



Home Standard 2023

ASSET MANAGEMENT

SLH Home Standard

Purpose

South Lakes Housing (SLH) is a registered provider (housing association) and we own and manage approx. 3300 homes across a wide geography in South Lakeland and Lancashire.

South Lakes Housing provides good quality homes in one of the most beautiful areas of in the country. The need for quality affordable homes has never been greater, with many working families unable to afford market homes.

Our purpose, 'Quality Homes, a platform for life', has been central in setting the standard for our homes.

The Decent Homes Standard sets out the basic maintenance and repair standards that all housing association homes must meet. The SLH Home Standard goes well beyond the basic requirements of Decent Homes, giving customers a safe, warm and modern home in which to live.

The SLH Homes Standard outlines how we will:-

- Inspect homes every 5 years as part of our Stock Condition Survey plans
- Provide good quality affordable homes that are warm and weathertight
- Ensure homes benefit from modern facilities
- Supply homes with an efficient heating and hot water system
- Insulate homes to make them affordable to keep warm
- Maintain a safe and secure environment
- Install energy efficient products to help reduce fuel poverty.

This standard has been developed in line with our Asset Management Strategy and Financial Plan, and ensures that planned investment is undertaken to ensure safety, value and security for our customers, and in compliance with our legislative and regulatory requirements.

Responsibilities

The Head of Assets & Building Safety is responsible for ensuring that this standard is kept up to date and consistent with any new SLH Strategies. It will be reviewed every three years or following a change in legislation or regulatory requirements, to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

The Head of Assets & Building Safety is also responsible for ensuring that this standard is adhered to through the implementation of planned programmes of work.

Related Policies and Strategies

The SLH Home Standard directly supports and is supported by, the SLH Asset Management Strategy. The SLH Asset Management Strategy is the umbrella document for the below:-

- Sustainability Strategy 2022-27
- Disposal Policy
- Gas Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Water Safety Policy
- Tree Management Safety Policy
- SLH Home Standard
- Adaptations Policy
- Option Appraisal Process
- Non-Gas Heating Policy
- Electrical Safety Policy
- Lift Safety Policy
- Radon Safety Policy
- SLH Void Standard
- SLH 5 year Investment Plan

Legal & Regulatory Framework

We will adhere to requirements laid down by regulations and legislation. These include (but are not limited to):-

- Tenancy Agreement
- Housing Acts 1988, 1996, 1998 and 2004
- Landlord and Customer Act 1985
- Equality Act 2010
- Fire safety act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022

SLH Homes Standard

Health and Safety

Our aim is to make our homes safe and secure. We undertake a full review of each home during stock condition surveys or when a customer first moves into the home. We also operate an “every visit counts” service, where all colleagues are responsible for carrying out a visual inspection, vulnerability assessment and reporting risks every time they enter a property. We will incorporate any work required into our Planned Improvement Programmes and raise repairs where immediate works are identified.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

SLH Surveyors carry out HHSRS assessments during stock condition surveys, which are undertaken every 5 years and on an ad hoc basis if a risk is identified during an inspection.

HHSRS assessments include risks such as damp and mould, and thermal comfort. SLH undertakes a risk assessment at the first point of contact for any damp and mould that is reported to us. Homes where vulnerable customers live will be inspected by a surveyor as a priority.

At first point of contact all customers are also offered a mould wash that is carried out by our in-house repairs team. We have developed customer information on damp, mould and condensation on our website and encourage customers to contact us if they're concerned.

This initiative has been developed to ensure that each home is safe by identifying possible risks and taking steps to remove or reduce those risks as quickly as possible.

Condition of Building Components

We will carry out stock condition surveys every five years and plan works in accordance with the information gathered. We will monitor and assess condition and where appropriate will extend component lifecycles up to their point of disrepair.

Primary Roof Covering

The SLH Home Standard aims to ensure that a roof covering will be surveyed for both condition and age within the following timescales:

- Concrete tiles 55 years
- Clay tiles 35 years
- Natural slate 90 years
- Man-made slate 35 years
- Felt roof 15 years

A roof is defined as being in poor condition if there is a requirement to replace 50% of the roof covering. When replacing a roof covering, we will generally replace it like for like. We will consult with customers should an alternative covering be proposed.

Re-Roofing will include:

- Renewal of roof tiles, felt and battens
- Renewal of rainwater goods
- Renewal of fascia's, soffits, and bargeboards with white PVC-U (unless restricted by planning regulations when it will be replaced on a like for like basis)
- Upgrade loft insulation to at least 300mm depth
- If a chimney is no longer in use, it will be taken down below roof level and vented.

Chimneys

A home will not meet the SLH Homes Standard if the chimney is in poor condition and needs to be partially or fully rebuilt.

Chimneys will be inspected as part of the stock condition survey. If found to be in repairable condition, we will carry out the appropriate remedial works. If beyond repair, we will either partially or completely rebuild it, or remove it entirely by taking the external chimney structure down to below roof level and venting.

Walls – Brickwork/Stone/Render

A home will not meet the SLH Homes Standard if 50% of the wall finish requires re-pointing or renewal. We anticipate render finishes to have a lifespan of 60 years and will inspect its condition every 5 years as part of the stock condition survey.

We will inspect cavity wall ties and lintels when re-rendering properties and replace these where necessary or thought to require replacement before the next cycle for render replacement, as part of the works. If cavity wall insulation is found not be present this will also be included as part of the works.

Render will be patched to match the existing following repair works, where less than 50% of the entire elevation finish requires replacement. All elevations will then be painted to provide a uniform colour finish. A coloured rendering system will be used where render to a one or more full elevations is needed.

If the external finish of a home is already painted, or is painted following patch repairs, it will be included in SLH's 10 year cyclical painting programme.

Windows

The SLH Home Standard ensures that windows will be surveyed for both condition and age within the following timescales:

- Wooden windows 20-25 years
- PVC-U windows 35 years
- Aluminium windows 45 years

Windows are defined as being in poor condition if they are beyond economical repair.

When replacing windows, we will generally use white PVC-u. We will replace the window fenestration to match existing and subject to planning restrictions. We will install secondary glazing to properties where planning restriction prevents the installation of double glazing such as listed building or properties within a conservation area.

Window replacement will include:

- Double glazing units in white PVC-u frames
- Multi point high security locking systems with lockable handles
- Internally beaded glazing for added security
- Casements with the facility for sashes to be locked in an 'ajar' position to improve ventilation
- Pattern or obscure glass to bathrooms/wc's
- Draught proofing
- Trickle vents
- Locking window restrictors, as appropriate
- Escape windows above the ground floor
- PVC-u trims to internal reveals where necessary

External Doors

The SLH Home Standard ensures that doors will be surveyed for both condition and age within the following timescales:

- Wooden doors 25 years
- PVC/Composite/Aluminium 35 years

Doors are defined as being in poor condition if they are beyond economical repair.

When replacing external doors, we will use an insulated core with PVC-u or GRP composite door facing. Customers will be offered a choice of door design and colour. External doors will be fire resistant where appropriate and fitted in accordance with current regulations.

External doors will include:

- Double glazing
- Multi point high security locking systems with lever handles, door pull, spy hole, numerals, and letter plate

Central Heating

The SLH Home Standard ensures that our central heating systems are efficient and key central heating components will be surveyed for replacement within the following timescales:

- Gas boiler 15 years
- Complete gas central heating system 35 years
- Electric storage heaters 15 years

When replacing heating systems, we will also consider alternative fuel systems and aim to give the best balance between replacement cost and fuel efficiency. For example:

- We will only use the most efficient programmable 'A' rated gas condensing boilers
- When replacing radiators, we will fit thermostatic radiator valves and minimise any changes in size.
- Installation of programmable room thermostats
- We use modern efficient programmable electric storage heaters
- We will consider the use of more sustainable heating systems such as solar heating, ground and air source heat pumps

Wherever possible the preferred option for replacement will be a gas fired system. This may not be achievable in some areas where there is no current gas supply and in these situations, we will consider the use of renewable energy systems and consult with customers on the options available such as Air Source Heat Pumps. We will encourage customers to use SMART meters and where possible these will be installed.

Bathrooms

The SLH Homes Standard aims to ensure that Bathrooms will be surveyed for replacement every 32 years and will generally comprise of:

- A matching white bath, wash hand basin and toilet
- Over bath shower facilities
- Ceramic tiled splash backs and shower area as appropriate, with a choice of colours.
- Slip resistant vinyl sheet floor covering in a choice of colours
- A humidistat-controlled extractor fan
- Decoration
- Refitting of customer's items such as toilet roll holders, soap dishes, etc

All new bathrooms will be designed in full consultation with customers to ensure we meet their individual needs.

If the central heating system has sufficient pressure, when modernising a bathroom, we will fit a thermostatic bath shower mixer tap, where this is not possible an electric shower will be installed.

In Sheltered Accommodation, we can help by replacing a bath with the installation of a wet room shower facility. We will also fit thermostatically controlled mixer valves to ensure customers are protected from scalding.

Kitchens

The SLH Homes Standard aims to ensure that kitchens will be surveyed for replacement after 22 years and will generally comprise of:

- New base and wall units with a choice of colours and handles
- Upgrade of electrics to modern standards with appropriately located sockets over worktops
- Stainless steel sink and taps
- 38mm worktop with a choice of colours
- A choice of ceramic tiled splash backs or upstands between worktops and wall units and behind the cooker space, with a choice of colours
- Slip resistant vinyl sheet floor covering in a choice of colours
- A humidistat-controlled extractor fan
- Decoration
- Plastering where required
- Relocation of white goods if necessary
- Refitting of customer's items such as blinds, kitchen roll holders etc

All new kitchens will be designed to take into account adequate space and layout, and in full consultation with customers to ensure we meet their individual needs.

Communal Areas

The SLH Home Standard for communal areas will include the following;

- We will replace traditional lighting in blocks with energy efficient LED motion sensor lighting
- Install Passive Infrared (PIR) motion sensor external lighting
- Upgrade flooring to either slip resistant vinyl floor or maintain existing finishes if tiled
- Install secure composite entrance doors (in some circumstances we will install powder coated aluminium security doors with magnetic locks on a electronic entry system)
- Windows in white PCV-u

- Internal decoration every 5 years to include handrails

Within sheltered communal areas the following will be included;

- Replace existing floor finishes
- Upgrade lighting to energy efficient variable lighting level fittings
- Internal decoration every 5 years including high contrast demarcation of areas where required, ie floors and walls, doors and walls
- Replacement internal fire doors as required and in accordance with current regulation

Noise Insulation

The SLH Home Standard will ensure that where customers suffer from noise nuisance, as determined by either HHSRS or an environmental improvement notice issued by the Local Authority, we will undertake improvement work directly related to the nuisance to abate matters.

Thermal Insulation

Loft insulation in all homes will be upgraded to at least 300mm (12"). This exceeds the current Building Regulations standard (250-270mm) and Decent Homes Standard and will help to reduce energy bills. We will undertake a survey and install cavity wall insulation where appropriate. Where the construction of a house does not allow for cavity wall insulation we will consider the installation of internal/external wall insulation.

External Components

Security Lighting

The SLH Home Standard ensures that all properties will be provided with Passive Infrared (PIR) motion sensor lighting to the front and/or back of their homes.

External Painting

The SLH Home Standard requires the following;

- External joinery will be repaired and re-painted every 5 years
- Previously painted render to be re-painted every 10 years

Footpaths

The SLH Home Standard requires all footpaths to be inspected as part of the stock condition survey and a programme of repairs carried out where required to ensure slip or trip hazards are negated.

Boundaries

The SLH Home Standard will ensure all boundaries are clearly demarcated either by means of hedging, fencing, post and wire, or boundary walls. These will all be inspected as part of the stock condition survey and a programme of repairs carried out where required.

Where a clear health and safety hazard is determined a secure boundary will be installed.

Communities and Consultation

Customer Consultation

We recognise that each home is unique so we will arrange for a Customer Liaison Officer to visit all customers to discuss their needs when we carry out planned improvement works.

Before any planned work commence, our contractors will agree dates and times that are convenient to the customer. They will confirm this in writing and the customer will receive a letter confirming choices (where applicable) and a commencement date. The works will be supported by a dedicated Customer Liaison Officer or Project Manager who will be on hand to answer any questions or queries customers may have both before and during the works.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction underpins our desire to continually improve our service to customers. Customer views and comments are key to improving our services. When we carry out major work in a home we request that the customer completes a Satisfaction Survey that is returned to us.

Service Standard Monitoring and Reporting

Delivery of the SLH Home Standard is monitored through a variety of means including quarterly Decent Homes reporting through the Business Strategy KPI Monitoring Report to Board and quarterly service standard monitoring reports through Tenants Committee.