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# Social Landlords' Performance in Achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (Revised)

## Results from the monitoring exercise of social landlords' performance in achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard

This report summarises the results of a monitoring exercise carried out by the Assembly Government into the performance of housing associations and local authorities in working towards achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for their existing homes.

### Revision

Previously reported figures for the Isle of Anglesey Council have been revised due to an error in the number of properties stated as meeting the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. This affected the overall total and percentage of local authority owned properties meeting the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, as well as figures for all social housing

### Background

As at 31 March 2010 there were almost 221,000 homes owned and managed by housing associations and local authorities in Wales – approximately 16% of all homes. In July 2001 the National Assembly approved the National Housing Strategy for Wales 'Better Homes for People in Wales'. It set out the Welsh long term vision for housing in Wales. Central to that vision was the expectation that all households in Wales should have the opportunity to live in good quality homes. To achieve this, the Assembly Government decided the physical standard and condition of existing housing had to be maintained and improved to a common target standard - the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS).

The WHQS was published in 2002. The Assembly Government expected all social landlords in Wales to adopt the standard, to devise realistic programmes for bringing all their homes up to it by the end of 2012 and to maintain into the future. Revised Guidance was issued for social landlords in 2008. However the Assembly is seeking to achieve more than an improving in the physical condition social housing and has seen the WHQS as an opportunity to bring wider benefits by addressing social, environmental and economic concerns.

The WHQS means homes must

- Be in a good condition and structurally stable;
- Be safe and secure;
- Have proper heating and be fuel efficient and well insulated;
- Contain up-to-date kitchens and bathrooms;

- Be well managed;
- Be in attractive and safe environments; and
- Meet the needs of the people living in them as far as possible.

To achieve the standard, all social landlords are expected to: -

- Have up to date information on the condition of their stock gathered via a rolling programme of stock condition surveys
- Work to a comprehensive strategy for planned maintenance and improvement based on this information and taking into account the views and aspirations of its tenants , with the aim of keeping all homes in compliance, as far as practicable, with standard

The Assembly Government is planning to carry out this monitoring exercise on an annual basis, with discussions taking place on how best to do this.

## **One Wales agreement**

The One Wales delivery plan has specified that the WHQS will be kept under review and that applications to extend the timetable will be considered on their merits. Five new housing associations created as part of the transfer of local authority homes have successfully applied for 2 year extensions in order to meet the standard given the short time between their creation and the 2012 deadline, and four local authorities have been given extensions of between 2 and 5 years.

## **Wales Audit Office**

At the same time as this monitoring exercise is taking place the Wales Audit Office (WAO) is examining the progress that has been made in improving peoples' homes and living environments in line with the WHQS and in delivering wider regeneration benefits. The WAO has been gathering the views of residents in homes owned by housing associations and local authorities about the general quality of their homes and about work that may have been undertaken to bring their home and wider living environment up to the standard. The WAO is also interviewing a selection of landlords as part of its study. The report is due to be published in the summer of 2011.

## Measuring Progress

The WHQS is an interpretive standard. Difficulty in precise measurement against the standard has inevitably involved social landlords in making judgements, for example, in considering compliance with the environmental standard. Equally there are many situations where reaching the standard has not been feasible, viable or practical, for example in providing a level area no smaller than 10 metres squared directly accessible from each home. In many situations social landlords have used the 'Acceptable Fail' option in looking at compliance. An Acceptable Fail is only possible on individual elements and may only be used where the cost or timing of work (for example making structural changes to the home to increase internal space) is not efficient, where residents exercise choice (for example where they don't want a bath and a shower in their bathroom) or where there are physical constraints to the work.

## Monitoring Progress - Methodology

The 2004 Living in Wales property survey estimated that 0.8 per cent of all social housing met the WHQS. The Survey found that 2.7 per cent of Housing Association homes met the WHQS, but none of the local authority stock did so. The Living in Wales property survey carried out in 2008 found that only 6% of social housing met the standard.

In early 2010 the Assembly Government decided to take a collaborative approach to the monitoring exercise and convened a Task and Finish Group to consider the most effective approach to collecting data on progress made by housing associations and local authorities in meeting the standard. As a result of its work and agreement on a methodology that was sufficiently robust but also uncomplicated Social landlords completed monitoring returns and submitted them to the Assembly Government in September 2010.

The monitoring return was designed to establish the level of compliance with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for the key components in each year from 2009/10 until the date the standard has been achieved. The key components are: Roofs & Associated Components, Windows, External Doors, Kitchens, Bathrooms, Energy Rating, Central Heating Systems, Electrical Systems, Mains Powered Smoke Detectors, and External Work. Compliance was also assessed against All Components.

Social landlords have been carrying out regular surveys of their homes in order to gather and review information on the standard and condition of their homes. This data is used to identify a programme of works to improve and replace the key components of a home. These programmes are fed into the business plans social landlords prepare to ensure they have the funds to carry out the work in the future. Social landlords were invited to enter the results from their stock condition

information in tabular format and the data collected was entered into a spreadsheet by Assembly Government officials and analysed. The analysis has identified the number and the percentage of homes which comply with the standard by component for each social landlord. It has also identified the number and type of homes owned, details on 'acceptable fails' where these have been included in the returns, details of any environmental statements, and information on the wider impacts of work to meet the standard (for example health impacts, crime, poverty, employment and training).

## **The findings**

The findings show that in terms of overall compliance with the standard 78% of housing association homes (including the recent stock transfers) can meet the standard by 2012/13. 87% of local authority homes can meet the standard by 2012/13 excluding those with no votes and those going to ballot. 38%(r) of local authority homes can meet WHQS by 2012/13 including those with no votes and those balloting.

The results for housing associations show that for those associations working to the 2012 deadline (i.e the RSL's that have not been given an extension beyond the 2012 deadline), 86% of their homes are likely to meet the standard by 2012/13. By 2016/17 performance will have reached 98% for all RSL's.

All five of the housing associations with an extended deadline for meeting the standard until 2014/15 will have 100% of their homes meeting the standard across all of the key components.

The overall picture for local authorities is somewhat different to that of housing associations. Four out of the twelve authorities are predicting achieving WHQS by 2012/13, one more in 2014/15 and another in 2016/17. Three Local Authorities are currently going to ballot tenants, one has now transferred and two Local Authorities have already balloted and received a no vote. It is true to say that for some of these remaining authorities the challenge of achieving WHQS is further complicated by the process required in order move to a stock transfer situation and the requirement to obtain tenant approval via a stock transfer ballot.

## **What the findings show**

When the Assembly Government published the WHQS it set an ambitious target for social landlords to improve their existing homes and the environments around them. It has proved a challenge for a number of landlords but the

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(r) Revised due to revision to figures for the Isle of Anglesey Council

investment that has taken place in raising standards represents a significant investment in tenants' homes and in the fabric of many communities across Wales.

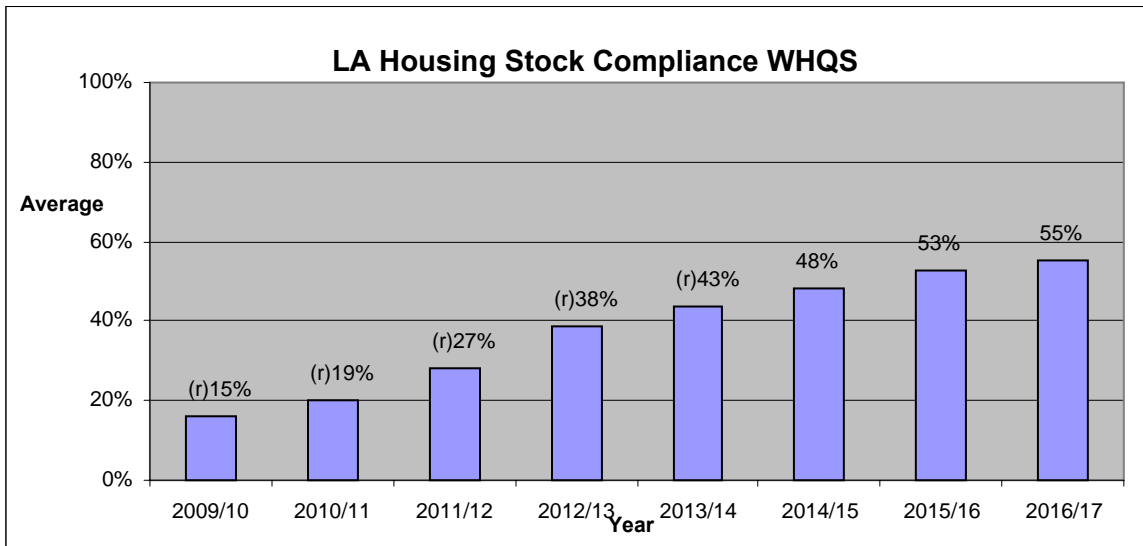
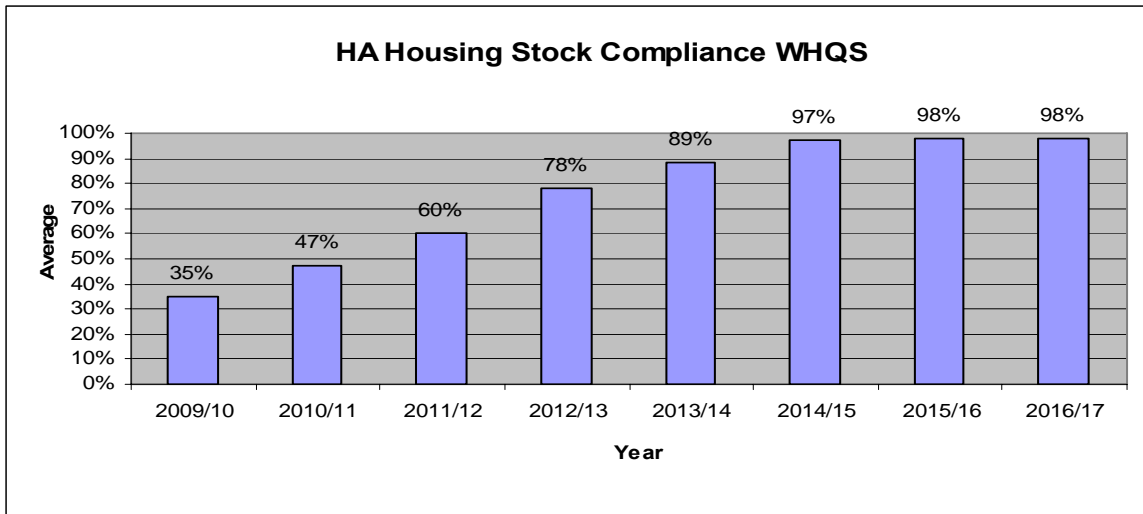
This investment towards achieving WHQS has proved critical to many small and medium contractors in Wales whose business has been affected by the recession. So it's meant that businesses in the construction and maintenance supply chain have been kept in business and that's retained as well as boosted jobs and helped increase training and skills. It's meant too that builders' merchants and materials suppliers have continued to do business with the sector.

The investment in raising standards in social housing has meant that tenants now enjoy improved safety, security and comfort as a result. Their homes have lower carbon emissions and the improvement in the energy performance of homes now means tenants proportionately spend less on heating their homes – so the WHQS investment is also helping to deal with global warming and the fuel poverty agenda.

Housing associations and Local Authorities have shown that the investment has also produced a number of wider benefits. On the employment front - as part of their maintenance and improvements programmes for example, associations and LA's have created jobs, training opportunities and apprenticeships with local contractors as part of targeted recruitment and training requirements in contracts. Fuel poverty is being addressed - new "A" rated energy efficient boilers have been installed, along with new windows and doors, external wall insulation and loft or cavity wall insulation. This has helped reduce carbon emissions and reduced energy bills for tenants. £1000's of tenants savings on energy bills that help towards fuel poverty. Crime has been tackled – improvements to the security of homes (new external doors, door entry systems and windows which meet Secure by Design standards) as well as improvements to estates have helped to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

There is also some evidence that WHQS improvements may have positive effects on tenants' health with one local authority piloting a Health Impact Study the results of which have shown evidence of works having a positive impact on mental health, reduction in respiratory complaints and less visits to their GP.

Some of the findings for housing associations and local authorities are shown in the following tables and charts.



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**Housing Association homes meeting WHQS by component and year (percentage)**

Component	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Roofs	88%	88%	93%	96%	99%	100%	100%	100%
Windows	89%	92%	96%	99%	99%	100%	100%	100%
External Doors	82%	88%	93%	97%	98%	99%	99%	99%
Kitchens	62%	69%	80%	90%	96%	100%	100%	100%
Bathrooms	58%	66%	77%	88%	94%	98%	99%	99%
SAP 65	65%	71%	82%	90%	96%	99%	99%	99%
Central Heating	76%	82%	90%	95%	98%	100%	100%	100%
Electrical Works	68%	75%	86%	93%	99%	100%	100%	100%
Smoke detectors	88%	92%	94%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%
External Works	66%	72%	80%	90%	94%	99%	99%	99%
<b>All Components</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>98%</b>

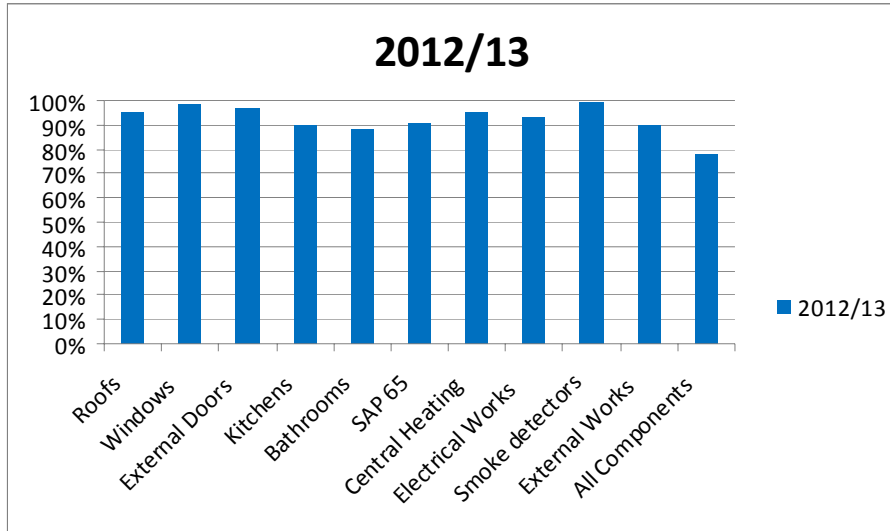
**Local Authority homes meeting WHQS by component and year (percentage of stock)**

Components	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Roofs	82%	82%	82%	84%	85%	86%	86%	86%
Windows	92%	94%	94%	95%	96%	97%	97%	97%
External Doors	78%	82%	85%	88%	90%	92%	92%	93%
Kitchens	32%	36%	45%	54%	59%	63%	65%	67%
Bathrooms	36%	40%	44%	53%	58%	61%	63%	65%
SAP 65	63%	68%	75%	82%	84%	86%	87%	87%
Central Heating	58%	61%	67%	73%	79%	84%	85%	86%
Electrical Works	57%	63%	72%	78%	82%	85%	85%	86%
Smoke detectors	88%	89%	91%	93%	94%	95%	95%	95%
External Works	43%	46%	52%	58%	61%	63%	64%	65%
<b>All Components</b>	<b>(r)15%</b>	<b>(r)19%</b>	<b>(r)27%</b>	<b>(r)38%</b>	<b>(r)43%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>55%</b>

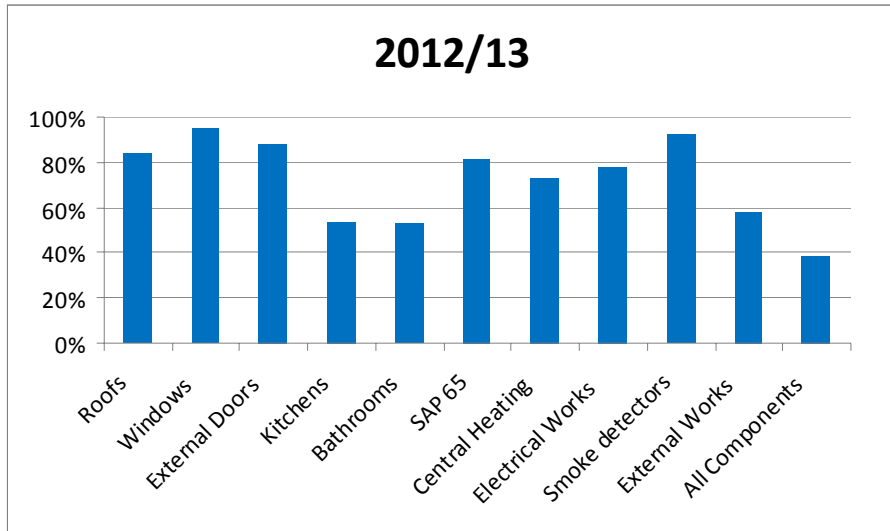
(r) Revised due to revision to figures for the Isle of Anglesey Council



Housing Association homes meeting WHQS by component 2012/13 (percentage of stock)

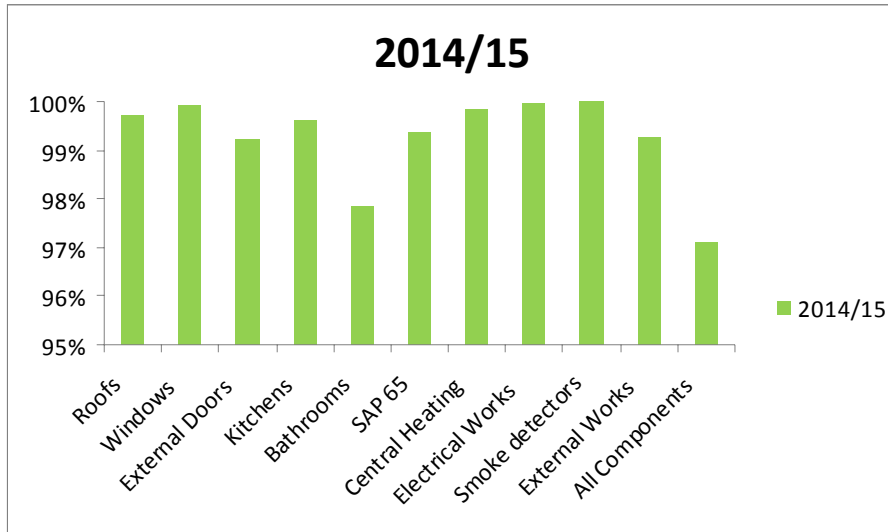


Local Authority homes meeting WHQS by component 2012/13 (percentage of stock) (r)

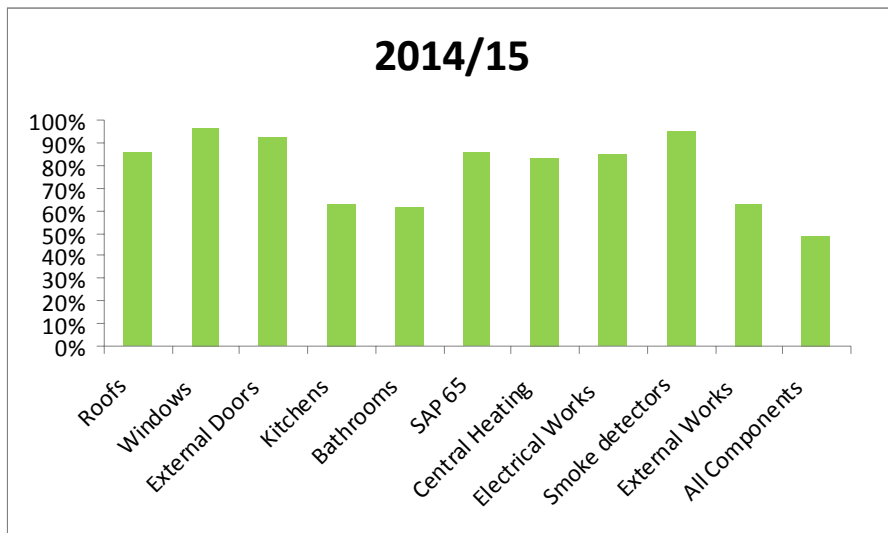


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Housing Association homes meeting WHQS by component 2014/15 (percentage of stock)



Local Authority homes meeting WHQS by component 2014/15 (percentage of stock) (r)



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# Measuring progress in improving social housing in Wales (Revised)

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## Appendix - Projected Achievement of WHQS by Individual Landlords (percentage of stock)

WHQS Guidance 2008 web link:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/housing/publications/whqsrevisedguide/;jsessionid=fvN2MfZGZT9vKnKnMTJmC5Kjw7Q8fG44CtQVwckvT9CQQ752RnRV!-42672990?lang=en>

RSL Landlord	Notes	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Aelwyd HA		29%	34%	53%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
BroMyrddin		32%	42%	52%	73%	88%	100%	100%	100%
Bron Afon	LSVT - transferred 2008	5%	28%	52%	76%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Cadarn		64%	77%	85%	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Cadwyn HA		34%	50%	67%	83%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Cardiff Com		19%	30%	63%	89%	100%	100%	100%	100%
C Conwy	LSVT - transferred 2008	40%	56%	86%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
CC Gwynedd	LSVT - transferred 2010 – extension to 2015	2%	4%	2%	50%	60%	100%	100%	100%
Coastal HA		32%	60%	75%	88%	97%	100%	100%	100%
Cynon Taf CH		50%	58%	75%	96%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Family W HA		31%	33%	42%	50%	58%	66%	86%	86%
First Choice		64%	78%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Gwalia		47%	55%	61%	74%	87%	100%	100%	100%
Hafod HA		65%	70%	70%	75%	80%	85%	95%	100%
Linc Cymru		52%	74%	86%	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Melin Homes		45%	73%	87%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Merthyr HA		16%	16%	37%	56%	72%	90%	100%	100%
Merthyr VH	LSVT - transferred 2009 – extension to 2015	18%	29%	55%	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Mid Wales		36%	64%	85%	90%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Monmouth	LSVT - transferred 2008	34%	59%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Newport City	LSVT - transferred 2009 – extension to 2015	3%	3%	6%	48%	80%	100%	100%	100%
Newport HT		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
North Wales		43%	44%	47%	49%	52%	55%	55%	55%
Pembs HA		39%	70%	95%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Pennaf		69%	75%	82%	95%	98%	100%	100%	100%

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RCT Homes	LSVT - transferred 2007	54%	70%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Rhondda HA		9%	15%	30%	36%	50%	70%	92%	100%
Seren		80%	85%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Tai Calon	LSVT - transferred 2010 – extension to 2015	0%	15%	30%	50%	75%	100%	100%	100%
Tai Cantref		24%	45%	55%	78%	100%	100%	97%	97%
Tai Ceredigion	LSVT – transferred 2009 – extension to 2015	0%	0%	4%	5%	6%	100%	100%	100%
Tai Clwyd		26%	30%	40%	60%	80%	100%	100%	100%
Tai Eryri		53%	64%	76%	88%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Tai Hafan		21%	47%	73%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Taff HA		75%	85%	90%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%
UWHA		46%	61%	77%	83%	90%	91%	91%	91%
V2C	LSVT – transferred 2003	33%	48%	64%	74%	86%	92%	92%	92%
W&W HA		65%	69%	75%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Retention LAs</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Anglesey CC		(r)30%	(r)47%	(r)73%	(r)80%	(r)90%	100%	100%	100%
Carmarthen	Extension to 2014/15	9%	9%	40%	69%	90%	100%	100%	100%
Cardiff		40%	55%	75%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Denbighshire		50%	58%	72%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Pembs CC		60%	70%	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Powys CC	Extension to 2017/18	28%	34%	45%	52%	61%	75%	86%	95%
<b>LAs going to ballot</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Caerphilly	Going to ballot	1%	1%	3%	10%	15%	20%	20%	20%
Flintshire	Going to ballot	0%	0%	3%	5%	7%	10%	10%	10%
#NPT CBC	Transferred to NPT Homes from 4/03/11	0%	0%	0%	1%	16%	38%	75%	100%
*Vale of Glam	Out to ballot	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>LAs where tenants rejected</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>

## Measuring progress in improving social housing in Wales (Revised)

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proposal to transfer stock									
\$Swansea CC	No viable business plan – no vote in 2009	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wrexham	No viable business plan – no vote in 2008	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%

#Neath Port Talbot CBC – stock not transferred at time of data gathering.

\* Vale of Glamorgan's figures are not available until after the ballot result in May? 2011.

\$ Swansea CC – Final figures are not yet available.

(r) Revised due to revision to figures for the Isle of Anglesey Council

## Quality of Information and Definitions of Table Headings:

The information is based on the stock condition information of social landlords.

For a component to be considered as compliant it should meet the requirements stated in the “Revised Guidance for Social Landlords on Interpretation and Achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard July 2008”.

An “Acceptable Fail” as defined in the Guidance will be considered as compliant for the purpose of the above tables table.

## Roofs & Associated Components

The roof structure, coverings, fascias, soffits, bargeboards and chimney to a dwelling should be free from disrepair and in good condition.

## Windows

The windows to a dwelling should be safe, secure, with adequate thermal performance and adequately draught proofed.

## External Doors

The external doors to a dwelling should be safe, secure, with adequate thermal performance and adequately draught proofed.

## Kitchens

Kitchens should be safe, convenient, adequately ventilated and include the appropriate space, fittings, storage, electrical sockets and flooring.

## Bathrooms

Bathrooms should include a shower as well as bath, and be safe, convenient, adequately ventilated and include the appropriate space, fittings and flooring.

## Energy Rating (SAP ≥ 65)

The annual energy consumption for the space and water heating for a dwelling must be estimated using the Government's Standard Assessment Procedure for Energy Rating of Dwellings 2005 (SAP 2005) method. A minimum rating of 65 out of 100 must be achieved.

## **Central Heating Systems**

The heating system to a dwelling must be appropriately sized and be reasonably economic to run and programmable, so that a resident can control the temperature and timing.

## **Electrical Systems**

The electrical installation must be safe with the appropriate number of conveniently located fittings.

## **Mains Powered Smoke Detectors**

Dwellings must have suitably located, mains powered (with back up power source such as a sealed lithium battery) smoke alarm on each floor of a dwelling.

## **External Works**

The external and communal areas around a dwelling should be an attractive and safe environment. Achievement of this standard should be interpreted in accordance with the principles detailed in the 'Guidance on the Interpretation of the WHQS Environmental Standard' published in 2008.

## **All Components**

This heading should include ALL the elements of WHQS (whether or not they are included in the above table headings).

