

# POLICY BRIEFING



## HOUSING POLICY UPDATES

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- The Co-operation Agreement
- Welsh Government's Net Zero Plans

## POLICY AND INFLUENCING

TPAS Cymru work with the Welsh Government and other key decision makers. We are contributing to policy change by informing about policy developments and issues, channeling the experience and needs of tenants and landlords to policy makers, and working with partner organisations to influence policy.

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# THE CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT

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On the 21st November, the Labour party and Plaid Cymru party announced a deal that will impact the lives of many people in Wales following on from the pandemic. Here are a few of the actions that the Co-operation agreement will implement over the next 3 years.

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- **Property and fair rent** - the promise of a white paper that will introduce the right to adequate housing. The aim of this is to roll out a system of fair rents to make the private sector more affordable, since one in twenty properties on the market are at or below the Local housing Allowance rates.
- **Wales Building Safety Fund** - a second phase of the fund will look at reforming building safety more broadly. This is likely to feature in the next iteration of the Building Safety White Paper.
- **Homelessness** - Linking in with the Renting Homes Act, there will be greater security for tenants. There is a commitment to implement the recommendations of the Homelessness Action group with the aim to end homelessness.

**Free School Meals and Childcare:** Extension of free school meals to all children in primary schools and free child care for all children aged two.

**More information here:**

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-11/cooperation-agreement-2021.pdf>

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## NET ZERO WALES PLAN

At the end of October 2021, Welsh Government published a new net-zero plan. The plan looks at the second carbon budget and lays out climate targets for 2025 as well as looking forward to 2050 to the Government's ultimate net-zero target.

### Retrofit

The new Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS 2) focuses on 'fabric-first' principles. The aim is to retrofit all social housing within a decade to bring it as close as possible to EPC A, which is the highest standard a home can achieve based on how much energy is needed to heat it.

WHQS 2 (which is aiming to launch in 2022), will "require the achievement of both affordable warmth and decarbonisation of homes, with a target date of 2033" according to the new-zero plan.

These new builds will also have to meet EPC A and this will be done through carrying out a fabric-first approach which means the insulation in the home requires less energy to heat it. The aim of Welsh Government is to roll this out across all newly built homes in Wales by 2025 so they will be tracking and monitoring the impact.

### **Influence Policy and Have Your Say**

If you want to be part of Wales's largest tenant voice panel, and have your say in shaping national policy, join our Tenant Pulse Panel. Tenant Pulse is the voice of tenants in Wales. It has been created by TPAS Cymru and is supported by Welsh Government. The main aim is to find out what matters most to tenants in Wales. The results of their surveys are used by Welsh Government and decision makers to create housing policy which works for tenants, and which makes housing in Wales safer and fairer.

**Click here to join:** [www.tpas.cymru/pulse](http://www.tpas.cymru/pulse)



## **A 'passport' approach**

The programme that is currently funding retrofit is the Optimised Retrofit Programme (ORP). This programme has committed £70m over the next two years to fund 'home passports' for nearly 2,000 social housing properties. The passports will set out what the property needs to make it energy efficient.

Intelligent energy systems will be fitted into every homes which produces measurements that enable housing providers to see the impact over time.

The report states that “this will allow us to test different approaches and will report actual rather than estimated sector reductions in emissions.” This reporting gives us a strong evidence base on which to make future investment decisions and to share with partners across the private rented and owner-occupied sectors.”

## **New Build Standards**

Within the Net Zero Wales strategy, they highlighted the strict standards to new-build social housing. From this month onward, all new social homes will go through a process of approval as they will need to meet design-quality requirements that stop them from using fossil-fuel fired boilers for heating and hot water.

