

Tai Calon Community Housing

Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 Compliance Policy

Policy Owner	Director of Assets & Property
Lead Officer	Head of Assets, Sustainability & Healthy Homes
Lead Team/Department	Assets, Sustainability & Healthy Homes

Version control

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Name: Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 Compliance Policy

At Tai Calon Community Housing, our goal is to achieve 95% customer satisfaction.

This policy explains our approach to delivering the Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023, the standards we maintain, and the steps we take to ensure a positive experience for our customers.

Our Policy Promise

What we'll do

Provide all our policies in different formats.

We make our policies easy to follow by splitting them into two parts; **what we'll do and what this means for you.**

We will follow our Vulnerable Customer Policy for helping customers who need extra care

What this means for you

You can reach out to us to let us know what format you need.

This helps you understand the service we offer.

You will get the right type of service based on your individual needs.

Policy Statement

The aim of this policy is to set out how Tai Calon Community Housing will seek to deliver the Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 (WHQS23) to provide the greatest benefits to our customers and the communities we serve.

We fully support the ambitions of WHQS23, whilst also being aware of the funding and delivery challenges it presents. Our approach will, within our financial and resource capacity, ensure the best outcomes for the greatest numbers of customers in the least time possible, whilst not impacting on the quality of improvements we deliver.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Welsh Government first introduced the Welsh Housing Quality Standard in 2002, with the aim of raising the quality of social housing in Wales. The original standard included many of the elements contained within WHQS23. An evaluation of WHQS concluded that the quality of homes had been significantly improved and had benefitted customers (Tenants).
- 1.2 Welsh Government sought to build on the improvements seen with the introduction of WHQS23, with the new standard reflecting the need to significantly decarbonise homes. WHQS23 specifies the following requirement for social housing homes;
 - Must be in a good state of repair,
 - Must be safe and secure,
 - Must be affordable to heat and have a minimal environmental impact,
 - Must have an up-to-date kitchen and utility area,
 - Must have an up-to-date bathroom,
 - Must be comfortable and promote well-being,
 - Must have a suitable garden,
 - Must have an attractive outside space.
- 1.3 These requirements comprise of a number of elements (as listed above), with homes meeting WHQS23 when all applicable elements are met. As all elements will not be present in all homes, WHQS23 allows for elements to be recorded as one of the following;
 - Pass
 - Assumed Pass
 - Conditional Pass
 - Temporary Fail
 - Fail
 - Not Applicable
- 1.4 The condition of each element will be recorded in line with WHQS23 guidance.
- 1.5 Tai Calon Community Housing is committed to aligning our business and delivery of services to WHQS23 and has restructured key Teams to optimising that delivery. We do, however, recognise the significant financial and technical difficulties we will face, along with resources required and timescales to be met. We will continually review our progress and the financial implications of meeting the standard, reporting these outcomes to our Board and Welsh Government.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy will apply to all social homes owned and managed by Tai Calon Community Housing that are subject to WHQS23. The format of this policy fully reflects the guidance provided in WHQS23 and includes;
- Approach to WHQS23 , reflecting local resources and circumstances
 - Database and asset management software
 - Customer engagement
 - Independent verification
 - Compliance statements for new customers
 - Elements not measured, including
 - Homes suitable for specific household needs
 - Disables and older persons housing requirements
 - Attractive outside spaces
 - Biodiversity
 - Broadband/Digital connectivity
 - Cost prohibitive activities
 - Targeted Energy Pathway (TEP) narrative
 - Redevelopment, demolition and carbon
 - Community Benefits
- 2.2 This policy applies to all colleagues who deliver, manage or whose work activities relate to the policy objectives. It will also apply to all contractors, consultants and suppliers involved in the delivery of WHQS23 activities.

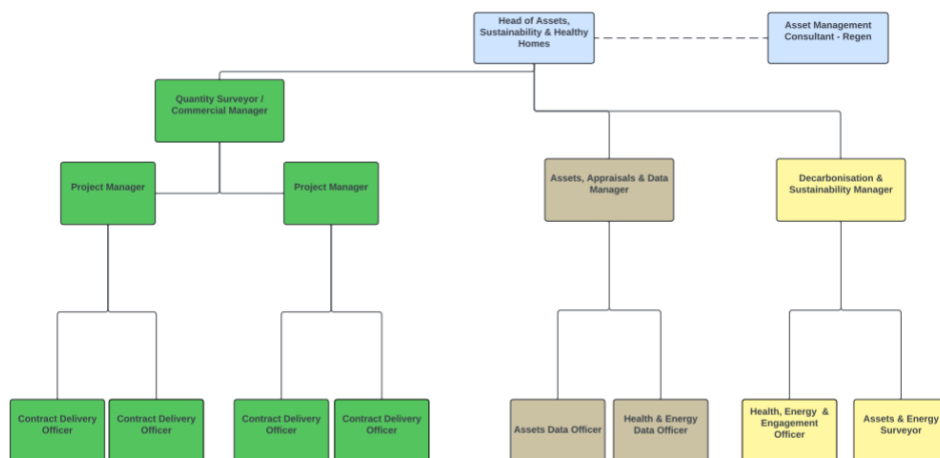
3.0 Our Approach: Delivering and Maintaining WHQS23

- 3.1 Our Assets, Sustainability and Healthy Homes (ASHH) Team will lead in the monitoring, delivery and reporting of WHQS23. The ASHH Team has recently been restructured and grown to reflect the additional investment and reporting requirements of the standard, along with the increased need to work with our customers and stakeholders to ensure our homes contribute to the health and wellbeing of our customers. In making compliance related decisions we will;
- Interpret the standard reasonably and clearly set out the impacts on our 30-year business plan and financial forecasts, setting out clearly our reasoning if we are not able to meet all requirements.
 - Comply with legal repairing obligations.
 - Clearly set out our intention to comply with elements where it is reasonable and practicable to do so and where financial provisions exist within our 30-year business plans.
 - Keep components in a good state of repair and remove any Category 1 Hazards (as defined in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)).

- Only replace components (e.g. kitchens and bathrooms) when they are nearing the end of their useful life, rather than within set timescales.
- Upgrade components to meet WHQS23 where it is reasonable to do so and where there is financial provision to do so.
- Record, monitor and report our compliance annually to Welsh Government.

3.2 We will not carry out significant and high cost alterations to homes or external areas to meet the standard.

3.3 The ASHH Team structure is provided below. The ASHH Team will lead on the implementation, delivery, monitoring and reporting of progress both internally and to Welsh Government.



3.4 We will seek to meet and maintain WHQS23 for individual homes by working closely with our customers, listening to their suggestions and concerns and acting on their feedback. We will also ensure we work towards the standard on the following basis;

No	Element	Approach
1a	Homes must be structurally stable and free from disrepair.	All staff will report obvious concerns, with Trades and Technical staff being more aware of issues. Any structural or disrepair concerns are raised to the Residents Services Team Surveyors who will inspect and act accordingly.
1b	Homes must be free from damp.	All staff will report obvious concerns, with Trades and Technical staff being more aware of issues. All damp, mould and condensation concerns are surveyed and acted upon, with these category of repair being monitored and reported. Additionally, consideration is given to the

		installation of environmental monitoring equipment.
2a	External doors and windows must provide a reasonable level of physical security.	Specification for windows and doors is compliant with all legislation and regulations at the time of installation.
2b	Staircases and balustrades must be safe.	A visual check of staircases and balustrades is conducted during visits and urgent orders issued where replacement or repair is required.
2c	Homes must have an adequate fire detection and alarm system installed.	All homes are fitted with compliant systems and maintained as part of our cyclical programmes.
2d	Homes must have appropriate means of escape in case of fire.	Homes have suitable and appropriate means of escape in line with current regulations.
2e	Gas, oil-fired or solid fuel burning combustion appliances and installations must be annually certified as safe.	We complete cyclical inspections of systems on an 11-monthly cycle to ensure compliance is maintained.
2f	A carbon monoxide detector must be fitted in each room containing a fixed gas appliance, an oil-fired combustion appliance, a solid fuel burning combustion appliance or an associated flue	Carbon monoxide detectors are fitted in all applicable rooms and serviced as part of our cyclical programmes
2g	Homes must have an electrical safety inspection undertaken by a qualified person at intervals of 5 years or less.	Electrical safety inspections are completed as per regulations with certification issued to occupants.
2h	All electrical equipment supplied and owned by landlords in homes must be safe, comply with the current safety requirements for domestic electrical products and be tested annually.	All electrical equipment owned by Tai Calon is tested annually to ensure compliance.
2i	Common parts of flats and other multi-occupied residential buildings must have adequate means of warning and escape from fire in accordance with building regulations requirements.	All common areas are equipped with compliant fire detection (where applicable) and inspected on a regular basis.
2j	All buildings containing more than one dwelling (regardless of whether they also contain common parts) must have a current and up-to-date fire risk assessment.	All in-scope buildings have an appropriate FRA in place and are inspected by a dedicated Officer.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>3a Heating systems must be reasonably economical to run and capable of heating the whole of the home to a comfortable level in normal weather conditions (minimum of SAP 92 – EPC A).</p> | <p>Currently, the majority of homes are heated via up to date and efficient gas boilers.</p> <p>Our approach to decarbonising heating is to assess each property when the heating system is to be replaced and to replace with a lower carbon system provided it does not cause economic disadvantage to the residents and where this is financially viable within planned budgets.</p> |
| <p>3b In the interim, all homes must meet a minimum standard of SAP 75 – EPC C.</p> | <p>Tai Calon is producing a TEP for each home and working toward the WHQS23 target (subject to affordability)</p> |
| <p>3c Carbon emissions from homes must be minimised (minimum of EIR 92).</p> | <p>Tai Calon seeks to reduce carbon emissions in line with our decarbonisation programmes.</p> |
| <p>3d Landlords must carry out a whole stock assessment and produce target energy pathways for their homes.</p> | <p>Tai Calon utilises its assets software system and SAVA Intelligent Energy to inform current and potential performance and to produce our Whole Stock Assessment and Target Energy Pathways.</p> |
| <p>3e Homes, and in particular kitchens and bathrooms, must have an adequate amount of ventilation</p> | <p>Ventilation and ventilation strategies are considered as part of our planned replacement programmes, during energy efficiency upgrades and on an ongoing basis. All ventilation installations or upgrades are tested in accordance with Part F Building Regulations.</p> |
| <p>3f Landlords must make arrangements for a smart meter to be installed in each home.</p> | <p>Smart meter installations are arranged with our supplier on all empty homes. We proactively engage with current residents to encourage the installation of smart meters, particularly during planned or energy efficiency works.</p> |
| <p>3g Measures to improve water efficiency and alleviating water poverty must be installed when replacing fittings and fixed appliances.</p> | <p>Our specification for plumbing installations (taps, toilets, showers, sinks, baths etc.) are compliant with WHQS23.</p> |
| <p>3h Water butts to be installed when appropriate.</p> | <p>We offer water butts to new Contract Holders and during our environmental planned improvement works.</p> |
| <p>4a Kitchens must be in good condition.</p> | <p>We have a kitchen replacement programme in place, compliant with WHQS23 requirements (where possible). We survey and replace kitchens only when they are at the end of their lifecycle.</p> |
| <p>4b Kitchens must have adequate space for kitchen</p> | <p>Kitchens are designed and installed to WHQS23 requirements where this</p> |

	appliances.	is possible without major structural works.
4c	Kitchens must be well organised and contain sufficient work surfaces.	Replacement kitchens are installed in compliance with WHQS requirements where this is possible.
4d	Homes must have sufficient general storage.	We work with customers to maximise suitable storage within their homes, but will not carry out major structural works to increase storage.
4e	Homes must have adequate space for local recycling requirements.	We provide space where this is achievable without incurring additional costs.
4f	Kitchens must have sufficient conveniently located power sockets.	Replacement kitchens are installed in compliance with WHQS requirements where this is possible.
4g	Kitchens and utility areas must have suitable flooring.	Appropriate flooring is provided, with a choice provided to residents.
4h	Homes must have adequate facilities for washing, drying and airing clothes.	We provide space where this is achievable without incurring additional costs. Where no other solution is found, we will gift a tumble dryer to residents.
5a	Bathrooms and WC facilities must be in good condition.	We have a bathroom replacement programme in place, compliant with WHQS23 requirements (where possible). We survey and replace bathrooms only when they are at the end of their lifecycle.
5b	Bathrooms and WC facilities should have suitable flooring.	Appropriate flooring is provided, with a choice provided to residents.
5c	Bathrooms must have a shower and a bath (or shower and sufficient space for the provision of a bath).	Bathrooms are provided with a bath and overbath shower. We are consulting with residents for the provision of larger shower and no bath where this is their preference.
6a	Homes should have sufficient space for everyday living.	Our lettings policy allocates properties to household composition.
6b	At change of tenancy all habitable rooms (bedrooms and living rooms), staircases and landings located within the home should have suitable floor coverings.	All homes are carpeted as per WHQS23 prior to being relet.
6c	Exposure to noise should be minimised	Any reported noise issues are investigated by Technical Officers and remedial action taken where applicable.
6d	As far as possible, homes should suit the specific requirements of the household.	Our lettings policy allocates properties to household composition. Thereafter, we will assess any changing needs of the household and, if required, complete adaptations or arrange for transfer to more suitable accommodation.

6e	Disabled and older people's housing requirements must be planned for and met in accordance with the duty for reasonable adjustments.	We have financial and staffing resource to meet the requirements of physical adaptations for specific household needs, and deliver these where it is practical, reasonable and affordable.
6f	Homes should be clearly identifiable and have definable boundaries.	All homes are clearly identifiable with house numbers. All homes have fences etc. in line with the original design of the home and estate.
7a	There should be an external level space no smaller than 10m ² directly accessible from the home.	We have an Environmental Improvement Team who complete external upgrades to homes. We will meet with this standard where it is reasonable, practical and not cost prohibitive, given the topography of much of Blaenau Gwent.
7b	There should be paved access from the home to any garden gate.	We provide suitable paths where reasonable and practical.
7c	There should be paved access from the home to the drying line if one is present.	We provide suitable paths where reasonable and practical.
7d	Outdoor space must be easy to maintain, and safe.	We have an Environmental Improvement Team who complete external upgrades to homes. We will meet with this standard where it is reasonable, practical and not cost prohibitive, given the topography of much of Blaenau Gwent.
8a	External lockable storage for cycles and equipment must be made available.	We provide additional external storage (where none previously existed) by way of sheds or storage buildings where it is practicable to do so.
8b	There should be adequate, practical, maintainable and safe community space(s).	Our Green Space Team maintain our external estate and we complete estate improvement works
8c	Biodiversity opportunities should be introduced by landlords who own or manage verges, parks, grounds and open green spaces by changing their management of these areas to make them more wildlife friendly.	We undertake a range of Biodiversity projects as set out below.

3.5 WHQS23 recognises that certain elements may not apply to all homes, with this being incorporated into the assessment and returns requirements and the majority of homes will be classified as either 'pass' or 'fail' for each condition. Additionally, a 'temporary fail' will be recorded

by Tai Calon Community Housing is unable to comply due to circumstances which we cannot control, such as tenant refusal.

- 3.6 **Temporary Fail:** if a component or element is given a 'temporary fail' coding, we will complete works at void stage or the element will be rolled to the next programme of works. Where refusal of works is the choice of the customer, we will contact them to assess their status prior to the next programme being commenced;
- Temporary Fail: Tenant Refusal
 - Temporary Fail: Tenant Delay
 - Temporary Fail: Tenant behaviour/financial restrictions
- 3.7 **Conditional Pass:** Tai Calon Community Housing will utilise this coding where required. If a component or element is given a 'conditional pass' coding. A conditional pass is likely to apply in the following circumstances;
- Physical Constraint (e.g. the outdoor space is not of a sufficient size to meet WHQS23)
 - Heritage/Conservation Constraint (e.g. Energy Efficiency measures are prohibited due to the property being in a National Park)
 - Cost Prohibitive (e.g. to improve the amount of level external space would present an unjustifiable cost)
- 3.8 Tai Calon Community Housing will assess the safety of homes using the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS), with a number of Technical Staff being fully trained. Our approach will focus on the elements as set out in WHQS23. We will rectify hazards based on whether they are defined as 'Category 1' or 'Category 2' hazards following the HHSRS assessment;
- **Category 1 Hazard:** We will comply with our legal obligations to rectify these hazards. Once addressed, we will reclassify elements or components as pass or conditional pass,
 - **Category 2 Hazard:** These will be addressed on an individual property basis and acted on accordingly.

4.0 Ensuring Accurate Data

- 4.1 Tai Calon Community Housing utilises PIMSS Assets Software, SAVA Intelligent Energy and other systems to record our assets and energy data.
- 4.2 We follow the industry standard of all Stock Condition Surveys being less than 5 years old, and have introduced a programme to achieve up to 25% of stock condition surveys per annum
- 4.3 We have trained twenty technical staff to be able to complete Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's) and Energy Performance Reports (EPR's) as well as complete Retrofit Assessments.

- 4.4 We have restructured our Assets, Sustainability and Healthy Homes Team, with additional resource to meet the requirements of WHQS23 and decarbonisation. Key posts that will ensure accurate data include;
- Assets, Appraisals and Data Manager
 - Assets Data Officer
 - Health & Energy Data Officer
- 4.5 We will be using our data systems and in-house expertise to accurately record progress toward the standard and to build full knowledge of the costs and resources required for all homes to meet WHQS23, along with highlighting where there may be risks that homes will be unable to achieve the standard for financial, resource or technical reasons.

5.0 Customer Engagement

- 5.1 Tai Calon Community Housing recognises that effective and meaningful customer engagement will be essential to the delivery of WHQS23, particularly in decarbonising homes whilst also not impacting on the affordability of energy costs. Central to our engagement approach will be our Customer Voice Framework and strategy. We will use several channels for engaging with our customers and ensure their feedback shapes our delivery of WHQS23.
- 5.2 We will engage with customers in ways that work for them and their families, and not adopt a 'one size fits all' approach. Tai Calon Community Housing has restructured its Assets, Sustainability and Healthy Homes Teams to ensure that we are able to engage with our customers and provide effective engagement and support. In particular, our Health and Energy Data Officer and our Health and Energy Engagement Officer will deliver wider and focussed engagement and support activities, working with our customers to deliver the best possible WHQS23 outcomes. They will also deliver support, training and expertise to our wider team of Tenant Liaison Officers, Trades Team, Technical Officers and Community Housing Officers to ensure that engagement and support occurs at all opportunities.
- 5.3 We have invested significantly in understanding, communicating and engaging with our customers. We have a well developed understanding of our customers needs and how they wish to be communicated and engaged with. A key element of this is our 'Llais Ein Pobl' group, which we are investing in and supporting to grow. This allows for customers to decide on their level of engagement and ensures more varied and inclusive engagement opportunities (particularly when linked back to our in-depth customer segmentation information), and is particularly useful when engaging with those customers who may be less confident or capable in expressing their views and opinions. We will work closely with

our Customer Wellbeing and Engagement Team to ensure that our delivery of WHQS23 is coproduced with our customers and communities.

6.0 Independent Verification

- 6.1 Tai Calon Community Housing has external and independent auditors appointed (currently undertaken by Validera). We will arrange for Validera to undertake and verify the assets data that we hold and our WHQS23 compliance returns on a biennial basis.
- 6.2 Additionally, our Data Officers will audit the information provided from the various surveys undertaken which, in turn, will be audited by our Assets, Acquisitions and Data Manager.
- 6.3 The energy and retrofit surveys we undertake will also be subject to audit by external organisations such as Trustmark and Elmhurst Energy.

7.0 WHQS23 Compliance Statements for Customers

- 7.1 A WHQS23 Compliance Statement will be provided to all new customers at the commencement of their contract as part of the wider pack of information they receive.
- 7.2 The Statement sets out the requirements of WHQS23 and details passes, fails and elements not applicable in line with the standard;
 - Must be in a good state of repair,
 - Must be safe and secure,
 - Must be affordable to heat and have a minimal environmental impact,
 - Must have an up-to-date kitchen and utility area,
 - Must have an up-to-date bathroom,
 - Must be comfortable and promote well-being,
 - Must have a suitable garden,
 - Must have an attractive outside space
- 7.3 The Statement will be generated automatically by our Assets Database. Where customers disagree with any part of the Compliance Statement, there will be express directions on how they may register their concerns.

8.0 Elements not Measured

8.1 Tai Calon Community Housing do not, currently, measure a number of the elements set out within WHQS23. We will consider and progress these elements as set out below;

8.2 3d) Whole Stock Assessment to produce Target Energy Pathways

- Whole Stock Assessment (WSA) is defined as a review of Stock Condition and energy efficiency data utilising the stock and energy data systems the landlord uses. The purpose of a WSA is to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of housing stock
- A Target Energy Pathway (TEP) identifies (where sufficient and accurate data is in place) the measures that can be installed to decarbonise individual homes. A TEP will also provide the optimum path for decarbonisation measures to be installed in line with wider planned investment programmes.
- Tai Calon Community Housing utilises the PIMSS Asset Management system, alongside SAVA Intelligent Energy Software. These systems will allow us to;
 - Identify data gaps through the production of low, medium and high confidence TEP's,
 - Identify incomplete or inaccurate data,
 - Identify priorities for homes to be surveyed and data added to,
 - Evaluate the current and potential energy efficiency of individual homes.
- We will continue to work toward the WHQS23 target date to provide comprehensive TEP's for individual homes, with the timing of energy efficiency measures aligned to our wider planned investment programmes and costed to assess the affordability and impact of those measures.

8.3 6d) Homes should suit the specific requirements of the household

- Tai Calon Community Housing engages with current and future customers to ensure that their homes, as far as is practicable, meet the specific requirements of the household. This includes providing a range of adaptations and helping them to find new homes where their needs change beyond their current housing. We ensure that all colleagues who engage with our customers are able to provide advice and signpost them to further support, either within the organisation or to external stakeholders.
- We have invested significant time and resource to understand our customers needs and how best to engage with them to improve our services and their wellbeing. We will continue to develop our approach and understanding.

8.4 6e) Disabled and older persons housing requirements

- Tai Calon Community Housing services include specific colleagues and Teams who work closely with our older and less able customers

to provide the homes and services best suited to their individual needs.

- Tai Calon has specific annual budget dedicated to providing additional adaptations and services to our customers, ensuring they are able to live well in their homes.
- All colleagues are trained in identifying safeguarding issues. Additionally, our technical and trades colleagues will identify additional needs when in customers homes. We will then contact those households to establish the additional support and adaptations they may need.

8.5 8b) Attractive outside spaces

- Tai Calon Community Housing recognises the importance of outdoor space to the health and wellbeing of our customers and communities. We endeavour to provide a safe and practical environment for our customers and the creation of areas that adds to the communal environment.
- We engage closely with customers and stakeholders to identify and deliver a range of external improvements including community tree planting, growing spaces and the improvement of under utilised external areas.
- The maintenance of the external natural environment is delivered by our in-house team, Green Earth. By employing this resource directly, we are able to be reactive and proactive in delivering the environmental spaces that our customers want and will benefit from.

8.6 8c) Biodiversity

- Tai Calon Community Housing owns and maintains significant land across the borough of Blaenau Gwent. As an organisation that fully appreciates the impact of climate change we always look to ensure we are able to contribute positively to biodiversity and have a number of initiatives and projects to support this ambition. Our accreditations include Bee Friendly accreditation with the Wales Biodiversity Partnership.
- Additionally, Tai Calon Community Housing engages with ecologists and local champions to ensure that our grounds maintenance activities enhance biodiversity. We are also engaged in community growing initiatives and the creation of local woods.

8.7 Digital connectivity

- Tai Calon Community Housing has engaged with our customers and external stakeholders to understand how digitally connected they currently are, their preferred methods of communication and how we can work with them to deliver improved connectivity and our digital communications offers to them.

- We are currently developing our online offer to customers, recognising that our current digital services require improvement, with the Llais Ein Pobl group being an excellent example of these improvements being delivered. We will then communicate with customers to fully implement these changes. As part of this, we appreciate that some customers will not engage digitally and will continue to provide services according to their preferences.

9.0 Cost Prohibitive Activities

- 9.1 Tai Calon Community Housing will establish cost prohibitive activities and record them as 'Conditional Pass – Cost Prohibitive' using the Welsh Governments definition;
- Measures that do not create a sufficient improvement in quality or the cost of energy for the household,
 - Measures that are not cost effective unless undertaken as part of a planned programme of works and such a programme has not yet been established,
 - Where the available funding is limited to undertake those works.
- 9.2 Where works have been identified as cost prohibitive, Tai Calon Community Housing will include details in our annual WHQS23 Compliance Statement and returns to Welsh Government, setting out and justifying our reasoning to ensure transparency. We will also communicate this to individual customers as well as through wider engagement activities.

10.0 Target Energy Pathways

- 10.1 Tai Calon Community Housing utilises PIMSS Assets Software and SAVA Intelligent Energy to assess our stock, identify improvements and produce Target Energy Pathways (TEP).
- 10.2 In line with the WHQS23 target of March 2027, we will produce comprehensive TEP's for individual properties, highlighting current and potential Energy Performance (both certificates and reports) and environmental impact information. Each TEP will provide;
- Current and proposed RdSAP/EIR scores
 - Current and projected CO² emissions
 - Planned implementation dates of the TEP for each home
- 10.3 We have commenced the completion of TEP's, with a range of low, medium and high confidence pathways being produced. This will allow us to identify data and knowledge gaps and produce a detailed plan for the treatment of individual homes. Part of this approach will involve a

detailed assets appraisal and the decision to invest or disinvest in individual homes.

- 10.4 We will update our Audit & Risk Committee on a quarterly basis on the progress of TEP's and RdSAP scores and also report this to Welsh Government annually

11.0 Considering Carbon

- 11.1 Where Tai Calon Community Housing considers demolition or significant remodelling to our existing homes, we will do so in line with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) professional statements and ensure compliance with Welsh Development Quality Standards 2021. This activity will be led by our Quantity Surveyor/Commercial Manager.
- 11.2 We will also assess the cost/benefit of meeting WHQS23 standards, particularly the decarbonisation elements, and assess whether to invest or disinvest in individual properties. The decision to dispose of any homes will follow relevant policies and procedures including our acquisitions and disposals policy.
- 11.3 To reduce the carbon impact of our improvement and maintenance activities, we will not replace components ahead of their useful economic life unless there are compelling reasons to do so. The TEP for individual homes will take account of wider programmes of work to minimise carbon impact, costs and resources.

12.0 Social Benefits

- 12.1 As a Community Mutual organisation, Tai Calon Community Housing recognises the positive impact we can have on individual households, wider communities and the economy of Blaenau Gwent.
- 12.2 Tai Calon recognises Social Benefits as being far wider than securing a percentage value of our issued contracts which is then used on various projects in communities. Our Social Benefits approach includes;
- Tai Calon Community Housing plays a key role in tackling poverty and food insecurity in Blaenau Gwent, hosting the Blaenau Gwent food partnership,
 - We run a hardship scheme, providing funds to residents to assist in their living costs. Referrals to the scheme may be made by customers, their families or others, and any member of staff recognising that a household may need additional financial support.
 - We are signed up to the Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) for housing, reporting annually on our Environmental, Social and Governance activities and progress.

- Our procurement activities and framework sets out our procurement and tendering principles which include;
 - Foundational & Circular Economy – to develop strong collaborative relationships that maximise long-term sustainable social and economic value outcomes in all procurement activities.
 - Processes & Systems – to ensure.. sustainable procurement activities are delivered.. which reflect best practice and demonstrate commitment to the goals of the Future Generations Act.
 - In 2024/25 our approach to procurement delivered;
 - 79.8% of expenditure to Welsh businesses.
 - 23.6% of expenditure to Blaenau Gwent businesses. This equates to £4.3 million of expenditure within the county borough.
 - 79% of expenditure to VCSE's and SME's.
 - 100% of activity included Sustainable Procurement Statements.
- 12.3 Relevant Procurement and Tendered contracts require a number of commitments from suppliers, including;
- An agreed percentage of the contract value to be provided in order to deliver community and social benefits,
 - A commitment to make employment and training opportunities available to customers and the community,
 - A commitment to work with Tai Calon and our customers to deliver specific projects within communities where activities are taking place,
- 12.4 As an anchor organisation within Blaenau Gwent and with our in-house Trades Team, Tai Calon ensures that we are an employer and trainer of choice in the county borough council with an annual intake of apprentices. We also work closely with colleges and schools to raise awareness of our activities and the opportunities we can present.

13.0 Related legislation that our policy complies with.

- 13.1 Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023
- 13.2 Housing Health & Safety Rating System guidance
- 13.3 Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016
- 13.4 Fitness for Human Habitation Guidance
- 13.5 Other Welsh Government legislation and regulations that relate to WHQS23

14.0 Other relevant Tai Calon documents.

- 14.1 Voids Management Policy
- 14.2 Fitness for Human Habitation (FFHH) Policy
- 14.3 Vulnerable Customer Policy
- 14.4 Customer Care Policy
- 14.5 Corporate Plan 2025 – 2029
- 14.6 Asset Management Strategy 2019 2031
- 14.7 Acquisition and Disposal of Property Procedure
- 14.8 Development Strategy

15.0 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- 15.1 Tai Calon Community Housing will take every opportunity to promote equality, diversity and inclusion for our customers and wider communities.
- 15.2 To promote fairness, inclusivity, and adherence to equality principles, we have conducted an Equality Impact Assessment. As part of this we reviewed relevant information we hold about our customers to make sure this policy is accessible to everyone.

16.0 Review

- 16.1 We will review this policy either when necessary or every 2 years. During any review, we will consider customer feedback and any changes in regulatory guidance and best practices.

Chief Executive/Director Approval:

Board/Homes & Communities Committee Approval Date:

Date of next review: 1st April 2027

Visit our offices or write to us at:

Tai Calon Community Housing, Solis One,
Rising Sun Industrial Estate, Blaina, Blaenau
Gwent NP13 3JW

Email us: talktous@taicalon.org

Phone: 0300 303 1717

Find us on the web at: www.taicalon.org.