map below.



A random sample of dwellings were externally selected, surveyed and audited by an external body (E C Harris consultant surveyors) and reports presented electronically and in hard copy 300 in 2015/16. Results from this external verification process confirmed that existing Council database is accurate and reliable.

## References

- Welsh Government - Stock Condition Surveys – Guidance December 2000 .
- Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005
- Principles of Secured By Design
- Welsh Government - Welsh Housing Quality Standard Revised Guidance. July 2008 .
- TPAS Cymru and Groundwork Wales - Guidance on Interpretation of the WHQS Environmental Standard 2008
- Wales Audit Office – Progress towards meeting the Standard – City Of Cardiff 2006 External Audit
- Wales Audit Office – Will the Council Meet the Standard By 2012? – City Of Cardiff 2007 External Audit
- Wales Audit Office – Assessment of Progress towards meeting the Standard – City Of Cardiff 2009 External Audit
- Cardiff Council- declaration of compliance with WHQS October 2012
- Welsh Government - Welsh Housing Quality Standard: Verification of progress in achieving the Standard 2014 . Altair report
- Welsh Government– The Welsh Housing Quality Standard Verification in Achieving and Maintaining the Standards: Next Steps. March 2015
- Welsh Government– The Welsh Housing Quality Standard Verification in Achieving and Maintaining the Standards: Next Steps. July 2015
- E C Harris Stock Verification Survey 2015 External Stock Audit

# CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

This is to certify that your home is

## WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD COMPLIANT

- In a good state of repair.
- Safe & secure.
- Adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated.
- Contains up to date kitchen & bathroom.
- Well managed.
- Located in an attractive & safe environment.
- As far as possible suits the specific requirements of the household.

If you have any queries please contact C2C Housing Repairs Hotline on: 029 2087 2087



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Communities, Housing  
& Customer Services



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