

The Future Homes and Buildings Standard

CIAT Membership Briefing – April 2026 – Applicable to England only

1. On 24 March, the Government published details of the Future Homes and Buildings Standard (Future Homes Standard), which will strengthen requirements on new homes built in England from 2027, to improve energy efficiency and enable operational decarbonisation.
2. The briefing summarises the key changes included in the Standard. CIAT members and affiliates are reminded to refer to full Building Regulations and guidance provided in Approved Documents, to ensure compliance. The Future Homes and Buildings Standard impacts primarily on Approved Documents F and L; updated Approved Document can be found [here](#).
3. In consulting on the new Standard in 2023, two options were set out, with differing requirements and costs. Government has chosen to move forward with the first of these options, which was the more ambitious in terms of reducing energy use and maximising consumer savings.

Key updated requirements

Dwellings	Buildings other than dwellings
Notional air source heat pump equivalent to ErP A++ or 4 th generation heat network with SCOP of plan 3.0, primary losses of 12% and secondary losses of 62W per dwelling.	A heat pump for side-lit spaces and radiant electric heating in top-lit spaces. For buildings connected to a heat network, standards are equivalent to a 4th-generation heat network.
Enhanced air tightness score of 4 m ³ /m ² .h @ 50 Pa.	Enhanced levels of airtightness which support the installation of low-carbon heating systems in warehouses and sports halls (top lit-spaces)
Solar PVs (with equivalent area of 40% of the dwelling's ground floor, which may be lowered in some contexts), or an equivalent renewable generation capacity. Buildings over 18 m tall are exempt.	Solar PVs (with equivalent area of 40% of the building's foundations), or an equivalent renewable generation capacity. Buildings over 18 m tall are exempt. N.B. , Government has adopted the same requirement for both top- and side-lit spaces (the initial consultation proposed more ambitious requirements for top-lit spaces,).
Decentralised mechanical ventilation	Enhanced lighting efficiency to an average of 105 luminaire lumens by circuit-watt for general lighting (95 light sources lumens per circuit-watt for display lighting, 65 light sources lumens per circuit-watt for high excitation purity light sources).
Wastewater heat recovery systems	Enhanced heat efficiency (including more rigorous insulation requirements for pipework and ductwork, requirements for use of fuels for heating and hot water that achieve a CO ₂ emission factor of less than or equal to 0.086kgCO ₂ /kWh and a primary energy factor of less than or equal to 1.969kWhPE /kWh).



Costs

4. At the time of consultation in 2023, for domestic buildings option 1 was estimated to add around £6,200 to upfront costs, with average bills around £520 per year (option 2 would have added around £1,000 upfront, and left bill around £1,220 per year). For non-domestic buildings, the increase in capital, maintenance, and replacement costs was estimated at between 1.4% and 5.8%, depending on the building type.

Additional changes

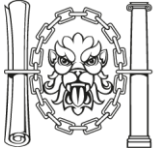
5. In addition, Government has announced:
- Performance metrics will remain unchanged, using the target emissions rate, target primary energy rate, and fabric energy efficiency.
 - Guidance on issues such as testing and certification will be updated, including reflecting new building control requirements.
 - Approved guidance on heat network approaches will be updated. Temporary heating solutions used before heat network connection must be low carbon.
 - Voluntary good practice guidance has been provided for smart metering.
 - A new Standard Assessment Procedure, SAP10.3, has been published, and the new Home Energy Model (HEM) will be approved as a calculation model no earlier than June, with 24 months of “dual running” of the two methodologies once the HEM is published (with HEM as the preferred model thereafter).
 - The definition of “fixed building services” will be expanded to include fixed lifts, escalators or moving footways.
 - Home User Guides will need to be provided in both paper and digital formats, to ensure they are widely accessible.
 - Current performance requirements for dwellings created through material change of use (MCU), and for consequential improvements have been retained; Home User Guides must be provided for dwellings created through the MCU route.
 - Further consultation will be undertaken on the scope of applicability of MCU standards and on an optional whole-dwelling performance target, alongside a stronger elemental approach.
 - Government will consult on how to strengthen in use performance monitoring, including through post-occupancy evaluation.
 - Government will also undertake a full technical review of Approved Document O (addressing overheating).

Transition

6. The new standards will come into effect on 24 March 2027 for non-HRBs, followed by a 12-month transition period (so construction will need to commence by 24 March 2028, in order to apply the 2021 regulations). For HRBs, a valid gateway 2 application will need to be submitted prior to 24 September 2027, in order to apply the 2021 regulations (where a Gateway 2 application is rejected after this date, any resubmission would need to meet the new standards).

Key documents

7. Copies of updated Approved Documents F and L, the Government’s consultation response and guidance on smart meter installation can be found [here](#). The legislation amending the Building Regulations can be found [here](#).



Conclusion

8. The Future Homes Standard represents a significant shift in how buildings will need to be designed in order to meet the new requirements. The standards highlight a stronger focus on early design decision making, coordination and performance outcomes.

9. For members and affiliates, this reinforces the importance of maintaining up to date knowledge of low carbon technologies, building performance and regulatory expectations, while ensuring that appropriate process and systems are in place to support delivery.

10. CIAT would also encourage the membership to upskill where appropriate in order to adhere to these new requirements and work collaboratively. The Future Homes Hub has produced a number of resources to support professionals in implementing the new Standard, which can be found [here](#). We expect further materials and training to be developed over the next year; CIAT will signpost to these through regular Institute communication channels as appropriate.

CIAT, April 2024. For more information, contact technical@ciat.global.